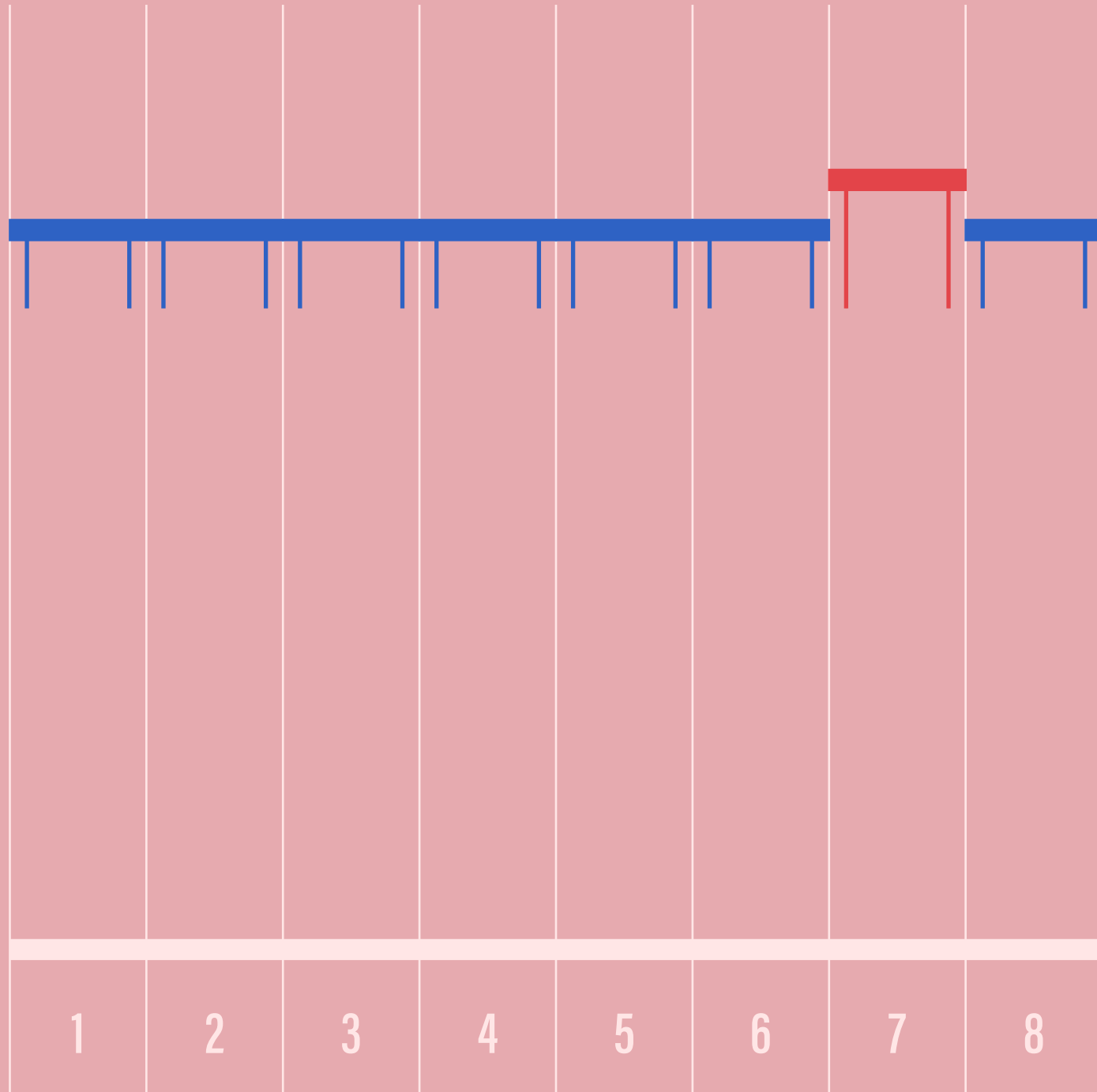


Gender-based content analysis:



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# Introduction

One of the most significant accomplishments of this year's Summer Olympics was the fact that gender equality was officially achieved through equal participation of men and women in the sports games. However, despite these achievements, there is still no full gender equality and equity in the world. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report, it is estimated that it will take another 131 years to achieve full gender equality worldwide. Cultural and social norms are still driven by gender stereotypical expectations of women and girls.

In order to dispel the negative effects of gender stereotypes and gendered disinformation, an environment should be created in which information is critically analysed, and the media work to create social responsibility and contribute to the advocacy for women's emancipation. In this regard, this research aims to investigate the gender-based content published by the media during the Summer Olympics, with special reference to the case of the two female boxers - Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting, which is crucial to understanding how narratives are constructed to undermine and marginalize sportswomen, especially those who challenge traditional gender norms and expectations.

Disinformation not only affects public perception of how women athletes are perceived, but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes<sup>1</sup>, contributing to an antagonistic environment for female, transgender, and non-binary athletes. By analysing the impact of spreading disinformation and biased narratives about female boxers, this research raises the topic of gendered disinformation in sports and its wider implications. Also, the purpose is to address fair and accurate representation of this type of news in the media, in hopes of furthering efforts to encourage inclusivity and respect in the sports community for women. Using the case of the Algerian boxer Khelif, one can recognize the deliberate creation of disinformation narratives, which, in fact, are based on already known anti-gender and transphobic narratives and values. Regardless of the fact that Khelif has

1 [TROLL OF THE MONTH: Media coverage of Imane Khelif - Reporting Diversity Network](#)

repeatedly announced that she was born a woman and identifies as a woman, especially considering her origin in Algeria, where it is impossible for her to change her gender, it was not enough to stop this case from being publicly misused for anti-gender purposes.<sup>2</sup>

The dominant narrative in the media in North Macedonia presented boxers Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting as men or transgender persons competing in the women's category, which directly caused hate speech in the media and on social networks. In addition, Khelif was also attacked for her physical appearance and race, which fall outside of Western standards of beauty. At the same time, several members of the clergy shared this disinformation on their Facebook profiles, fuelling decidedly anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiment. Anti-gender movements in the country have actively spread disinformation for a long time and they use every event to reinforce these narratives. Narratives that the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Coalition for the Protection of Children often support.

This analysis, titled “Gendered Disinformation – A Hurdle for Women in Sports” is the fifth analysis of gender-based content produced by the Institute of Communication Studies within the project “Fact-Based Journalism for Raising Awareness and Countering Disinformation in the Media Space in North Macedonia”, which is implemented with the support of the British Embassy in Skopje.

2 [The Algerian boxer, Imane Khelif, is not a biological man \(Алжирската боксерка Имане Келиф, не е биолошки маж\) Meta.mk](#)

# Context Of Analysis

The analysis itself, in addition to recognizing the different mechanisms by which the female body is disciplined in public and is discriminated against, will also help to identify future potential cases pertaining to women in sports, because the case of Imane Khelif and the dissemination of disinformation regarding The Summer Olympics are not isolated cases. If the wider context is taken into account, it will be seen that, in the past, double standards for women in sports were the norm, not the exception. Since the early days of sports media research, research has consistently shown that women athletes receive minimal media attention, often being marginalized or excluded, especially in day-to-day coverage (Toffoletti, 2016), even during high-profile events such as the Olympics (Delorme and Testard, 2015; Salido-Fernandez, 2020). This disparity stems from the male-dominated nature of sports media, which prioritize men's sports for a predominantly male viewership. Women are not only underrepresented (Billings et al., 2010; Jones, 2013), but they need to achieve exceptional results for their successes to be recognized at all. Even when there is media coverage, women are often portrayed in a trivializing, biased, or stereotypical way, focusing on their emotions, physical appearance or family roles (Eagleman, 2015; Ravel & Garo, 2016).<sup>3</sup> The very method of reporting already contributes to the so-called belonging of women in sports. The question of whether and which women belong in sport is not so discreetly woven through narratives about women in sports, as is the physical appearance of women athletes and their successes and failures.

In the past, it was not only the media that stereotyped women, but gender discrimination itself was institutionalized. For example, international sports governing bodies, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Federation of Association Football (Fédération Internationale de Football Association—FIFA), have attempted to promote women's sports and women's participation in sports. However, these efforts do not indicate that these organizations have ceased to be institutions of patriarchal hegemony (Fink, 2008;

3 [Salido-Fernández, J. & Muñoz-Muñoz, A.M. \(2021\). Media Representation of Women Athletes at the Olympic Games: A Systematic Review. \*Apunts Educación Física y Deportes\*, 146,32-41.](#)

Williams, 2014). Initiatives to promote women's sports may simply reflect the search for new clients in an increasingly saturated sports entertainment market. However, there is evidence that such promotional endeavours have inspired more participation in women's elite athletics (e.g., Jacobs, 2014).<sup>4</sup> The following principles are stated in the mission of the Olympic Games:<sup>5</sup>

“ to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women”.

But even more important in this situation were these principles, for which it is crucial to continue working:

“ to act against any form of discrimination affecting the Olympic Movement;

“ to promote safe sport and the protection of athletes from all forms of harassment and abuse.”

