

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 17 March 2017

GEC(2017)4

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

Draft Terms of Reference of the
Gender Equality Commission
2018-2019

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Type of committee: Steering Committee

Terms of reference valid from: **1 January 2018 until 31 December 2019**

MAIN TASKS
<p>Under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers, the GEC will steer the intergovernmental work in the field of gender equality. In particular, the GEC is instructed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) ensure that a gender equality perspective is maintained in the activities of all committees and bodies of the Organisation; (ii) conduct needs' assessments and provide advice on the development of standards, co-operation and monitoring activities within its field of competence; (iii) provide expertise to member States on the development of legislation, policies, practice, training schemes and awareness material to support implementation of internationally agreed standards at national level; and facilitate exchange of experience and good practice; (iv) support the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023); (v) support governments, parliaments, local authorities, civil society and private sector for the purposes of achieving real change on gender equality in member States; (vi) identify a topic of particular relevance in the field of gender equality and organise a thematic conference to exchange experience, good practices and facilitate progress on this topic; (vii) advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on appropriate action to be taken and likewise provide advice as requested on such questions as may arise; (viii) engage in co-ordination and joint planning at international level with the European Union, UN Women and other intergovernmental organisations and civil society; (ix) take due account to building cohesive societies in the performance of its tasks; (x) follow the implementation of the non-binding instruments that it has prepared as well as conventions for which it has been given supervision by the Committee of Ministers; (xi) contribute to co-operation and support activities to national initiatives in this field; (xii) without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, follow the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies or convention mechanisms; (xiii) in accordance with decision CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind its priorities, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility¹, in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers.
PILLAR/SECTOR/PROGRAMME
<p>Pillar: Human Rights Sector: Promoting Human Rights and Dignity Programme: Equality and Diversity</p>
SPECIFIC TASKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Promote gender equality as a visible priority for the Organisation (internal and external); (ii) Promote the implementation by member States of the 2009 Madrid Declaration and the 2010 Baku Action Plan; (iii) Contribute towards the implementation of the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; (iv) Contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") and Goal 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"); (v) Oversee the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023; (vi) Prepare a draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation to prevent and combat sexism; (vii) Share good practices and support member States in the implementation of gender equality standards at the national level; (viii) Promote Council of Europe gender equality standards and activities at national and international level;

¹ Cf. Relevant decision of the Committee of Ministers (CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2) and list of Conventions in Appendix 1.

- (ix) Promote coherence, synergies and co-operation with other regional and international organisations on gender equality;
- (x) Promote the inclusion in the political agendas of the Council of Europe member States and beyond of the need to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence;
- (xi) Review the implementation of relevant Committee of Ministers' recommendations;
- (xii) Promote the visibility of the Council of Europe's standards at United Nations level;
- (xiii) Ensure co-operation with relevant UN agencies, namely UN Women and relevant UN Special Rapporteurs and participation in relevant meetings (UN Commission on the Status of Women, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Human Rights Council, events and conferences organised by UN Women), the World Bank, the OAS, the OSCE, the OECD as well as at the European Union level, by co-operation with the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), with the aim of strengthening equality and enhancing women's rights as an integral part of universal human rights.

COMPOSITION

Members:

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the government of the highest possible rank in the field of gender equality.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State. Member States may send other representatives without defrayal of expenses.

Each member of the Commission shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

Participants:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- Representatives of other international organisations: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (including ODIHR), United Nations (including UN-Women and other relevant UN agencies), and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Observers:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, European Women's Lobby and WAVE (Women against Violence in Europe);
- Non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities.

WORKING METHODS

Meetings:

48 members, 2 meetings in 2018, 2.5 days

48 members, 2 meetings in 2019, 2.5 days

The Gender Equality Commission is an integral part of the Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality. With a view to fulfilling its main tasks, the GEC will maintain close links with other elements of the Transversal Programme.

The Gender Equality Commission will engage in a regular exchange of views with Gender Equality Rapporteurs

appointed by the respective steering committees and/or monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe.

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Subordinate Structure to the GEC

The GEC has a co-ordinating, supervisory and monitoring role over the Drafting Committee in charge of preparing a draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation to prevent and combat sexism (see separate terms of reference at Appendix 2).

APPENDIX 1 - RELEVANT DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS AND LIST OF CONVENTIONS**CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 (Review of Council of Europe conventions)**

9. [The Deputies] instructed the steering and ad hoc committees to carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind the priorities of each committee, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which they have been given responsibility, in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, in order to:

- propose ways of improving the visibility, impact and efficiency of some or all of the conventions for which they have been given responsibility;
- draw the attention of member States to the relevant conventions;
- where necessary, identify any operational problems or obstacles to ratification of the relevant conventions, and draw the attention of member States to reservations which impact substantively on the effectiveness of their implementation;
- encourage States to regularly examine the possibility and/or desirability of becoming a Party to new Council of Europe conventions;
- assess the necessity or advisability of drafting amendments or additional protocols to the conventions for which they have been given responsibility or drafting supplementary conventions;
- and to report back to the Committee of Ministers.

GEC	
197	Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
210	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

Appendix 2**Drafting Committee to prepare a draft Committee of Ministers recommendation to prevent and combat sexism (GEC-DC Sexism)****Main tasks**

Under the supervision of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), the Drafting Committee is entrusted with the task of drafting a recommendation to prevent and combat sexism and to submit it to the GEC for approval prior to its transmission to the Committee of Ministers for consideration and eventual adoption.

Composition**Members:**

All member states shall be entitled to appoint a representative with relevant expertise. The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from **fifteen member states** (Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Malta, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom).

Member states may send additional representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses, to the meetings of the Drafting Committee.

Participants:

The following may send a representative, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe,
- DGII – Violence against Women Division, Children’s Rights Division, Education Division, Youth Directorate; other Committees engaged in related work

Observers:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, European Women’s Lobby, and Women against Violence in Europe (WAVE).

Non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities.

No. of meetings

Two 1.5 day meetings in 2018

WORKING METHODS**Meetings:**

16 members, 2 meetings in 2018, 1.5 days each