

# GRECO CONFERENCE ON “GENDER DIMENSIONS OF CORRUPTION”

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**Address by Ms Helena LIŠUCHOVÁ**  
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**Head of the Czech delegation in GRECO**

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Dear First Deputy President,  
Dear Minister,  
Distinguished representative of the Parliamentary Assembly,  
Dear President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

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**It**

gives me pleasure and pride to welcome you all in Prague at the seat of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

It was with a great deal of curiosity - but also humility - that I accepted to become **GRECO's Gender Equality Rapporteur** in 2012. It is often said that "learning by doing" is the best way to achieve innovation and change. From that point of view, this past year has been marked by some tremendous learning experiences: for me - as an individual and professional, and for GRECO - as the anti-corruption centre of excellence.

I would like to commence by recalling that it was in response to the **Committee of Ministers' decision** of January 2012 that GRECO has taken steps to reflect on whether and how a gender perspective could or should be incorporated into its work. As you all know, GRECO is the most advanced multilateral anti-corruption review mechanism. It identifies gaps in laws, policies, practices and institutional setups, and issues recommendations to governments on how to better prevent, detect and sanction corruption. GRECO's impact however extends much beyond its strictly defined mandate. It reflects the multifaceted approach of the Council of Europe and is also committed to promoting gender equality and strengthening democracy.

As Gender Equality Rapporteur, I see my role as being to facilitate **three important processes**. The first is to ensure that gender issues are highlighted at various stages of GRECO's monitoring procedure. My second goal is to support national research and data collection and to allow for the exchange of findings amongst member States. My third, but not less important objective is to communicate and co-operate with other Council of Europe organs as well as other international organisations on gender equality and mainstreaming issues.

Since 2012, progress has been made under each of those headings.

**First of all, member States have agreed to a more systematic collection of data in the framework of GRECO's Fourth Evaluation Round** which is dedicated to corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors. In the course of this year, 25 member States have voluntarily responded to a data collection request. This was in addition to a brief questionnaire circulated in 2012 to which 19 responses were received. Therefore, a total of 33 countries have responded in some way to our examination of gender and corruption, and it is with pleasure that I share with you now our main findings.

In so far as **gender and representation** is concerned, I was reassured to learn that data disaggregated by gender is readily available on the number of MPs, ministerial posts, parliamentary chairs and heads of political groups. The same is also true for data on judges and prosecutors at different levels, including in high-ranking posts.

The data provided on **male and female representation in national government** leaves little room for misinterpretation. As you can see from this slide [slide No. 3], national politics are dominated by men in most of our member States. That being said, some of the countries are making efforts to include within their ranks the diverse population they are meant to serve. In Ireland, for example, the Chair of the Revenue Board described as "particularly clever" the Government's move to ensure that State

funding to political parties is halved unless 30% of their candidates at the next elections are women. In Romania, a draft law amending the legal framework on party financing contains a provision stipulating that parties receiving state grants on condition that they promote women on their electoral lists, should spend more than 10% of those grants on women's organisations. Such measures intend to strengthen legitimacy and to overcome the disengagement which may stem from real and perceived corruption among politicians. Additionally, since women represent 50% or more of the population in most of our countries, you would agree that having low numbers of women in decision-making positions is undemocratic and no longer acceptable.

Turning to **judges and prosecutors**, it was in 2012 that gender disaggregated data was collected for the first time and included in the biannual review of national judicial systems produced by the Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). The table you see relates to judges [slide 4]. It shows again that the gender imbalance is typically in favour of male rather than female judges across most of our member States. The situation is pretty similar with respect to prosecutors [slide 5].

A more nuanced situation can however be found in Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Moldova and the Russian Federation. In Croatia, [slide 6], there is a gender imbalance favouring women in the legal system, although not necessarily in senior posts. Female judges are in the majority in all levels of courts, and the available figures suggest that this trend is unlikely to change since more women than men enter the service. In higher courts, the ratio between female and male judges is however decreasing. Also, while women make up the majority of court presidents in first instance courts, this is not the case in higher courts and at the Supreme Court.