That's why the context and the attack on women athletes is also important, this attack on femininity is not only an attack on physical appearance, but also on the very participation and motivation to involve women in sports. In 2024, there is an increased level of anti-gender narratives in the public arena, but it is important to understand that this practice of gendered disinformation and stereotyping is a continued practice. The disciplining of the female body and physical appearance in sports, in particular, is a practice related to the success that women have in sports. Tennis player Serena Williams has been insulted in the media on multiple occasions and her gender has been brought into question<sup>6</sup> - with comments directed at her muscles and performance. In this instance, especially if we link the case with Imane and other women athletes, the racial element must not be left out. In fact, according to Grover 's analysis, the line between gender and sex is often intertwined when racism, misogyny and transphobia define the notions of femininity in the world of elite sports<sup>7</sup>.

4 [Women in International Elite Athletics: Gender \(in\)equality and National Participation](#)

5 <https://olympics.com/ioc/mission>

6 <https://www.businessinsider.com/serena-williams-responds-to-accusations-she-was-born-a-man-2018-5>

7 [Straddling the line between gender and sex: How racism, misogyny, and transphobia intertwine to define notions of womanhood in the world of elite sports](#)

In that regard, 15 years ago there was a situation with Caster Semenya that is a powerful example of how the media can reproduce gendered disinformation and fuel public debates based on discriminatory opinions. Instead of celebrating her exceptional success as an athlete, her gender and identity became the focal point of the media reporting. Such reporting not only violates the privacy of athletes, but also normalizes public scepticism and discrimination against women who do not fit into traditional norms of femininity. However, as Grover also points out, women of colour, especially black women, are often masculinized and defeminized by the Global North, leading to an implicit bias that contributes to discrimination based on their appearance. The influence of heterocentrism and ethnocentrism stereotypes women as heterosexual and white. According to that approach, for the media, Semenya's large arms, broad shoulders and strong jawline set her apart from traditional beauty standards in Western Europe and North America, making her more vulnerable to the Association's scrutiny. However, the beauty standards set in this way, as well as the treatment of women athletes, make them more susceptible to being victims of gendered disinformation and digital violence. Then there was the case of Simone Biles<sup>8</sup>, an Olympic gymnast whose success is conditioned as "freakish athleticism", which again indicates that the narratives surrounding black women are fraught with discrimination and stereotyping that has a colonial and racist history. For example, racist descriptions that demean black women's bodies and body parts, including flat noses, large buttocks, or animalistic descriptions have a colonial history and practice. For this to be possible - one must see the root, perhaps the most pivotal and well-documented case that has influenced the culture of how women's bodies are treated, especially black women, which is the case of Sarah Baartman. Sarah Baartman (also known as Saartje, Saartjie or Sara) was a South African woman who was forcibly brought to England and then exhibited at "freak shows" and circuses in England and France in the early 19th century, upon whose body many fictional racist and sexualized stereotypes were created concerning black women. Today's stereotypes are contextualized, today's disinformation exists in already established beauty standards, notions of femininity and gender expectations.

It is important to note that constant physical injuries to their bodies during competitions and trainings, which sports psychologists<sup>9</sup> confirm are dangerous

8 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/05/30/simone-biles-is-the-best-gymnast-in-the-world>

9 [What the dominance of black female athletes means to American culture - ESPN](#)

for their careers, can reveal the deepest self-esteem of women athletes. Recovery is not just a matter of the healing power of the biological body, even the most powerful athletes can lose their sense of self-respect and self-acceptance that is part of their endurance and success. Hence, the media influence over their self-perception and valuation can completely change their image, but also their life path through constant digital violence.

# Methodology

The purpose of this analysis was to identify and analyse gender-based content that was based on transphobia and gendered disinformation in media coverage of the Olympic Games, such as the case of Imane Khelif, as well as the discussions it caused on social media. Through this research, pre-existing narratives and framing strategies used in these discourses were critically analysed, in order to explore the impact of disinformation and gender narratives on public opinion and marginalized communities, particularly women athletes. Regarding the literature review, particular focus was given to research referring to women and sports, transphobia in sports, especially in global events such as the Olympics, the phenomenon of gendered disinformation, including its forms, channels and impacts, as well as discourse analysis methods in media studies. Through this comprehensive methodology, the research aims not only to uncover misinformative gender narratives, but also to provide recommendations for dealing with these harmful discourses in the future.

For the purposes of this analysis, several research questions were asked:

1. What were the dominant themes and narratives surrounding women in sport in the media and social media during the Olympic Games?
2. How is gendered disinformation used to shape public perception of women in sports?
3. Which linguistic and rhetorical strategies are used to propagate transphobia in these contexts?

Through the analysis of news reports published on online media and the comments on social media related to these publications - this analysis included a case study, processed by applying a qualitative analysis of content published between July 26 and August 27, 2024. The research sample consisted of 400 news reports related to this year's Summer Olympics and Imane Khelif, which have been published on online media, as well as 170 comments on published news reports on social media, more precisely on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Gender-based content was analysed through several specific aspects: the use of gender stereotypes, the presence of anti-gender and transphobic narratives, and instances of sexist or hate speech. In addition, the research focused on identifying gendered disinformation and the use of sensationalist language in such content, as well as involving critical scrutiny of journalistic texts and the use of different sources of information.

# Case Study:

## Gender-Based Narratives During The Paris Olympics

### Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in Paris

On July 26, 2024, French President Emmanuel Macron officially opened the Summer Olympics in Paris, marking the 130th anniversary of the International Olympic Committee, the centenary of the Summer and Winter Olympics, and the 235th anniversary of the French Revolution. As stipulated in the Olympic Charter, the ceremony that opened the Olympic Games included an artistic program showcasing the culture of the host country and city, the Parade of Nations and the Olympic Cauldron lighting ceremony.

One of the performances at the opening ceremony quickly became the target of criticism around the world that spread through the media, including the Macedonian media space. The criticisms, which came primarily from church leaders and conservative politicians, referred to the similarity of one of the performances to a biblical scene in Leonardo da Vinci's painting *The Last Supper*, which some called a "mockery" of Christianity.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the focus of the criticism, i.e. mockery, referred to the fact that drag queens, transgender people and other public figures belonging to the LGBTI+ community took part in the performance. The organizers of the event denied the connection, as well as the intention of mocking anyone, explaining that the purpose of the scene was to promote diversity as well as to pay tribute to French gastronomy.

On July 27, several media reported the criticisms of the ceremony made by representatives of different countries. Hence, two news reports cited the statement of the spokeswoman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Maria Zakharova,

<sup>10</sup> [An Olympics Scene Draws Scorn. Did It Really Parody 'The Last Supper'? - The New York Times](#)

who took issue with elements of the ceremony. She also *condemned the LGBT parody of the “Last Supper”, with “apostles presented as transvestites.*<sup>11</sup> Two more reports conveyed the criticism directed by the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who commented on the opening of the Olympic Games by saying that *there is no public morality in the West.*<sup>12</sup> A few days later, six news reports conveyed the statement of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who called the opening of the Olympic Games *a moral insult to Christians and to us.*<sup>13</sup> What these news reports have in common is that they report statements by conservative politicians who hold anti-gender views and advocate and implement policies harmful to the LGBTI+ community.

In the meanwhile, several columns of protopresbyter Ivica Todorov,<sup>14</sup> Biljana Vankovska,<sup>15</sup> Janko Ilkovski<sup>16</sup> and Straso Angelovski<sup>17</sup>, as well as an opinion by the CEO of Kanal 5, Ivan Mirchevski,<sup>18</sup> were published, in which the Olympic Games were called *a parody, decadence and blasphemy.* A media outlet published a column by Irena Cvetkovic in defence of diversity, calling criticism of the ceremony a *visible manifestation of widespread societal unease toward gender diversity.*<sup>19</sup>

On July 28, nine news reports shared the apology from the organizers of the Olympic Games, saying that there was never any intention to show disrespect to any religious group, however, despite the organizers denying any connection of the performance to the Last Supper, reports continued to refer to the symbolism,

11 [Russia: The opening ceremony of the IOC was a failure \(Русија: Церемонијата на отворањето на ЛОИ беше неуспех\)- Екипа](#)

12 [In a two-hour speech, Orbán opposed the policies of the West \(Орбан во двочасовен говор се спротивстави на политиките на Западот\) - Radio Free Europe](#)

13 [Erdogan: The ceremonial opening of the Olympics is a moral insult for Christians and for us \(Ердоган: Свеченото отворање на ОИ е морална навреда за христијаните и за нас\)- Info.mk](#)

14 [PROTOPRESBYTER TODOROV: My position on the opening of the Paris Olympics! \(ПРОТОПРЕЗВИТЕР ТОДОРОВ: Мојот став за отворањето на ОИ во Париз!\) – Denesen.mk](#)

15 [Olympic hypocrisy and/or decadence? \(Олимписко лицемерство и/или декаденција?\) - Nova Makedonija](#)

16 [Parodied Olympics \(Пародирана Олимпијада\) - Republika](#)

17 [ANGELOVSKI'S COLUMN: Riders of the Apocalypse at the Olympic Games in Paris \(Јавачите на апокалипсата на ОИ во Париз\) – Denesen.mk](#)

18 [Blasphemy and decadence - The director of Kanal 5 is looking for Olympic disciplines: Pole riding and long ejection \(Богохулие и декаденција - Директорот на Канал 5 бара олимписки дисциплини: Скок на стап и исфрлување во далечина\) - Expres.mk](#)

19 [Men in dresses, Olympic Games and offended souls \(Мажи во фустани, Олимписки игри и навредени души\) - Prizma](#)

notably through headlines such as **LOI Organizers Apologize for ‘Last Supper’ Parody**<sup>20</sup> and **Olympic organizers apologized for LGBT Last Supper**,<sup>21</sup> which could have served the public as a confirmation of previous suspicions and a justified reason for revolt. Additionally, only four reports conveyed the explanation given by the creative director of opening ceremony, Thomas Jolly, on the idea that the performance symbolizes a pagan entertainment associated with the ancient gods of Olympus and the origin of the Olympic Games, of which only one report informed about the misunderstanding in its headline: **The Olympic “Last Supper” is actually a scene from a painting of the Greek gods**<sup>22</sup>.

