

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 29 April 2016

GEC (2016) Abridged Report

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION  
(GEC)**

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*9th meeting  
Strasbourg, 27-29 April 2016*

**List of items discussed and decisions taken  
Abridged Report**

1. The Gender Equality Commission (GEC) held its 9th meeting in Strasbourg (France) on 27-29 April 2016 with Sergiy Kyslytsya (Ukraine) in the Chair.
2. The GEC adopted its agenda as set out in Appendix I to the present report.

### **Exchange of views with Guido Bellatti Ceccoli, Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H)**

3. The GEC held an exchange of views with Guido Bellatti Ceccoli, the Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H) of the Committee of Ministers. It took note with appreciation of the support of the GR-H to the GEC's work to implement the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017. The GEC further welcomed continued co-operation with the GR-H on gender equality matters, including the preparation of the future strategy on gender equality.

### **Draft work plan of the Gender Equality Commission 2016-2017**

4. The GEC took note of the draft work plan, as amended, and agreed to use it as a basis for its work in 2016-2017, and to keep it under regular review and update. The revised version of this document will be made available on the website of the Gender Equality Commission.

### **Network of National Focal Points on Gender Equality (NFPs)**

5. The GEC took note and welcomed the adoption of its new Terms of Reference for 2016-2017, as a fully-fledged steering committee with all 47 member states represented and having their participation costs borne by the Council of Europe. Accordingly, it acknowledged that there is no need to have a parallel structure of the Network of National Focal Points for Gender Equality (NFPs).

### **Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017**

#### **Objective 1 - Combating gender stereotypes and sexism**

6. The GEC welcomed the report of the seminar on "Combating sexist hate speech" (Strasbourg, 10-12 February 2016) organised by the Youth Department and the Gender Equality Unit in the framework of the No Hate Speech movement campaign. It agreed to follow up on the proposal to prepare a draft recommendation for consideration by the Committee of Ministers on combating sexism. The GEC instructed the Secretariat to take the necessary action towards the preparation of a draft recommendation, including the consideration of relevant expertise in member states and involving other sectors of the Council of Europe.

## **Objective 2 - Preventing and combating violence against women**

7. The GEC held an exchange of views with Feride Acar, the President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), who provided information on the adoption of the baseline questionnaire and the launch of the evaluation procedure in March 2016. GEC members were invited to provide GREVIO with relevant information for the evaluation of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention by states parties. The GREVIO President and GEC members agreed to continue close dialogue and co-operation on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

## **Objective 3 - Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice**

8. The GEC took note of the report of the Bern Conference as it appears in document GEC(2016)5 and the follow-up activities included in the GEC's work programme for 2016-2017. Addressing access to legal aid as an important element of women's access to justice was also raised as an area for further work in co-operation with other bodies of the Council of Europe. The GEC took note with interest of the new Council of Europe Action Plan on Strengthening Judicial Independence and Impartiality, and its specific actions to promote a gender balance in the composition of the judiciary at all levels, to fight gender stereotyping within the judiciary, and to work towards the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all reforms aimed at strengthening judicial independence and impartiality.

9. The GEC welcomed the information on the on-going activities under the Regional Project on "Improving women's access to justice in five Eastern Partnership countries". GEC members were invited to send their comments and feedback on the document "Review of International Good Practices in Training on Women's Rights and Gender Equality Legal Professionals" (ref. GEC(2016)2).

## **Objective 4 - Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**

10. GEC members were requested to complete on time the online questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of CM Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making (deadline: 15 July 2016). Any delays would have an impact on the timely completion of the expert evaluation of the information and data submitted by member states.

11. The GEC welcomed the presentation of Ajla Van Heel, the representative from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Compendium of good practices for advancing women's political participation in the OSCE region. It noted with interest the gender audits of political parties carried out by OSCE/ODHIR and the guide for political parties to develop gender action plans. The GEC agreed to continue its co-operation with OSCE/ODHIR in the field of women's participation in political and public decision-making.

## **Objective 5 - Achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures**

12. The GEC took note of the follow-up to the training on gender mainstreaming for Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) carried out in November 2015, including the updated document summarising the different Council of Europe activities that mainstream gender equality. The GEC welcomed the publication of the factsheet on gender mainstreaming and considers it a practical reference tool for gender mainstreaming work and activities. The GEC and GERs present in the meeting supported the continuation of training on gender mainstreaming for GERs and secretariat members.

