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GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

A VITAL ASSET IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TRANSVERSAL PROGRAMME ON GENDER EQUALITY– GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEURS

Information note prepared by the Gender Equality Division,
Gender Equality and Human Dignity Department, DGI

I. THE TRANSVERSAL PROGRAMME: CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUALITY BY INTEGRATING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S ACTIVITIES

1. Since early 2012, the Council of Europe has introduced the transversal gender equality programme launched by the Secretary General to improve the visibility and impact of the Council's gender equality activities in member states and within the organisation itself.

2. The aim of the programme is to move from legal equality to real equality, as member states were called upon to do by the Committee of Ministers in its Declaration "Making Gender Equality a Reality". In order to do so it is necessary to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy at legislative and political level in member states and in Council of Europe activities. The programme therefore seeks to mobilise all of the Council of Europe's bodies, in particular intergovernmental structures, and its external partners.

3. Several interdependent structures are responsible for implementing the programme to achieve this aim, i.e.

- A Gender Equality Commission (GEC), composed of 16 members proposed by member states and elected by the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH);
- Gender Equality Rapporteurs, appointed from among the members of the steering committees and other intergovernmental structures of the Council of Europe;
- A network of national focal points in each member state;
- An inter-secretariat gender equality action group;
- Gender equality will also be a focus of the Committee of Ministers, in particular through the role of the thematic co-ordinator and the incorporation of gender equality issues in the priorities of the chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers.

4. The Gender Equality and Violence against Women Division within the Gender Equality and Human Dignity Department, DGI, will provide the secretariat for the programme.

II – THE ROLE OF GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEURS

5. Most, if not all, Council of Europe committees can contribute to gender equality in member states by ensuring that their activities integrate a gender perspective. This does not entail additional tasks or mean that it is necessary to embark on new activities. It does, however, require a change of approach. Essentially, committees will be required to consider proposals for new activities from a gender perspective before finalising them and to adapt or formulate activities as a result of such an analysis i.e. by taking account of the likely impact of a proposed activity on both women and men.

6. A few committees were already explicitly required to integrate a gender perspective into their activities. The majority of intergovernmental structures are now required, in their current terms of reference, to appoint a gender equality rapporteur from amongst their members. Of course, other committees and structures are free to appoint a gender equality rapporteur should they so wish and are encouraged to do so. In principal, convention committees should also be able to appoint a gender equality rapporteur within the framework of their internal rules. To date all the intergovernmental structures invited to appoint a rapporteur have done so (see list in Appendix).

7. The person appointed as gender equality rapporteur will not be required to write reports, but will be invited, along with the committee secretary, to liaise with the GEC (see below) and will be in contact with gender equality rapporteurs from other committees. This role is therefore essential in ensuring that everyone understands the gender mainstreaming strategy in the same way and in providing the impetus needed for its appropriate and effective application.

8. With this in mind, gender equality rapporteurs should ensure that a gender perspective is properly integrated during the programming process of their respective committees (i.e. the process of identifying priorities, preparing activity proposals, setting-up and implementing the activities, and evaluating the results). In the long term the person appointed as the committee's gender equality rapporteur should not be expected to do this alone. It should become the responsibility of the committee as a whole.

9. It is also important that the rapporteur is a member of the Bureau of his or her committee. Given the drop in the number of meetings, the committees have increasingly heavy agendas, and as a result the Bureaux play an increasingly important role in identifying, preparing and examining activities and in assessing their implementation. It is vital for rapporteurs to be able to intervene as soon as the Bureau begins preparing the programme of activities as this would lend more weight to their role. It is therefore strongly recommended that rapporteurs be appointed from among the Bureau members – or at least to involve them closely in the Bureau's discussions on the programme of activities.

III – CREATING A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH GENDER EQUALITY RAPPOREURS

10. The GEC is required to maintain close links with all partners of the transversal programme and to create opportunities to communicate with the other elements, in particular gender equality rapporteurs, and to support their work. Regular exchanges of views must be held with the gender equality rapporteurs to ensure that gender mainstreaming is taken into account within their committee on a long-term basis, improve co-operation with the different partners and, where appropriate, devise joint activities.

11. At its first meeting on 6-8 June 2012, the GEC already discussed a number of guidelines at an initial exchange of views with two gender equality rapporteurs, Ms Elisabetta Simeoni, Equality Rapporteur for the Pompidou Group, and Ms Nadejda Harizanova, Equality Rapporteur for the Committee of Experts on the rights of people with disabilities (CS RDP). It emerged from these discussions that the GEC should help the rapporteurs to carry out their task, in particular by giving them examples of gender impact or of methods for incorporating gender issues in policies. The establishment of pairs (comprising a member of the GEC and a rapporteur) might facilitate these activities by making it possible for members of the GEC who are experienced in a particular field dealt with by the committee to work in tandem with the rapporteur concerned. Members of the GEC have therefore been invited to inform the Secretariat of their particular field of expertise.