On July 29th, news reports were published about French DJ Barbara Butch, with headlines such as **(PHOTO) REACTIONS AREN’T DYING DOWN - This is the French woman who “played” Jesus at the opening of the Olympics: “I am fat, Jewish and a queer lesbian”**<sup>23</sup>, who was part of the performance and was criticized by the public for representing and thus mocking Jesus. More than ten reports conveyed various pieces of information about Butch, describing her as an LGBTI+ activist, while six of the reports conveyed that, after her performance at the Olympic Games, she started getting death threats, insults related to her appearance, which were full of anti-Semitism, homophobia, sexism.<sup>24</sup>

## **Decision of the International Olympic Committee on the participation of two female boxers**

Starting on July 30, and over the next few days, eight news reports were published about the decision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that boxers

20 [SOG organizers apologized for the “Last Supper” parody \(Организаторите на ЛОИ се извинија за пародијата на „Тајната вечера“\) Gol.mk](#)

21 [The organizers of the Olympics apologized for the LGBT last supper \(Организаторите на Олимпијадата се извинија за ЛГБТ тајната вечера\) - SPORTM.mk](#)

22 [The Olympic “Last Supper” is actually a scene from a painting of the Greek gods \(Олимписката „Тајна вечера“ всушност е сцена од слика на грчките богови\) - Nezavisen Vesnik](#)

23 [\(PHOTO\) REACTIONS AREN’T DYING DOWN - This is the French woman who “played” Jesus at the opening of the Olympics: “I am fat, Jewish and a queer lesbian” \(\(ФОТО\) РЕАКЦИИТЕ НЕ СТИВНУВААТ - Ова е Французинката која го „играше“ Исус на отворањето на Олимпијадата: „Јас сум дебела, Еврејка и квир лезбејка“\) » Екран](#)

24 [“They are threatening me!” The girl who participated in the problematic scene at the opening of the Olympics suffers violence, so she filed a lawsuit \(„Ми се закануваат!“ Девојката која учествуваше во проблематичната сцена на отворањето на Олимпијадата трпи насилство, па поднесе тужба\) - Тоска](#)

Iman Khelif of Algeria and Lin Yu-ting from Taiwan<sup>25</sup>, who had previously been disqualified by the International Boxing Association (IBA) from several world championships for failing to meet the gender criteria, are allowed to compete in the Paris Olympics. The reports conveyed this decision of the IOC using sensationalist headlines, like **Horror in Paris: Two men are allowed to “beat” women at the SOG!**<sup>26</sup> and **Olympic scandal: The organizer allowed men to box in the women’s boxing tournament!**<sup>27</sup> At the same time, in various news reports, one can notice the use of different, even contradictory information related to the gender of female boxers, such as that *they failed the gender test*,<sup>28</sup> *changed gender*,<sup>29</sup> *they have XY chromosomes*,<sup>30</sup> *they have a high level of male hormones*.<sup>31</sup> Some reports also say that the women boxers *tried to cheat their competition, as they pretended to be women to compete in that competition*.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, half of the news reports reporting this news used masculine nouns and pronouns for the female boxers.

” Two boxers who were banned from the world championships because they were considered to be biologically male have been given permission to compete in the Olympics as women.<sup>33</sup>

25 [Despite the fact that the text uses the surnames of the already mentioned persons, for boxer Lin Yu-ting, her name - Yu-ting was used, to be in accordance with the usage in the news reports and not to be misleading.](#)

26 [Horror in Paris: Two men are allowed to “beat” women at the SOG! \(Ужас во Париз: На двајца мажи им е дозволено да „тепаат“ жени на ЛОИ!\) – Sport1.mk](#)

27 [Olympic scandal: The organizer allowed men to box in the women’s boxing tournament! \(Олимписки скандал: Организаторот дозволи мажи да боксуваат на женскиот боксерски турнир!\) | Gol.mk](#)

28 [The IOC explained the admission of athletes who previously failed the gender test at a boxing tournament \(МОК го објасни приемот на спортисти кои претходно паднале на тестот за пол на боксерски турнир\) - IPON.mk](#)

29 [“BEATING WOMEN IS NOW AN OLYMPIC SPORT”! Born as men, they changed gender and now box with women \(„ТЕПАЊЕТО ЖЕНИ СЕГА Е ОЛИМПИСКИ СПОРТ“! Родени како мажи, го смениле полот и сега боксуваат со жени\) - plusinfo.mk](#)

30 [At the women’s tournament, two female boxers, who are suspected to be men, were also allowed to perform \(На женскиот турнир добија дозвола да настапат и две боксерки за кои има сомнеж дека се мажи\) - Sport Manija](#)

31 [IOC in defense of the disputed boxers of the LOI: “Their passports say that they are women” \(ИОК во одбрана на спорните боксерки на ЛОИ: „Во пасошите им пишува дека се жени“\) - Sport Manija](#)

32 [Olympic scandal: The organizer allowed men to box in the women’s boxing tournament! \(Олимписки скандал: Организаторот дозволи мажи да боксуваат на женскиот боксерски турнир!\) | Gol.mk](#)

33 [The moment trans boxer Imane Khelif delivers brutal punches to her opponent - after being cleared to compete in the Olympics as a woman despite being rejected from the World Championship \(Моментот кога транс-боксерката Имане Келиф ѝ задава брутални удари на противничката – откако доби дозвола да се бори на Олимпијадата како жена и покрај тоа што беше одбиена од Светското првенство\) | Motika](#)

The next day, only four news reports reported the IOC's reasoning for the decision, that is, that the two female boxers meet the criteria for competing in Paris, but the reported statement was superficial, that is, it focused on the information that *their passports state that they are women*.<sup>34</sup> Only one of the reports quoted part of the IOC's statement that *all athletes participating in the boxing tournament of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 comply with the competition's eligibility and entry regulations, as well as all applicable medical regulations set by rules 1.4 and 3.1 of the Paris 2024 Boxing Unit*.<sup>35</sup> However, in half of these reports, masculine nouns were again used for the boxers.<sup>36</sup>

### Imane Khelif's first boxing match

Khelif's first boxing match took place on August 1, when her opponent, the Italian Angela Carini, stopped the match after only 46 seconds, i.e. surrendered the fight. Meanwhile, the narrative that is the focus of the media is that Carini quit because she has never been hit so hard in her career, which is presented in the media as Carini alluding to Khelif being a man. The match triggered an avalanche of news reports (more than 40), ten of which had the same headlines, such as: **Italian Woman in Tears after a Fight with a "Man"**.<sup>37</sup> Almost all of the reports had sensationalist headlines portraying Khelif as a man, such as **The Professional Public Is Appalled: "The World Let a Man Beat a Woman in Front of Us All..."**,<sup>38</sup> **Scandal: A Female Boxer Stopped the Match because she was Fighting a Biological Man**.<sup>39</sup> **She changed her gender, an Algerian woman**

34 [IOC defends the disputed boxers of the LOI: "Their passports say that they are women \(ИОК во одбрана на спорните боксерки на ЛОИ: „Во пасошите им пишува дека се жени“\)](#) - Sport Manija

35 [They failed in the half tests at the World Cup, but they will compete in the Olympics \(Паднаа на половите тестови на Светско, но ќе се натпреваруваат на Олимпијада\)](#) Off .net.mk

36 [The IOC explained the admission of athletes who previously failed the gender test at a boxing tournament \(МОК го објасни приемот на спортисти кои претходно паднале на тестот за пол на боксерски турнир\)](#) - IPON.mk

37 [\(Video\) Italian woman in tears after a fight with a "man" \(Италијанка во солзи по борбата со „маж“\)](#) - Makfax

38 [The professional public is appalled: "The world allowed a man to beat a woman in front of all of us...\(Стручната јавност е згрозена: „Светот дозволи маж да претепа жена пред очите на сите нас...\)](#) - Екипа

39 [Scandal: A female boxer stopped the match because she fought against a biological man \(Скандал: Боксерка го прекина мечот бидејќи се бореше против биолошки маж\)](#) - Sportski . mk