13. The GEC took note of the presentation by the Head of the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) and agreed to consider areas of future co-operation and synergies in the framework of the implementation activities of the CoE strategies on gender equality and children rights.

14. The GEC took note of the new Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan for Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), in particular the measures planned to empower Roma and Traveller women and promote gender equality. The GEC expressed its support for a new three-year project to enhance the access to justice by Roma women in a number of selected countries, which links with its own work and activities to implement Objective 3 of the CoE Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 on ensuring equal access of women to justice. The GEC agreed to keep in contact with the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues about its on-going activities in this field, as well as about the work of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) on gender equality for Roma and Traveller women.

### **Conference 2016 – Tallinn, Estonia**

15. The GEC took note of the draft concept note and programme of the Tallinn Conference. It was agreed that the Secretariat, the GEC members and the Estonian authorities will finalise the programme. The Secretariat will make it available on the website of the GEC. Members noted that the Council of Europe will bear the cost of one participant per member state designated by the national government.

### **Co-operation with other sectors of the Council of Europe**

16. The GEC held an exchange of views with Elena Centemero, the Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), with focus on the PACE Resolution "Assessing the impact of measures to improve women's political representation", adopted on 21 April 2016, calling on member states to adopt quotas and aim for parity in the political representation of women and men. There was agreement to continue the co-operation in areas of common interest, including the preparation of reports on gender equality issues currently under consideration by the PACE Equality and Non-Discrimination Committee.

17. The GEC took note of the current activities under the project “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine”. It further expressed its hope that the Istanbul Convention will be ratified by Ukraine in the near future.

### **Co-operation with international/regional organisations**

18. The GEC held an exchange of views with Ingibjorg Gisladdottir, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Representative to Turkey of UN Women on their activities to promote gender equality in the region and beyond. It took note of the synergies between the strategic priorities of UN Women and the Council of Europe in the field of gender equality. The GEC further noted the important role for the Council of Europe in addressing the human rights of women migrants and asylum seekers. It agreed to continue the close co-operation with UN Women in areas of common interest.

19. The GEC also held an exchange of views with the Anastasia Divinskaya, UN Women Gender Advisor in Ukraine, who presented the key priorities and challenges ahead for the promotion of gender equality and women’s rights in Ukraine.

20. The GEC held an exchange of views with Gesa Böckermann (Gender Equality Unit, Directorate-General Justice and Consumers, European Commission) on the “Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019” and agreed to continue co-operating in areas of common interest.

21. The GEC took note of the information and main events reported by the representatives from The Netherlands and the Slovak Republic about their respective Presidencies of the European Union in 2016.

### **Report of events attended by GEC members, National Focal Points and the Secretariat**

22. The GEC took note of the written and oral reports made by members of the GEC and Secretariat about events at which they participated since the previous GEC meeting.

### **Current and future activities at national level and at international level**

23. The GEC took note of the information and main events of the forthcoming Estonian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

24. The GEC took note of the information about the Conference “Who cares? Who shares? Men as actors and beneficiaries in Gender Equality Policies”, being organised by the Luxembourg Ministry of Equal Opportunities with the support of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of the Federal Republic of Germany, in Luxembourg on 17-18 October 2016, including the invitation from the Luxembourg authorities for the GEC to send a representative to participate as a speaker.

**Date and place of next meeting**

25. The GEC agreed to hold its 10th meeting in Strasbourg, on 16 –18 November 2016.

## Appendix

### AGENDA

- I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**
- *Draft Agenda* *GEC(2016)OJ 1 Rev*
- II. Exchange of views with Guido Bellatti Ceccoli, Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H)**
- III. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality**
1. **Draft work plan of the Gender Equality Commission 2016-2017** *GEC(2016)1*
  2. **Network of National Focal Points on Gender Equality (NFPs)**
  3. **Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017**
    - a. **Objective 1 - Combating gender stereotypes and sexism**
      - Seminar on “Combating Sexist Hate Speech” organised by the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign in co-operation with the Gender Equality Unit (Strasbourg, 10-12 February 2016)
        - *Report of the seminar* *Report*
        - *Follow-up action to seminar* *Oral presentation*
        - *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech* *CRI(2016)15*
    - b. **Objective 2 - Preventing and combating violence against women**
      - Exchange of views with Feride Acar, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (baseline questionnaire for the 1<sup>st</sup> round of monitoring)
        - Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the (Istanbul Convention)*
      - Latest publications
        - *Paper on Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention* *Publication*
        - *Paper on Article 17 of the Istanbul Convention* *Publication*

