TGEU at the UN Trans Advocacy Week 2026: Bringing trans voices from Albania and Kyrgyzstan to the global stage

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In June 2026, the UN Trans Advocacy Week (TAW) 2026 brought trans and gender diverse activists from across the world to Geneva to connect their local struggles with the international human rights system. Held alongside the 62nd session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC62), TAW created space for activists to engage directly with UN human rights mechanisms, Member States, and civil society partners, bringing the realities and struggles of their communities directly to the United Nations.

For activists, particularly from under-represented regions including Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Global South, participation in such forums would otherwise remain out of reach due to structural barriers and limited resources.

As anti-trans rhetoric grows and democratic space continues to shrink, international human rights advocacy is becoming an increasingly important tool for trans communities fighting for their rights.

Meet the TGEU delegates

This year, TGEU, in collaboration with our partner, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Tirana Office, brought two delegates to the 62nd session of the Human Rights Council: Ariel (they/them), representing Aleanca from Albania, and Kazy (them/any pronouns) from BizdaBarbyz, Kyrgyzstan.

Together with other trans and gender diverse activists from across the globe, Ariel and Kazy took part in discussions and advocacy on key UN reports and resolutions. This included the work of the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and the Special Rapporteurs on health, freedom of expression, and education.

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Trans Advocacy Week 2026

UN Trans Advocacy Week

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Photo descriptions:

Left: Ariel and Kazy at TAW sessions

Middle: Ariel and Kazy with TGEU's EECA Senior Programme Officer, Daniyar Orsekov (he/him)

Right: TAW activists with the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

TGEU's joint statement at the 62nd Human Rights Council (HRC62)

During HRC62, TGEU worked with partner organisations ILGA World and COC, as well as non-binary lesbian activist Michelle Kariuki, on a joint statement delivered during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

The statement described a global rise in anti-trans and anti-gender movements, which use fear-based narratives to scapegoat trans and gender-diverse people while undermining human rights and democratic values.

It also highlighted the growing role of digital platforms in these attacks, arguing that failing to address harmful online environments can threaten freedom of expression and civic participation while enabling broader anti-rights and authoritarian agendas.

Video description: Michelle Kariuki, delivering the joint statement during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

TAW side event: Defending freedom of association

TAW partners also organised a dedicated side event during HRC62: Democratic backsliding through attacks on freedoms of expression, association and assembly. The event brought together activists and advocates to discuss the shrinking space for trans, LGBTI, and feminist movements, share strategies for resisting democratic erosion, and reflect on the future of engagement with global human rights mechanisms.

TGEU's EECA Senior Programme Officer, Daniyar Orsekov (he/him), delivered an intervention at the event addressing the growing restrictions on freedom of association faced by trans and LGBTI organisations across Europe and Central Asia:

"Protecting freedom of association is not only about safeguarding one particular community. It is about protecting democracy itself and preserving society's ability to organise, defend its rights, and resist authoritarianism."

read the statement

In conclusion

International spaces such as the United Nations are most meaningful when they are connected to the realities of

communities on the ground. TAW 2026 brought activists together to share experiences, build solidarity and strengthen collective advocacy at a time when trans and wider civil society movements are facing growing pressure. For TGEU, supporting activists from our region to participate in these spaces helps ensure their experiences and expertise shape international human rights discussions.

The work does not end in Geneva: the relationships built, skills learnt, and experiences shared during Trans Advocacy Week continue to support advocacy efforts long after Trans Advocacy ended.

Your support makes change possible

We work across Europe and Central Asia to advance trans rights, build strong communities, and drive change through research, advocacy, and community-building.

Your donation helps us continue this vital work — defending trans lives, amplifying trans voices, and advocating for justice every day.

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