**hits like a man in the ring,<sup>40</sup> A biological man from Algeria had his first victory at the Olympic Games.<sup>41</sup>**

What is noticeable, both from the headlines and from the text in the reports, is that the media continued to use various disinformation related to Khelif's gender, i.e. they presented her primarily as a man or a transgender person, while in several reports, masculine nouns were again used.<sup>42</sup>

“ *There was a lot of criticism of the decision to allow someone who was born a man who later “transformed” into a woman, to box in the women’s competition.*<sup>43</sup>

A news report with the headline **Gender Issues in Women’s Boxing at the SOG: Controversy over Two Female Boxers over Russian Official’s Telegram Post<sup>44</sup>** published a brief analysis of the case of the two boxers, giving insight into the different eligibility rules and the path of the two boxers to the Olympic Games in Paris. However, despite it only being a suspicion, the report directly linked the disinformation about Khelif's gender to *a statement by a Russian official posted on Telegram last year that claimed the two boxers were transgender, but that there was no evidence or a public statement to show that both athletes identify as transgender and both have competed in women’s competition throughout their careers.*

Two identical reports conveyed the official statement of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee which expected the officials of the Olympic Games not to remain indifferent to the participation of the two boxers in the Olympic Games, while

40 [She changed her gender, an Algerian punches like a man in the ring \(Си го сменила полот Алжирка удира како машко во рингот\) - Republika](#)

41 [A biological man from Algeria recorded his first victory at the Olympic Games: An Italian woman surrendered the match after 45 seconds and burst into tears \(VIDEO\) \(Биолошки маж од Алжир ја забележа првата победа на ОИ: Италијанка го предаде мечот по 45 секунди и пукна во солзи\) - IPON.mk](#)

42 [Angela left the ring and handed over the fight to her rival, whom she insinuates is a man \(Анџела да го напушти рингот и да му ја предаде борбата на својот ривал, за кој инсинуира дека е маж\) - Alon.mk](#)

43 [The Algerians defend the boxer who was born as a man and they expect her to win a medal at the SOG \(Алжирците заставаа во одбрана на боксерката која е родена како маж и од нејзе очекуваат да освои медал на ЛОИ\) - Sport Manija](#)

44 [Gender issues in women’s boxing at the SOG: Controversy for two female boxers due to a Russian official’s post on Telegram \(Родовите прашања во женскиот бокс на ЛОИ: Контроверзии за две боксерки поради објава на руски функционер на Телеграм\) - Trn.mk](#)

writing about Khelif as *the Algerian boxer (woman boxer) who failed the testosterone testing in 2023*.<sup>45</sup> Several reports also shared the statement of conservative Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Maloney and the British writer J. K. Rowling, who, by the way, is known for frequent transphobic statements in public,<sup>46</sup> which condemn Khelif's participation in the women's category. One report cited a statement from Dr. Robert Malone, an anti-vaxxer known for spreading disinformation about Covid-19 vaccines,<sup>47</sup> who said that *the Olympics have become an embarrassment with crazy, mixed-up rules that make no sense. Rules that cater to the whims of biological males, as opposed to the safety of other opponents*.<sup>48</sup>

Four identical reports shared the announcement of Sports Club Usce, sending support for Carini, stating that she is a real champion, for which the club sent her a gold medal.<sup>49</sup>

The next day, August 2nd, news reports came out on various topics related to Khelif. So, some ten reports said something along the lines of: **Khelif is a woman after all – Carini apologized to her: If I meet her, I will hug her!**<sup>50</sup> Carini's apology to Khelif was relayed, considering the attacks on Khelif that were a result of her reaction during the match. In three reports, the announcement of the Algerian Olympic Committee in defence of Khelif and condemnation of *the unethical targeting and tarnishing of the reputation of our prominent athlete*<sup>51</sup> was conveyed. However, most of the reports (more than ten), with headlines such

45 [The Bulgarian Olympic Committee initiates the issue of gender equality at the Olympics \(Бугарскиот олимписки комитет го иницира прашањето за родовата еднаквост на Олимпијадата\) - МИА](#)

46 [For example, J. K. Rowling said that the Hate Crimes Act, which was passed in Scotland, places higher value on the feelings of men performing their idea of femaleness than to the rights and freedoms of actual women and girls. See more at: J.K. Rowling: The law places higher value on men who feel like women than on the rights and freedoms of actual women](#)

47 [For example, Dr. Robert Malone stated that he played a key role in the creation of mRNA vaccines, but during the pandemic he emerged as one of the most controversial voices of the anti-vaccine movement, against mainstream knowledge about the coronavirus and health science. See more at: Science has not confirmed negative effects of vaccines, nor has there been a Third Covid Summit](#)

48 [DR. MALONE ON THE BEATING OF A FEMALE BOXER BY A MALE BOXER: The crazy and cruel reality of the Paris Olympics just got crazier and more deadly \(Д-Р МАЛОУН ЗА ПРЕТЕПУВАЊЕТО НА ЖЕНСКА БОКСЕРКА ОД МАШКИ БОКСЕР: Лудата и сурова реалност на ОИ во Париз штотуку стана полуца и посмртоносна\) - Denesen.mk](#)

49 [The Italian woman everyone is talking about will receive a gold medal from a Serbian club \(Италијанката за која сите зборуваат ќе добие златен медал од српски клуб\) - Makfax](#)

50 [Khelif is a woman after all – Karini apologized to her: If I meet her, I will hug her! \(Келиф, сепак е женско – Карини ѝ се извини: Ако се сретнам со неа, ќе ја прегрнам!\) | Gol.mk](#)

51 [Algerians defend Khelif: The attacks on the boxer are unfounded \(Алжирците во одбрана на Хелиф: Нападите кон боксерката се неосновани\) - Kurir](#)

as **Imane Khelif is just a strong woman after all**<sup>52</sup> and **The Truth About Imane Khelif: She is stronger than “ordinary” women, but she is still... a woman!**<sup>53</sup> share photos of Khelif as a child in which it becomes “obvious” to many that Khelif was born and raised as a girl. In addition, information is being shared that gender reassignment operations are prohibited in Algeria. From the published reports, especially from the headlines, it can be noted that, in addition to sensationalism, journalists are beginning to back away from their condemnation of Khelif, which was present through the sensationalism and gender-insensitive language that was used in the reports in the past period.

Only two reports shared the IOC’s announcement regarding the boxers who were the subject of attacks, which were described as *the victims of a sudden and arbitrary decision by the IBA. Towards the end of the 2023 World Cup, they were suddenly disqualified without due process.*<sup>54</sup>

There was a debate in the media regarding the criteria for qualification in women’s competition, as well as the ways in which gender is determined by different sports organizations. So, a media outlet published a report with a brief analysis of the IOC’s eligibility criteria versus the IBA’s, stating that *the athletes were not subjected to testosterone, but instead were subject to a separate and recognized test,*<sup>55</sup> citing a New York Times analysis, official IOC and IBA announcements, as well as other sources and comments. Another media outlet made a chronological analysis of the events, including statements from the IOC, but also comments by Meloni.<sup>56</sup> Two reports mentioned a meeting between IOC President Thomas Bach and Maloney in connection with the Carini - Khelif boxing match, after which Bach stated that *he agreed with the need to improve scientific methods in assessing the condition of athletes with characteristics such as elevated testosterone levels in women.*<sup>57</sup>

52 [Imane Khelif is just a strong woman after all \(Имане Келиф е сепак само силна жена\) - Libertas](#)

53 [The truth about Imane Khelif: She is stronger than “ordinary” women, but she is still... a woman! \(Вистината за Имане Келиф: Таа е посила од „обичните“ жени, но сепак е... жена!\) - Lokalno](#)

54 [The IOC defends the decision on boxing \(МОК ја брани одлуката за боксот\) - IPON.mk](#)

55 [Who can compete in the women’s competition - a debate after the Italian Carini withdrew from a boxing match at the Olympics \(Кoj може да настапува во женска конкуренција - дебата откако Италијанката Карини се повлече од боксерски меч на Олимпијадата\) - frontline.mk](#)

56 [Dispute about the gender of the Algerian boxer Imane Khelif \(Спор за полот на алжирската боксерка Имане Келиф\) - DW - 08/02/2024](#)

57 [Bach: Scientific methods regarding athlete testing need to be improved \(Бах: Треба да се подобрат научните методи во врска со тестирањето на спортистите\) - MIA](#)

The same media outlet published two reports which convey statements by boxing promoter Eddie Hearn<sup>58</sup> and boxer Jake Paul<sup>59</sup>, who call Khelif's participation a travesty and sickening.