**c. Objective 3 - Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice**

- Report of the Conference on “Towards guaranteeing equal access of women to justice” (Bern, 15-16 October 2015) *GEC(2016)5*
- Follow-up to Bern Conference *Oral presentation*
- Video of Bern Conference *Video*
  
- Latest publications/documents
  - o *Council of Europe Plan of Action on “Strengthening Judicial Independence and Impartiality”* *CM(2016)36 final*
  - o *Factsheet on Gender equality prepared by the European Court of Human Rights* *Factsheet*
  
- Regional Project on “Improving women’s access to justice in five EAP countries” *Oral presentation*
  - o *Review of international good practices on women’s rights training for legal professionals* *GEC(2016)2*

**d. Objective 4 - Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**

- 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 *Oral presentation*
  
- Presentation by Ajla van Heel, Adviser on Gender Issues, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the compendium of good practices for advancing women’s political participation in the OSCE region *Compendium*
  
- Latest documents
  - o *“Assessing the impact of measures to improve women’s political representation”* *PACE report*

**e. Objective 5 - Achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures**

- Follow-up to training on gender mainstreaming for Gender Equality Rapporteurs *Oral presentation*
  
- Presentation by Regina Jensdóttir, Head of Division and Programme co-ordinator, of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) *Oral presentation*  
*Strategy*



- Presentation by Robert Rustem, Support Team to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma<sup>1</sup> Issues, of the Thematic Action Plan for Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) *Oral Presentation  
Action Plan*
- Latest publications/documents
  - o *Gender mainstreaming policy briefs and CoE activities, 2nd Edition  
March 2016* *Publication*
  - o *Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers to member States  
on the protection and promotion of human rights in  
culturally diverse societies* *CM Document*

#### **4. Conference 2016 – Tallinn, Estonia**

- o *Draft Programme* *Oral presentation  
GEC(2016)4*
- o *Draft Concept Note* *GEC(2015)12 Rev*

#### **5. Co-operation with other sectors of the Council of Europe**

- Exchange of views with Elena Centemero, Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Rapporteur on assessing the impact of measures to improve women's political representation
- Presentation by Alessandra Siino, Project Officer (Strasbourg) - "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine"

#### **IV. Co-operation with international/regional organisations**

- Exchange of views with Ingibjorg Gísladóttir, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Representative to Turkey of UN Women
- Presentation by Anastasia Divinskaya, Gender Advisor, of UN Women's perspectives on the key priorities, challenges and ways ahead for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in Ukraine
- Exchange of views with Gesa Böckermann, Unit on Gender Equality, Directorate-General Justice and Consumers of the European Commission  
*Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "Roma" and "Travellers" are being used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

- European Union gender equality agenda:
  - o Netherlands Presidency (January – June 2016)
  - o Slovakian Presidency (July – December 2016)

**V. Report of events attended by GEC members, National Focal Points and the Secretariat**

*GEC(2016)3  
CSW60 Agreed Conclusions*

**VI. Current and future activities at national level and at international level**

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:
  - o Bulgarian Chairmanship (November 2015 – May 2016)
  - o Estonian Chairmanship (May – November 2016)

**VII. Other business**

**VIII. Date and place of next meetings**

*GEC - 10<sup>th</sup> meeting: Strasbourg, 16 –18 November 2016*

**Calendar of forthcoming events and meetings:**

**Council of Europe**

*Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia (30 June – 1 July 2016)*

*Regional Conference in the framework of the project Improving Women's Access to Justice in Five Eastern Partnership Countries, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova (24-25 October 2016)*

**Other organisations**

*Conference: "Who cares? Who shares? Men as actors and beneficiaries in Gender Equality Policies", organised by the Luxembourg Ministry of Equal Opportunities in partnership with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of the Federal Republic of Germany (Luxembourg, 17-18 October 2016)*

**IX Adoption of abridged report**