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Memorandum on the review of the questionnaire for the third round of monitoring the implementation of CM Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making

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Introduction:

A revised draft questionnaire for the 2015 monitoring of Recommendation (2003)3 (see document GEC(2015)6) has been prepared in the light of discussions held at the GEC meeting in November 2014 and written comments submitted by member states (see document GEC(2014)15rev).

Please note that new and revised questions appear in red in the Questionnaire so that they can be easily identified. Whenever needed, coding instructions have been provided in order to collect standardised data for all countries.

Most of the additional questions of the revised questionnaire relate to fields and actors covered by Recommendation (2003)3, such as media, enterprises (corporate boards) and international organisations.

Issues for discussion and decision:

1. As regards **political parties**, several member states expressed concern about the large number of new questions. Being responsive to this concern, the number of questions has been significantly reduced while keeping the most relevant ones. The inclusion of the selected political party questions in the revised version of the questionnaire is guided by the same emphasis that Rec(2003)3 places on policy recommendations aimed at encouraging political parties to promote gender equality and to collect disaggregated data of elected representatives, candidates and party officials (at the national level). See paragraphs 4, 27 and 44 (i),(ii) and (ix) of the Appendix to Recommendation (2003)3.

The importance given to political parties by Rec(2003)3 is unquestionably related to the fact that political parties can make or break women's attempts to stand for political office. The outcome of parties' selection processes can be understood in terms of the interaction between the supply of candidates wishing to stand for office and the demands of party structures who select the candidates. Furthermore, political parties control not only which candidates are recruited and selected but are also the central actors involved in adopting and implementing candidate selection reforms such as **gender quotas**. The frequent mismatch between the proportion mandated by statutory quotas and gender outcomes indicates that their effectiveness largely depends on the willingness of party actors. Where party quotas exist and are followed, legal quotas might be complementary in that equal gender representation already operates as 'party law'. Also, if effectively implemented, voluntary quotas may allow political parties to lead women's representation within their party systems, even in the absence of legal quota rules. Therefore, political parties play a central role in shaping women's political representation, as it is recognised in Rec(2003)3.

Taking into account that in many member states multiparty competition prevails, the questions on political parties could be limited to the five parties with the highest seat share in the main legislative body (the lower or single house).

2. Questions on **quota rules adopted by political parties** were already included in the previous questionnaire from 2008, but they were confusing. Since each political party might have different quota rules, the country average is not informative. Besides, it was not clear how many parties had been included in the aggregated data provided. The number of questions about political party quotas has also been reduced while keeping the most relevant ones. Overall, the previous proposals for a revised questionnaire included a potential list of 29

questions per party, out of which 13 main questions have now been selected. All of them refer to the national level, although Rec(2003)3 also recommends disaggregated data per party to include as well the supranational, the regional and the local level. This aspect needs to be further discussed at the April 2015 GEC meeting so that a final agreement can be reached.

If questions on (lower house and upper house) candidates per party are included, the sections on the lower house and the upper house might not need to ask about the total number of candidates that competed in the elections. Nevertheless, given that some member states currently collect these data through their respective observatories or monitoring bodies on women's political representation, these questions can be kept as optional.

3. The revised version of the questionnaire has taken into account the general concern about limiting the **length and scope of the questionnaire**, as well as taking into account the specificities of some countries (for example, questions on the Ombudsperson) as indicated by member states in their written comments:

- Corporations: There must be a selection criteria and the number of corporations to be examined needs to be limited. The broadly used standard criterion is to look at the corporations whose shares are traded in the country blue-chip index and that are registered in the country. As the Recommendation refers to balanced participation in political and public decision-making, we should include corporations that are publicly owned or where the state has a majority (with a maximum number).
- Media: All public ones as regards TV, radio and news agencies but only the five most read nationwide newspapers and tabloids.
- National-level government: Discussion was raised during the November GEC meeting as to whether more detailed data for type of ministry (functional areas) should be collected. The question has now been drafted for the GEC to consider its incorporation. It should be noted that the European Commission provides the coding instructions but the data does not seem to be available online.
- Justice: As per the request of some member states, questions about the Superior Council of the Judiciary have been added.

4. **Security forces (police and the military) or universities** are not explicitly mentioned in the Recommendation. The GEC may wish to take a final decision on whether to include a question on this.

- Public Universities: Limit questions to women/men rectors and professors (i.e. only the highest category within the academic profession) would provide a good picture of the state of gender equality and the pervasiveness of the glass ceiling in the most powerful and prestigious positions within universities.

5. Several member states suggested including data on **civil servants** in different sectors, while others would like to include **more bodies**, such as NGOs or state agencies. Yet, for some of the fields explicitly included in the Recommendation (2003)3, it is extremely difficult to establish a homogenous cross-country criteria that could guide their selection and allow for sound comparability.

6. While some countries are concerned about the extra burden caused by collecting **regional data in the field of legislative and executive institutions**, Rec(2003)3 explicitly recommends collecting regional data. It should be noted that the overall number of women and men heads of regional governments and members of regional governments and

parliaments is the result of aggregating the data for all the regions existing in a country. So, multi-level member states need to collect the data for each region in order to calculate the aggregated results. If an efficient method for entering the data is provided, disaggregated regional data might not produce an extra burden of work. (Please note that these data is already collected by the European Commission for EU member states). Germany has proposed to use the NUTS-3 level for regional data[1] in the questionnaire. A decision on this is needed.

7. As suggested by the GEC discussions, beyond descriptive statistics, several **other measures** aimed at promoting balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making have been included in the questionnaire. This encompasses asking about monitoring measures and administrative measures as well as other complementary policies that member states have implemented in the different fields of Rec(2003)3.

8. Concerning the **timeframe for the answers** on electoral data (i.e. the gender composition of legislative institutions) there is a broad consensus among member states to use the election time, and 1 September for all other data. There is also consensus to give member states six months to provide the answers to the whole questionnaire on-line.

[1] See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/overview