The statement of boxer Amy Broadhurst was shared in four reports, as *the last female boxer to beat a biological male*<sup>60</sup>, saying that Khelif did *not do anything that could be considered "cheating"*. *I think she was born that way and it's out of her control. The fact that she has already been beaten by nine women says it all.*

Three reports were published saying that **Another controversial boxer has her opponent in tears**<sup>61</sup> for Taiwan's Yu-ting, who beat Sitora Turdibekova from Uzbekistan in three rounds. Sitora left the ring with tears in her eyes, without giving a statement to the media. Again, all three reports used different information regarding the boxers' sex, i.e. *gender test* and *sex test*, *chromosomes* and *excess testosterone*, and one report called Khelif and Yu-ting *contestants of "controversial gender"*.<sup>62</sup>

## Placement in the semi-finals for Khelif and Yu-ting

On August 3, the news that Khelif secured a place in the semi-finals was reported in 15 news reports, but some of the headlines were again based on sensationalism, such as: **The Algerian boxer "beat up" a Hungarian woman, secured a medal and cried after the fight (VIDEO)**<sup>63</sup> and **The boxer from Algeria who is accused of being a man secured a medal and broke down in tears after**

58 [Eddie Hearn on the decision to allow persons with male chromosomes to compete with women: The world has gone a little crazy \(Еди Херн за одлуката да им дозволи на личностите со машки хромозоми да се натпреваруваат со жени: Светот малку полуде\) - IPON.mk](#)

59 [Jake Paul: Transgenders vs. Women in Boxing? It is a dangerous parody \(Џејк Пол: Трансродови против жени во боксот? Тоа е опасна пародија\) - IPON.mk](#)

60 [The last woman boxer who defeated the biological man said: I don't think she's cheating\(Се огласи последната боксерка која го победи биолошкиот маж: Мислам дека не мами\) - IPON.mk](#)

61 [Another controversial woman boxer made her opponent cry \(Уште една контроверзна боксерка ја расплака својата противничка\) - Fokus](#)

62 [Disputed gender of another female boxer in Paris - she made it to the quarterfinals \(Спорен полот на уште една боксерка во Париз - еве ја во четвртфиналето\) - Nezavisen Vesnik](#)

63 [The Algerian boxer "beat" a Hungarian woman, secured a medal and cried after the fight \(VIDEO\) \(Алжирската боксерка „претепа“ и Унгарка, обезбеди медал па се расплака по борбата\) - Team](#)

**the match.**<sup>64</sup> However, the same number of reports conveyed the announcement of the IBA that it will award a cash prize to Carini, but different reports conveyed different information regarding the amount of the prize, that is, some said that the prize was in the amount of 50,000 dollars, and others 100,000 dollars. In addition, the statement of the president of the IBA, Umar Kremlev, was reported in several reports, saying that he believes that we are facing the death of female boxing because of the participation of athletes who do not abide by the rules.<sup>65</sup>

IOC President Bach's statement was shared by eight news reports, saying that *the hate speech directed at boxers Imane Khelif of Algeria and Lin Yu-ting from Taiwan is completely unacceptable*<sup>66</sup> and that the boxers are *born as women, who have been raised as women, who have a passport as a woman and have competed for many years as women*<sup>67</sup>

A media outlet published a report on *the decades-long troubled management of the IBA*,<sup>68</sup> linking the IBA's decisions to disqualify Khelif to the Russian mafia. Another media outlet published a report **Why boxing is at risk of being excluded from the 2028 Olympics**<sup>69</sup> in which it is said that *the future of the sport has been uncertain for some time, mainly due to the fact that the IOC refuses to recognize the previous federation that led the sport to the Olympics – the International Boxing Association. Boxing needs to find a new governing body if it wants to remain an Olympic sport.* This conflict, according to the report, stems from some actions that bring into question the organization's credibility, including the attempt to prevent Ukrainian boxers from representing their nation and flag.

64 [The boxer from Algeria who is accused of being a man secured a medal and broke down in tears after the match \(Боксерката од Алжир која е обвинета дека е маж обезбеди медал и се расплака по мечот\) – Fokus](#)

65 [“I don't understand why they killed women's boxing, I couldn't watch Carina's tears” \(„Не разбираам зошто го убија женскиот бокс, не можев да ги гледам солзите на Карина“\) – Sport1.mk](#)

66 [Thomas Bach: Hate speech against the boxer Khelif is unacceptable! \(Томас Бах: Говорот на омраза кон боксерката Келиф е неприфатлив!\) - Lokalno](#)

67 [The IOC said about the controversial woman boxer: “Hate speech is unacceptable!” \(МОК се огласи околу контроверзната боксерка: „Неприфатлив говор на омраза!“\) - Екипа](#)

68 [THE IBA, WHICH DISQUALIFIED BOXERS KHELIF AND YU-TING AND IS BANNED FROM THE OLYMPICS, HAS CONNECTIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN MAFIA AND A PROBLEMATIC HISTORY \(МЕЃУНАРОДНАТА БОКСЕРСКА АСОЦИЈАЦИЈА, КОЈА ГИ ДИСКВАЛИФИКУВАШЕ БОКСЕРКИТЕ ХЕЛИФ И ЈУ-ТИНГ И Е ЗАБРАНЕТА НА ОЛИМПИАДАТА, ИМА ВРСКИ СО РУСКАТА МАФИЈА И ПРОБЛЕМАТИЧНА ИСТОРИЈА\) - SDK](#)

69 [Why boxing is at risk of being excluded of the 2028 Olympics \(Зошто боксот е изложен на ризик да биде исфрлен од Олимпијадата во 2028 година\) - Lokalno](#)

Three reports shared the Facebook post of the Boxing Club - Skopje, which defends Khelif by saying that *just because someone does not fit into the classical frames of female beauty, does not mean that she is not a woman*,<sup>70</sup> and that the exclusion of the boxer happened after the exclusion of the IBA due to financial non-transparency.

After qualifying for the semi-finals, on August 4, for the first time, a statement by Imane Khelif was shared by the media, in which she said that she is a woman and that *this is a victory for all women in the world*.<sup>71</sup> But several media still used words like *controversial*<sup>72</sup> or *female-male*<sup>73</sup> for the boxer.

On August 5, IBA held a press conference that was shared in eight news reports. At the conference, IBA Executive Director Chris Roberts said that the tests of the two boxers that were done in 2022 and 2023 showed that the female boxers have XY chromosomes, while President Kremlev stated that the tests were to determine the level of testosterone, which was high in both female boxers, which is not in accordance with IBA criteria. One report commented that *there was confusion as Kremlev discussed elevated testosterone levels and Roberts talked about chromosome tests*.<sup>74</sup> The IOC's response to the IBA's announcement was shared by just four reports, saying the boxers met the IOC's eligibility criteria and would continue to compete, dismissing the results of the tests conducted by the IBA as arbitrary and illegitimate.<sup>75</sup>

A media outlet shares a video of Monty Python in which a male boxer competes in the ring with a schoolgirl who is overpowered in the ring with every punch,

70 [Boxing Club - Skopje: Just because someone doesn't fit into the classic frames of female beauty, it doesn't mean that she's not a woman \(Боксерски клуб - Скопје: Само затоа што некој не се вклопува во класичните рамки на женската убавина, не значи дека не е жена\) - Brif.mk](#)

71 [Khelif after reaching the semi-finals: This is a victory for all women \(Келиф по пласманот во полуфиналето: Ова е победа за сите жени во светот\) - MIA](#)

72 [Controversial Khelif goes to the semi-finals: This is a victory for all women! \(Контроверзната Хелиф обезбеди полуфинале: Ова е победа за сите жени во светот!\) - SuperSport.mk](#)

73 [Female-male boxer claims to be a woman \(Боксерката жена-маж тврди дека е жена\) - Republika](#)

74 [The head of the International Boxing Federation wants Imane Khelif and other Olympic boxers to prove they were born women \(Шефот на меѓународната боксерска федерација бара Имане Келиф и други олимписки боксерки да докажат дека се родени жени\) | Motika](#)

75 [The IOC said: Khelif and Lin will stay at the Olympics as long as they win \(МОК порача: Келиф и Лин ќе останат на Олимпијадата сè додека победуваат\) 365.com.mk](#)

in a news report headlined **MONTY PYTHON PREDICTED WHAT BOXING WOULD LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE This video is old, but visionary!**<sup>76</sup>

Two media outlets reported that Yu-ting has advanced to the semifinals, with reports citing her opponent's reaction alluding to Yu-ting's presumed chromosomes. Three reports shared a statement from the Russian boxer Azalia Amineva, who said she knocked out Khelif in 2023, and quoting: *I am ready to knock you out again, to get back at you for all the girls!*<sup>77</sup> Three media outlets conveyed the position of philosopher Slavoj Zizek on the **Emancipatory meaning of the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics.**<sup>78</sup>

### Final bout and gold medal

On August 7, it was reported that Khelif qualified for the final bout by seven news reports, and already on August 9 and in the following few days, about 40 reports reported that she won an Olympic gold medal. Most of the media described Khelif as a *controversial* boxer, and some use sensationalist headlines like **the Algerian woman is furious: I am a woman, stop harassing me!**<sup>79</sup> and **The woman with male hormones convincingly won the gold at the Paris Olympics**<sup>80</sup>. At the same time, a large part of the media reported her statements about winning the medal, in which she says that she is *a woman like any other*.<sup>81</sup>

