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**To the members of the Selection Panel for
the “Vigdís Prize for Women’s
Empowerment” of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Council of Europe**

Berlin, 18.06.2026
Bezug: Objection

Anlagen:

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**Objection to the nomination of the so-called “European Citizens’
Initiative My Voice, My Choice: For Access to Safe Abortions”
for the 2026 edition of the “Vigdís Prize for Women’s
Empowerment” of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of
Europe**

Dear Mr. Biedron,
dear Ms. Konstatzky,
dear Ms. Stienen,
dear Ms. Árnadóttir,
dear Ms. Bjarnadóttir,
dear Mr. Hilmarsson,

for the 2026 edition of the Vigdís Prize for Women’s Empowerment, awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Government of Iceland, the “European Citizens’ Initiative My Voice, My Choice: for safe and accessible abortion” has now been shortlisted as a possible laureate.

However, “My Voice, My Choice: for safe and accessible abortion” is not a citizens’ initiative in the ordinary sense of the term.

For this reason, I respectfully ask you not to consider it further and to remove it from the shortlist of candidates for the Vigdís Prize.

It is, in reality, a formal instrument placed at the beginning of a European Union legislative process, provided for under Article 11(4) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 24 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The objective of this legislative attempt was to obtain, through a new specific EU budget line, financial resources intended to facilitate cross-border access to abortion.



In February 2026, the European Commission rejected this request. It referred instead to the possibility for Member States to use, on a voluntary basis and in accordance with their national law, certain already existing instruments, particularly the European Social Fund Plus.

It must therefore be acknowledged that the very core of this initiative was not accepted. It remains deeply contested, including on the question of whether the European Union has competence in this field at all. Public health policy is indeed a matter for the Member States. Consequently, an initiative of such a divisive nature should not today be honoured by the Vigdís Prize, whose memory ought to recognise what unites people for the promotion of women and for the wider service of the common good.

It is not necessary to take a position on abortion itself to observe that the credibility of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and of the Vigdís Prize, would be weakened by such a choice. To give retrospective symbolic recognition to a disputed campaign within the institutional architecture of the European Union, whose central demand was not taken up, would not honour the Parliamentary Assembly. The Vigdís Prize, which seeks to honour the cause of women and the promotion of the common good, should not be awarded to an initiative which divides women when it is intended to serve them. For millions of European women, the true promotion of women lies in the protection and practical support of life from conception to natural death, in concrete support for mothers, in reconciling family life and professional life, and in recognising the social and economic value of domestic and family work.

The sensitivity of this question has also been recalled by the Court of Justice of the European Union. In its *Brüstle* judgment of 2011, in Case C-34/10, which concerned patent law rather than an ethical question in the strict sense, the Grand Chamber of the Court nevertheless refused to treat the human embryo as a mere ordinary object of economic commerce: “The human being is a human being from fertilisation.”

The Vigdís Prize bears the name of a woman who united her country rather than divided it. Across Europe and beyond, there are many initiatives which provide concrete support to women and mothers of all ages, strengthen social cohesion and serve the common good. This Prize should remain where Vigdís Finnbogadóttir would most probably have wished it to remain, above ideological divisions.



For this reason, I respectfully ask you not to proceed with the nomination of “My Voice, My Choice: for safe and accessible abortion”, and to remove it from the shortlist of candidates for the Prize.

This would not be a sign of weakness but would strengthen the credibility of the Vigdís Prize.

I look forward to your reply, which I sincerely hope will be favourable.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Malte Kaufmann

Member of the German Bundestag

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Malte Kaufmann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.