

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 22 October 2013

GEC (2013)7

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION  
(GEC)**

---

**MEDIA AND THE IMAGE OF WOMEN**

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE AMSTERDAM CONFERENCE**

## Background

Combating gender stereotyping in and through the media has been in the focus of the Council of Europe in 2013. Highlights in this area include:

1. The organisation of a very well-attended and highly appraised Conference on "Media and the Image of Women"<sup>1</sup> gathering representatives of governments, civil society, the media, advertising agencies, research institutions as well as other regional and international organisations. The need to strengthen co-operation amongst these stakeholders was stressed, in particular: *"the paramount importance of developing alliances, networks and collaboration among media organisations, countries, professional organisations and civil society to tackle inequity and stereotyping..."*<sup>2</sup>.
2. The adoption of the Recommendation on "Gender Equality and Media" by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers. The Recommendation provides a comprehensive set of guidelines to member states and media organisations to support the implementation of measures to ensure gender equality in media.
3. Last but not least, the draft Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017<sup>3</sup> recognises that gender stereotyping presents a serious obstacle to the achievement of real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination. Combating gender stereotypes and sexism is one of its five strategic objectives.

Discussions, findings, recommendations and measures emanating from all the above, provide fertile ground for further action in this area within the Council of Europe's Transversal Programme on Gender Equality. The GEC is invited to consider and agree on future activities and concrete follow-up action including<sup>4</sup>:

### 1. Raising awareness on existing standards and on gender equality in/through the media

#### i. Handbook on the implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Media.

The Council of Europe has developed over the years a solid framework and set of standards on gender equality and media - the [Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Gender Equality and Media](#) is the most recent contribution to this theme. The Recommendation provides specific guidelines and suggests action for member states and media sector to ensure gender equality and to combat stereotyping. It is now suggested to prepare a

---

<sup>1</sup> Organised in co-operation with the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Amsterdam 4-5 July 2013.

<sup>2</sup> See K. Sarikakis, "Conclusions and recommendations", Report of the 1st Conference of the Council of Europe Network of National Focal Points on Gender Equality on Media and the image of women.

<sup>3</sup> The Draft Strategy is currently under discussion and is expected to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers before the end of 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Please note that proposed activities are by no means exhaustive. This document will be updated and further completed after discussion by the GEC and in view of the table of activities related to the CoE (draft) strategy on gender equality indicating action by other CoE sectors.

handbook/guidebook translating into specific action the expectations and commitments resulting from this Recommendation illustrating each provision with positive practical examples. This would no doubt support the wide dissemination of this text, making it more accessible and relevant, in particular to media organisations.

## **ii. Promotion of other Council of Europe publications and resources**

Council of Europe standards and resources remain relatively unknown to key partners. Additional efforts will be made to facilitate access by Gender Equality National Focal Points, media networks, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders to Council of Europe publications and studies (such as the [Handbook](#) for journalists) and to on-line resources on media, diversity and stereotyping resulting from Council of Europe campaigns: "[Speak out against discrimination campaign](#)" and the "[No Hate Speech Movement](#)" and programmes such as "[Media against racism in sport](#)"<sup>5</sup>.

## **iii. Publication of Amsterdam findings and recommendations**

Participants at the Amsterdam Conference appreciated the quality of the presentations and the debates. They underlined the interest in making them widely available to encourage follow-up to the Conference recommendations. The proceedings of the Amsterdam Conference will be published on-line. A summary including the findings and recommendations will be printed and also be made available on-line. An additional dissemination effort will aim at drawing key stakeholders' attention to these documents.

## **2. Exchange of good practices**

### **i. Collection and publication of good practices on gender equality and media**

All participants at the Conference in Amsterdam, and in particular the National Focal Points, provided very positive feedback with regard to the practices presented during the Conference as a tangible outcome which they could take on board at domestic level. To facilitate access to good practices and disseminate them more widely, a collection of such good practices in relation to the themes discussed during the Conference<sup>6</sup> can be elaborated and made available to member states to support them in their activities and action to combat gender stereotypes in the media. The collection will among other things complement work carried out by the European Institute on Gender Equality on [good practices on women and the media](#) with examples from Council of Europe member states that are not members of the European Union.

---

<sup>5</sup> MARS joint programme between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

<sup>6</sup> Stereotyping and sexism, leadership and women in the media, gender equality and freedom of expression, the role of new technology and new media.

## **ii. Identification and sharing of good practices among media regulatory bodies**

Discussions and conclusions of the Amsterdam Conference looked at ways to further develop and encourage a policy mix of regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation to combat gender stereotypes in the media. The Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Gender Equality and Media also targets regulatory bodies. Co-operation should be explored with the Council of Europe Audiovisual Observatory and the European platform of regulatory authorities ([EPRA](#)) to tackle gender discrimination, sexism and stereotypes in broadcast media, and in particular through identification and sharing of good practices and initiatives among its 53 members. A workshop on “Role of Media Regulatory Bodies” can be envisaged to gather information and disseminate findings among the regulatory bodies and other relevant stakeholders.

## **3. Promotion of Council of Europe standards and policies at regional and international level**

In view of the solid legal and policy framework related to gender equality, the Council of Europe continues to be well positioned to contribute to the advancement of the agenda of gender equality in the media in Europe and beyond. It should further strengthen co-operation with other organisations such as the EU and its different agencies, and the OSCE. At global level, the Council of Europe should continue its co-operation with the different UN bodies, notably UN Women and UNESCO.

### **i. Contribute to developments in the area of media and gender equality**

The Council of Europe will take advantage of opportunities to join and contribute to forthcoming initiatives such as the forthcoming Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMG) which will be launched by the UNESCO Global Forum on Media and Gender<sup>7</sup>.

### **ii. Further develop and strengthen co-operation with the media**

To promote implementation of Council of Europe standards in the area of gender equality and media, it is important to further strengthen relations and co-operation with the stakeholders in the media sector. This will be pursued through the creation of opportunities to contribute to the work and activities of leading institutions and organisations such as, for example, the European Federation of Journalists, the Advertising Standards Authority<sup>8</sup> or national media bodies and institutes.

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/crosscutting-priorities/gender-and-media/global-forum-on-media-and-gender/about-the-forum/>

<sup>8</sup> Non-exhaustive list which shall be further developed with input from the GEC discussion.