76 [MONTY PYTHON PREDICTED HOW BOXING WOULD LOOK LIKE THE FUTURE This video is old, but visionary! \(И МОНТИ ПАЈТОН ПРЕДВИДЕ КАКО ЌЕ ИЗГЛЕДА БОКСОТ НА ИДНИНАТА Ова видео е старо, ама визионерско!\) – plusinfo.mk](#)

77 [I'm ready to knock you out again , to pay you back for all the girls! \(Подготвена сум пак да те нокаутирам, да ти вратам за сите девојки!\) – Vecer.press](#)

78 [The emancipatory meaning of the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics \(Еманципаторното значење на церемонијата на отворањето на Олимпијадата во Париз\) - Nezavisen Vesnik](#)

79 [The Algerian woman was furious: I am a woman, stop harassing me! \(Алжирката збесна: Јас сум жена, престанете да ме малтретирате!\) – Sport1.mk](#)

80 [The woman with male hormones convincingly won the gold at the Paris Games \(Жената со машки хормони на убедлив начин стигна до златото на Игрите во Париз\) - Sport Manija](#)

81 [“I'M A WOMAN LIKE ANY OTHER WOMAN”, IMANE KHELIF ANSWERED THE ACCUSATIONS AFTER WINNING OLYMPIC GOLD \(„ЈАС СУМ ЖЕНА КАКО И СЕКОЈА ДРУГА ЖЕНА“, ИМАНЕ ХЕЛИФ ОДГОВОРИ НА ОБВИНУВАЊАТА ОТКАКО ОСВОИ ОЛИМПИСКО ЗЛАТО\) - SDK](#)

Only one media outlet during this period published a report containing an interview with an endocrinologist<sup>82</sup> who tried to give an expert explanation for what she calls *a disorder in sexual development*, which she assumes the boxers have. Despite the fact that the endocrinologist believed that, given the various information that is published in the media, it was not possible to determine what exactly the condition is, she still listed several possible conditions based on the publicly available data, which, again, varied in the media and left room for speculation. The endocrinologist gave an expert explanation of the differences in gender development and their possible impact in athletic competing, emphasizing that it is necessary to have debates on the topic, in order to minimize discrimination and enable integration in sports.

During this period, columns were published by Dzvezdan Georgievski and Zarko Trajanoski,<sup>83</sup> in which they wrote about the anti-gender propaganda and succumbing to disinformation related to the Olympic Games and the two women boxers.

On August 11, Yu-ting won a gold medal in her category, which was reported by four media outlets, calling her *a controversial*<sup>84</sup> and *disputable*<sup>85</sup> boxer. On the same day, the news in the media reported that Khelif was filing a lawsuit with the Paris prosecutor's office for cyber harassment, for a *misogynistic, racist and sexist campaign*<sup>86</sup> against her during the Olympic Games. In the following days, this news was supplemented with the information (18 reports) that specific persons were also mentioned in the lawsuit, such as the writer J.K. Rowling and Platform X owner Elon Musk, and *that former US President Donald Trump will be part of*

82 [Who is Imane Khelif? The controversial boxer with disputed gender identity won the OLYMPIC GOLD \(Која е Имане Келиф? Контроверзната боксерка со оспоруван полов идентитет освои ОЛИМПИСКО ЗЛАТО\) - Femina.mk](#)

83 [Russia's new Olympic discipline: "Boxing" with anti-gender disinformation \(Нова олимписка дисциплина на Русија: „Боксување“ со анти-родови дезинформации\) - frontline.mk](#)

84 [After Khelif, another controversial Olympian won gold in Paris, but it is certain that we will not see them at the next Olympic Games \(По Келиф, уште една контроверзна олимпијка освои злато во Париз, но сигурно е дека нема да ги гледаме на следните Олимписки игри\) - SPORTM.mk](#)

85 [Another "controversial" boxer was awarded a gold medal at the Olympic Games \(И втората „спорна“ боксерка се закити со златниот медал на ОИ\) - IPON.mk](#)

86 [The controversial Olympic champion filed a lawsuit due to a "misogynistic, racist and sexist campaign" \(Контроверзната олимписка шампионка поднесе тужба поради „мизогинска, расистичка и сексистичка кампања“\) - Vecer.press](#)

*the investigation.*<sup>87</sup> Three almost identical reports were published simultaneously with the headlines: **Algerian boxer will prove in court whether she is male or female,**<sup>88</sup> **From the top of the pedestal, straight to court: An investigation launched against the controversial boxer Iman Khelif**<sup>89</sup> and **the Court will say whether the Algerian boxer is male or female.**<sup>90</sup> Despite the fact that all three reports have headlines that suggest that a legal proceeding has been initiated against Khelif, the text of the reports does not refer to any proceedings, only information about past events related to her participation in the Olympics.

Khelif 's welcome in Algeria has been reported in eight news reports with headlines such as: **Iman Khelif heroically welcomed in Algeria**<sup>91</sup>, which indicate the support Khelif has from the Algerian people.

On August 13, a news report appeared with a statement by Bulgarian boxer Joanna Nwamerue, in which she says about Khelif: **I claim that he is a man, I have proof!**<sup>92</sup> In the following days, two more reports shared Nwamerue statement that she had several sparring sessions with Khelif and that she had... *a record of everything. I can confirm that this is a man in my opinion. Male strength. Male techniques,*<sup>93</sup> but it is not at all clear from the reports what exactly the evidence is.

On August 15 and over the next few days, around 20 news reports were published with a photo of Khelif and text saying that she *decided to show what she looks like when she is wearing make-up and is dressed up.*<sup>94</sup> Almost all reports had

87 [Imane Halif is suing J.K. Rowling, Elon Musk and all those who spread hatred against her \(Имане Хелиф ги тужи Џ.К. Роулинг, Илон Маск и сите кои ширеа омраза против неа\) - Trn.mk](#)

88 [The Algerian boxer will prove in court whether she is male or female \(Алжирската боксерка на суд ќе докажува дали е машко или женско\) - Republika](#)

89 [From the top of the pedestal, directly to the court: An investigation has been launched against the controversial boxer Imane Khelif \(Од врвот на пиедесталот, директно на суд: Поведена е истрага против контроверзната боксерка Имане Келиф\) - Maski Magazin](#)

90 [The court will say whether the Algerian boxer is male or female \(Судот ќе каже дали алжирската боксерка е машко или женско\) - Pressing TV](#)

91 [Imane Khelif heroically welcomed in Algeria: All the false accusations give a special charm to this gold medal \(Имане Келиф херојски дочекана во Алжир: Сите лажни обвинувања даваат посебен шарм на овој златен медал\) - Sport Manija](#)

92 [I claim he is a man, I have proof! \(Тврдам дека е маж, имам доказ!\) - Vecer.press](#)

93 [A Bulgarian woman claims that the boxer from Algeria is a man \(PHOTO\) \(Бугарка тврди дека боксерката од Алжир е боксер\) - Pressing TV](#)

94 [Boxer Imane Khelif in a never-before-seen edition, with make-up and all dressed up \(Нашминката и дотерана боксерка Имане Келиф во досега невидено издание\) \(Photo\) - Sport Manija](#)

sensationalist headlines, using words like *shocking, unprecedented, incredible, unexpected, controversial*, etc. Hence, there are headlines like: **Boxer Imane Khelif in a never-before-seen edition, dressed up and wearing make-up,**<sup>95</sup> **The male-female boxer put on make-up to show that she is a girl,**<sup>96</sup> **The most contested female boxer in a different light – wearing make-up and clothes like a lady!,**<sup>97</sup> **Boxer Imane Khelif showed her feminine side.**<sup>98</sup> The main narrative in these reports was based on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes about women and femininity, that is, that with make-up and clothes one “becomes” that is, proves that one is a woman.

Only one media outlet published a report on August 17 that included Khelif’s statement about the fear she felt as a result of the public backlash during the Olympics.<sup>99</sup>

On August 19, four news reports shared the IOC’s announcement that there were more than 8,500 abusive posts against athletes on social media during the Olympics, with *Khelif being particularly exposed to significant hostility on social media,*<sup>100</sup> while one news report shared the misinformation that *over 8,500 offensive messages were sent to Olympic champion Imane Khelif.*<sup>101</sup>

## Analysis of social media comments

According to the analysis of the comments, it is evident that the media captions only created fertile ground for citizens to reproduce hate speech, confirming the gendered disinformation in their comments. Comments on social media

95 [Boxer Imane Khelif in a never-before-seen edition, with make-up and all dressed up \(Нашминката и дотерана боксерка Имане Келиф во досега невидено издание\) \(Photo\) – Sport Manija](#)

96 [Male-female boxer wears make-up to show she’s a girl \(Боксерот машко-женско се нашминка за да покаже дека е девојка\) - Pressing TV](#)

97 [PHOTO: The most contested female boxer in a different light – makeup and clothes like a lady! \(Најоспоруваната боксерка во поинакво издание – шминка и облека како дама!\) | Gol.mk](#)