As with national politicians, ensuring diversity within the judiciary is becoming an issue. In 2012, in the United Kingdom, a House of Lords Report had found that a judiciary where only one in 20 judges is non-white and fewer than one in four is female was undermining the public confidence in courts. The report concluded that a more diverse judiciary - in terms of gender and minority groups - "can bring different perspectives to bear on the development of the law and to the concept of justice itself." Many of you will remember that GRECO's own report on the United Kingdom adopted in 2012 had welcomed the on-going discussions on, in particular, how "diversity" and "merit" could be accomplished in the existing selection process in the UK.

Let me now turn to another issue which was elucidated through the replies to the questionnaires.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it was confirmed yet again that the way in which **criminal statistics on corruption offences** are collected varies significantly among GRECO member States. While such statistics are readily available, and most of the countries do disaggregate by offender, other information on the offender (for example, his or her post or sector) or the victim is not being collected. That being said, separate statistics on specific professional groups such as judges, prosecutors and MPs tend to be kept, so information with regard to any wrongdoing is available at the national level. Other than that and the distinction between public and private sector corruption, very little sector-related information is open for scrutiny and analysis. I believe that collecting this additional data might prove sensible as it would facilitate a more correct understanding of the typology and impact of corruption within different sectors and with respect to vulnerable groups.

Also, as the idea that there is a "**victim**" in corruption has not been widely accepted, this information is not being collected in the context of criminal statistics. The only exceptions are Lithuania and Moldova where information on "victims" and their gender is being compiled, along with the gender of the alleged or convicted offender.



Ladies and gentlemen,

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**ou will have certainly noticed that the information included in the replies to the questionnaires has proved to be instrumental in advancing not only my first but also my second objective - to support national research and data collection and to allow for the exchange of findings amongst GRECO member States.** I was particularly delighted to learn that, thanks to our initiative, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” has included the collection of disaggregated data on perpetrators and victims of corruption offences into its Methodology for monitoring anti-corruption policies. I wish this example to be followed, where possible, by other countries.

Additionally, last year we reviewed research - where available - from around Europe, as well as surveys and studies from other parts of the world. The most informative ones will be presented to you today, and I sincerely hope that you will enjoy this learning process as much as I have in the course of this year.

**Now as concerns my third goal – to establish communication and co-operation within and outside the Council of Europe on gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues,** already twice, in 2012 and 2013, I was invited for an exchange of views with the Gender Equality Commission whose chairperson, Ms Carlien Scheele is present here today. GRECO’s approach to gender in the context of corruption has been praised by the Commission as a good example of promoting co-operation on gender dimensions of corruption at the national level. It was also with great satisfaction that I welcomed the adoption on 6<sup>th</sup> November of the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Strategy for 2014-2017. It includes several goals and strategic objectives, notably:

- ◆ combating gender stereotypes and sexism;
- ◆ preventing and combating violence against women;
- ◆ guaranteeing equal access of women to justice;
- ◆ achieving a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
- ◆ achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

In this light, our event today contributes to and helps realise several of the Strategy’s objectives.

As concerns collaboration with the Parliamentary Assembly, I was privileged to exchange views with Mr José Mendes Bota, the First Vice-President of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Committee. As you have already heard, Mr Mendes Bota agrees that the topic of gender and corruption is a novel issue that deserves further research and greater visibility at the Council of Europe level.

Last but not least, at the invitation of the UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS, for which we are grateful, GRECO is contributing to the development of a survey on men and women in public service to be implemented in several Eastern Partnership countries in 2014.

**In conclusion,** I would like to thank you all most sincerely for your support throughout this year. I would also like to thank you for your own curiosity and willingness to step into the unknown, which has brought many of you to Prague. This brainstorming conference marks the beginning of a potentially very promising process, in which every one of you could and should be involved.

I hope that by the end of today, we shall be convinced beyond doubt of the potential pitfalls of gender neutrality and acknowledge expressly the relevance and usefulness of incorporating a gender perspective into anti-corruption work of GRECO and the Council of Europe at large.

**Thank you for your attention.**