12. When specialised ministerial conferences are being organised, the Chair of the GEC could also send a message to the equality rapporteurs to remind them of the need to take account of gender equality in the declarations and action plans to be adopted by the ministers and heads of delegation, and thus draw everyone's attention to the need for gender mainstreaming in their forthcoming activities.

13. The equality rapporteurs of the different committees should also communicate with one another, exchange views on good practices, difficulties encountered and ways of overcoming them and the results obtained. All of the information gathered in this way, including that concerning the partnership between members of the GEC and the rapporteurs, could be very useful in drafting a practical handbook for current and future rapporteurs.

14. It is also important to ensure that the role of the rapporteur is preserved within each committee, as a change of expert all too often leads to the abandonment of his or her area of competence. It is therefore important that the GEC not only assist the rapporteurs themselves but also meet the committee as a whole at regular intervals to arouse the interest of its members, improve their knowledge of gender mainstreaming and encourage them to adhere to the strategy, so that if a rapporteur resigns, his or her role can be immediately taken over by another member of the committee.

15. In this context, the national focal points should not be excluded from this internal process but, on the contrary, should be closely associated so that they can pass on information at national level and ensure that it reaches all those concerned. This would encourage teamwork at national level and help member states to contribute to and benefit from the Council of Europe's work.

16. The first meeting of the GEC and the Gender Equality Rapporteurs will be held in Strasbourg on 16 November 2012 to discuss the proposals that have been made for identifying more precisely the role of the rapporteurs, the working methods and the methods of intervention and co-operation.

17. Finally, to assist the implementation of the Council of Europe transversal programme on gender equality, a special gender mainstreaming training programme has been put in place to ensure that all committee secretaries have the necessary knowledge and skills to assist the gender equality rapporteur and the committee as a whole in integrating a gender perspective into their programme of activities.

18. Committees, their secretaries and rapporteurs, should not hesitate to contact the Gender Equality Division of the DGI Secretariat for any help, advice or information they might need.

APPENDIX
Intergovernmental Committees
Gender Equality Rapporteurs

	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Rapporteur</i>	<i>Gender</i>
CDDH	Steering Committee for Human Rights	Alfonso DE SALAS	Philippe WERY	Male
DH-GDR	Committee of Experts on the Reform of the Court	David MILNER	Jakub WOLASIEWICZ	Male
DH-BIO	Committee on Bioethics	Laurence LWOFF	Beatrice IOAN	Female
CODEXTER	Committee of Experts on Terrorism	Carlo CHIAROMONTE	Tanja KIKEREKOVA	Female
CAHDI	Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law	-	-	-
CDPC	European Committee on Crime Problems	Carlo CHIAROMONTE	Antonella SAMPO-COUMA	Female
PC-OC	Committee of Experts on the Operation of European Conventions on Co-operation in Criminal Matters	Carlo CHIAROMONTE	Antonella SAMPO-COUMA	Female
PC-CP	Council for Penological Co-operation	Carlo CHIAROMONTE	Alina BARBU	Female
CDCJ	European Committee on Legal Co-operation	Simon TONELLI	Zuzana FIŠEROVÁ	Female
CCPE	Consultative Council of European Prosecutors	Muriel DECOT	Raija TOIVIANEN	Female

	Committee	Secretary	Rapporteur	Gender
CCJE	Consultative Council of European Judges	Muriel DUCOT	Bart Van LIEROP	Male
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice	Stéphane LEYENBERGER	Gabor SZEPLAKI-NAGY	Male
CDMSI	Steering Committee on Media and Information Society	Jan MALINOWSKI	Christina LAMPROU	Female
CDPPE	Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice	Vilano QIRIAZI	Bernard WICHT	Male
CDCPP	Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape	Mechthilde FUHRER	Brigitte MYLE	Female
CAHAMA	Ad hoc European Committee for the World Anti-Doping Agency	Pierre MASSON	Graziela VAJIALA	Female
CDLR	European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy	Siobhan MONTGOMERY	Edwin LEFEBRE Gabrielle METZ	Male Female
CDEJ	European Steering Committee for Youth	André-Jacques DODIN	-	
CCJ	Advisory Council on Youth	André-Jacques DODIN	-	Female
CMJ	Joint Council on Youth (ie composed of member of CDEJ and CCJ)	André-Jacques DODIN	Ilaria ESPOSITO	Female
CDCS	European Committee for Social Cohesion	Thorsten AFFLERBACH	Sina BUGEJA	Female

	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Rapporteur</i>	<i>Gender</i>
CS-RPD	Committee of Experts on the rights of people with disabilities	Thorsten AFFLERBACH Irena KOWALCZYK	Nadezhda HARIZANOVA	Female
CAHROM	Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma issues	-	-	-
Pompidou Group	Partical Agreement Pompidou Group (Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs)	Patrick PENNINCKX	Elisabetta SIMEONI	Female
EPAS	Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport	Sonia PARAYRE	Krisztina GÖNTÉR	Female
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption	Anna MYERS	Helena LISUCHOVA	Female