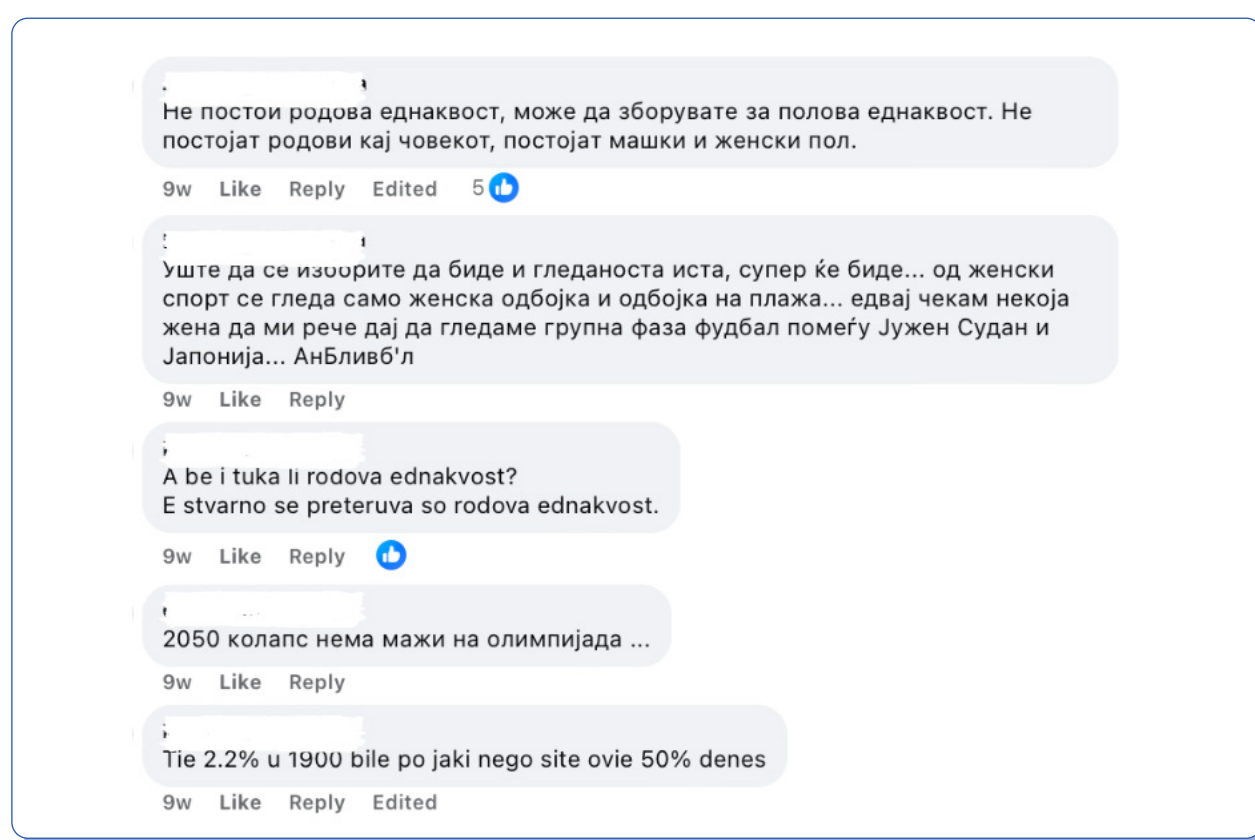
98 [Boxer Imane Khelif showed her feminine side \(Боксерката Иман Хелиф ја покажа женствената страна на личноста\) - Nezavisen Vesnik](#)

99 [Khelif: I can’t describe the fear I felt during the SOG \(Келиф: Не можам да го опишам стравот што го чувствував за време на ЛОИ\) – Sport Manija](#)

100 [IOC: Over 8,500 abusive posts against athletes on social media during Paris Olympics \(МОК: Над 8.500 навредливи објави против спортисти на социјалните мрежи за време на Игрите во Париз\) - Kurir](#)

101 [Olympic champion Imane Khelif got over 8,500 offensive messages \(Олимписката шампионка Имане Келиф добила над 8.500 навредливи пораки\) - SuperSport.mk](#)

predominantly showed sexist insults, objectification of the female body, especially of women boxers, gender insensitive language and linking gender equality to social problems. Through the stereotyping of the female body, as well as direct insults, intolerance grows, but also gender-based violence is potentially normalised. The narratives that reflect the media reports contribute to the dehumanization of, in this case, Khelif, but also future athletes who go beyond the norms and expectations of female bodies and physical appearance. Such media narratives have a wider social impact. When the media systematically stereotype women, it not only affects the way women athletes are viewed, but also reinforces deep-rooted gender inequalities in society. This creates a cycle in which the public is exposed to negative messages, which reinforces already existing discriminatory attitudes towards women.



**Text in image:**

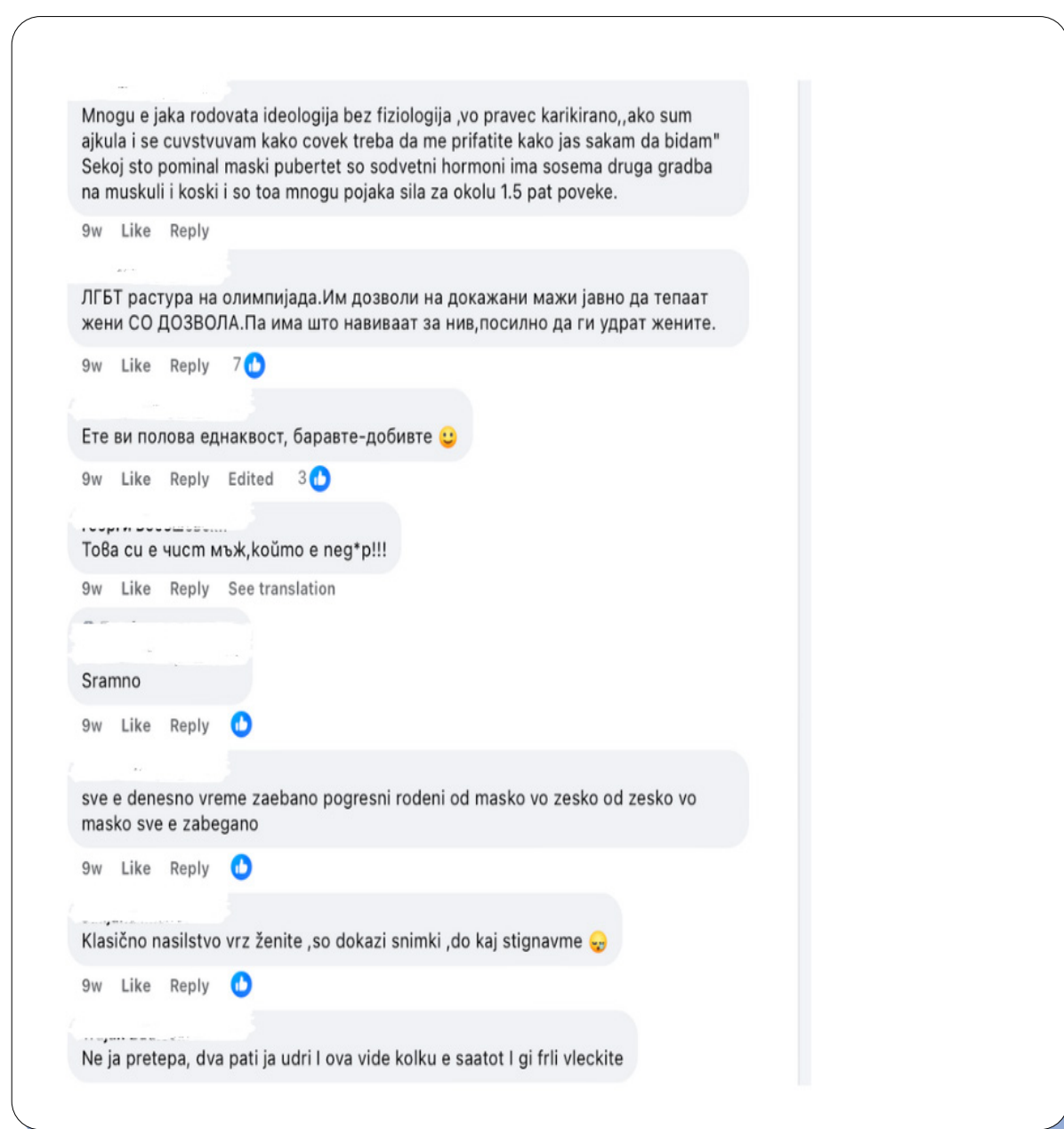
*There is no gender equality, you can speak of equality of the sexes. There is no gender in humans, only male and female sex.*

*It would be great if you can make them equally popular... In women's sports, only women's volleyball and beach volleyball are popular. I can hardly wait for a woman to say to me: Let's watch group stage bracket football between South Sudan and Japan... Unbelievable*

*Gender equality here, too? There's really too much of this gender equality talk.*

*The 2.2% in 1900 were stronger than the 50% today*

Compared to previous reports of gendered disinformation, where hate speech mainly appeared in the comments on social media posts, in this case, news reports became the primary source. This represents a significant change, as narratives containing gender stereotypes and disinformation now emanate directly from editors and the media or newsrooms, which place the topic in public discourse. This approach amplifies disinformation even more, as these narratives, transmitted by the media, then spill over onto social media and become the basis for discussions among citizens. In addition, what was interesting compared to previous reports, this time violence against women was positioned as a concern through the comments, while in other reports we usually encountered the normalization of violence against women through relativization.



**Text in image:**

*Gender ideology without the physiology is very interesting, to give a silly example: “If I’m a shark and I feel like a human, you should accept me as I want to be”. Anyone who went through male puberty with male hormones has a specific muscular and skeletal build and is much stronger, 1,5 times stronger.*

*LGBT are taking the Olympics by storm. They let proven men publicly beat up women WITH PERMISSION. There are those who root for them, rooting for them to hit the women even stronger.*

*That’s sex equality for you. You asked for it, you got it.*

*This is a man through and through, and he’s gay!!!*

*Shameful*

*Everything is f\*\*\*ed up today, people are born the wrong way, from man to woman, from woman to man, they’ve all lost their minds.*

*Classic violence against women, with evidence, video, what has the world come to*

*It wasn’t a beating; it was two hits and the woman realized what’s going on and threw her slippers in.*

The way the media present the issue increases the weight and prevalence of anti-gender narratives, such as the use of terms such as “gender ideology,” which intentionally create confusion and fear among the public. This legitimizes discriminatory attitudes and strengthens resistance to gender equality. This process shows how important it is for the media to be aware of their role in the formation of public opinion, because they not only reflect it, but also actively create and reinforce the public discourse on gender issues.



**Text in image:**

*These people should be legally declared as psychologically deranged and they should be locked up in treatment facilities for life-long care*

*Twisted deranged Olympic satanic games*

*Idiocy!*

*Oh, there is no end to this non-sense*

*Such scum! You've found new ways to belittle, harass and abuse women, and it's legal, you won't be held accountable, you'll even celebrate and get medals!!! Get lost!! May God smite you, deceivers!!!*

*The Olympics aren't interesting anymore, they've been turned into a circus.*

*Pitiful*

*The worst*

The objectification of women's bodies through social media diminishes women's sporting achievements and reduces them to their physical appearance, leading to reduced visibility and appreciation of women in sports.

Mnogu e jaka rodovata ideologija bez fiziologija ,vo pravec karikirano,,ako sum ajkula i se cuvstvuvam kako covek treba da me prifatite kako jas sakam da bidam" Sekoj sto pominal maski pubertet so sodvetni hormoni ima sosema druga gradba na muskuli i koski i so toa mnogu pojaka sila za okolu 1.5 pat poveke.

„Предности“ од родовата идеологија и на Олимписките игри како никогаш досега ,лажни жени ги победија жените, т.е. ги истепаа. Познато е жените се природно конституциски послаби од мажите во сила...

### Text in image:

*Gender ideology without the physiology is very interesting, to give a silly example: “If I’m a shark and I feel like a human, you should accept me as I want to be”. Anyone who went through male puberty with male hormones has a specific muscular and skeletal build and is much stronger, 1,5 times stronger.*

*The “advantages” of the gender ideology and of the Olympics, like never before, is that fake women have defeated women, i.e., beat them up. It is known that women have a weaker build than men...*

The state of social media fuels the myth that women cannot be true athletes or that their achievements are less significant compared to men's. Such negative narratives can have lasting psychological consequences on women athletes, who are subjected to constant pressure to conform to socially constructed standards of beauty and femininity. Instead of focusing on their talents and abilities, they often have to deal with insults and criticism about their appearance. It is therefore important to note that such media coverage can discourage many young girls from participating in sports, as they see the discrimination and objectification of women. The decline in women's participation in sport reinforces segregation and perpetuates gender inequality in this important social sphere.

# Final Discussion

The analysis of a sample of 400 news reports with gender-based content that were published during the Summer Olympics in Paris indicated a **high level of sensationalism, especially in the headlines of the reports**. As indicated in the conclusions of previous analyses of gender-based content in the media, the frequent use of sensationalist language, especially in headlines, can contribute to superficial drawing of conclusions by the audience. Bearing in mind that in several cases, **the headlines of the reports did not correspond to the essence of the news report itself, the possibility of spreading gendered disinformation increases, which can be the basis for further spreading of gender-based hate speech and transphobia**.

The headlines, but also the text of the reports **often contain arbitrary information and inconsistent and/or inappropriate terminology is used**, so, for example, there are cases where in the same report, different terms are used to indicate the assumed gender ineligibility of the boxers. This indicates that **a large number of journalists do not investigate the problem they are writing about at all, thus risking the spread of disinformation in the media**. In addition, **the inadequate translation of reports from foreign media** also contributes to this, which can be seen in the differences of statements from different speakers in different reports.

Furthermore, this analysis notes that the main disinformation **comes precisely from the media and the authors**, while the same narratives already started by the media are only shared on social media.

**Factual and somewhat dry statements** are conveyed in the reports, which are mostly translated from reports of foreign media, while **the sources from where the news is taken are rarely cited**, and the author of the news report is usually not named. At the same time, **there is no verification of the claims that are transmitted, nor is there a critical review** of the conveyed statements.

A very **small number of media outlets publish more detailed analyses** of the subject. But even in cases where these analyses are published, again different terms are mixed up, i.e., inconsistent terminology is used.

There is **inconsistent use of gender-sensitive language** in news reports. This is particularly evident through the frequent use of masculine nouns and pronouns for the two women boxers, and in some accounts the genders are mixed up in the same text.

In the news reports, we can once again notice **the perpetuation of gender stereotypes**. The reports confirm the stereotypes of what “woman” and “femininity” means, insinuating that with appropriate makeup and clothes, one “becomes” that is, proves that one is a woman. In this way, the media objectify women, giving them “permission” to be women only if they meet patriarchal social expectations of their physical appearance. In doing so, **they contribute to the continued objectification and discrimination of the female body in sports**, which, although it serves as the main instrument in sports, is still subject to social pressure on how it should look and behave, regardless of how that pressure may affect comfort, confidence and performance.

Bearing in mind that the analysis covered a topic that is particularly sensitive, but also current in the past few years, with the rise of anti-gender movements in the country and the world, the news reports still show **a low level of awareness about the principles of diversity and non-discrimination, as well as the possible negative consequences of the way of reporting on sensitive topics**. At the same time, the reports allow **more space to negative comments and statements** by various public figures who are known for their conservative and transphobic views.

# Concluding Remarks

Based on the analysis of gender-based content in the news reports that were published during the Summer Olympics in Paris, we can point to several key observations:

- **Sensationalist language in the headlines of news reports is still widely used by journalists**, who must be careful in formulating the headlines. When it comes to a sensitive topic, this can affect superficial drawing of conclusions by the audience and the spread of disinformation, especially in cases where the headlines do not correspond to the essence of the news report itself;
- **The use of inconsistent and/or inappropriate terminology, as well as the inappropriate translation of reports from foreign media**, can contribute to the spread of disinformation in the media. That is why it is necessary for journalists to (better) investigate the problem they write about and the terminology they use in their reports;
- **Media workers and journalists should undergo training on gender sensitivity, recognizing and dealing with gender stereotypes and disinformation**. These trainings will help them report in a way that does not legitimize discriminatory attitudes and encourage them to create content that promotes gender equality.
- By not adhering to the ethical reporting guidelines of online media, **the media are not sufficiently transparent regarding the authorship of news reports, as well as the citing of sources in news reports**. In addition, **the reports do not verify the claims that are conveyed, nor do they critically review the conveyed statements**. In that regard, it is necessary for the media to adhere to the guidelines for ethical reporting, by verifying the information, naming authors and/or citing sources, so that they can be verified by the audience, as well as for taking on accountability for what is written;
- If the media adhere to ethical reporting, they will also be careful about the space they create for the exchange of opinions and discussion. That is why **it is**

**recommended to carefully moderate discussions by ensuring that the discussions are appropriate, or rather, properly address hate speech and sexist comments on their social media profiles.** Therefore, the media and social networking platforms should establish strict fact-checking mechanisms to prevent the spread of disinformation and hate speech. Those who engage in systematic disinformation should face limited access to the public, through the removal of hate speech content.

- **Detailed analyses of the topics covered in news reports are largely missing, while media space is left for conservative and transphobic attitudes of various public figures.** Hence, it is necessary to take into account expert views and opinions of persons who are relevant to the area, in order to reduce the risk of spreading disinformation, and thus gender-based hate speech and transphobia;
- **It is necessary for journalists to use gender-sensitive language in news reports,** especially through the consistent use of feminatives;
- **There is a continuous perpetuation of gender stereotypes in the reports,** which contributes to the continuous objectification and discrimination of women in general and women athletes. The media should avoid using gender stereotyping and portraying women exclusively through their physical appearance, as well as create content to reduce gender stereotyping and prevent gender-based hate speech in the media space;
- **It is necessary to work on raising the low level of awareness about the principles of diversity and non-discrimination in news reports,** as well as about the possible negative consequences of the way of reporting on sensitive topics, primarily through continuous education of journalists on these topics and further creating content that will raise public awareness of these topics.

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