



Chairmanship of the Czech Republic
Council of Europe
May – November 2017

Présidence de la République tchèque
Conseil de l'Europe
Mai – Novembre 2017

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 11 December 2017

GEC (2017) Report November

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

12th meeting of the Gender Equality Commission
(Prague, Czech Republic, 15–16 November 2017)

REPORT

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The 12th meeting of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) was opened by the Chairperson who thanked the Czech authorities for the invitation to hold the meeting in Prague. The Chairperson introduced the Deputy Minister of Human Rights Section of the Czech Republic, Martina Štěpánková, who addressed the members. The draft agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix I to this document (GEC(2017)OJ2 Rev 2) and the list of participants is attached at Appendix III.

- *The GEC adopted the draft agenda as set out in Appendix I to this report.*

II. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

In accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods, the GEC re-elected Eva Fehringer (Austria) as its Chairperson, and Charles Ramsden (United Kingdom) as its Vice-Chairperson for one year, by acclamation.

- *The GEC re-elected for one year Eva Fehringer (Austria) as its Chairperson, and Charles Ramsden (United Kingdom) as its Vice-Chairperson.*

III. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality

1. Draft Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

The GEC discussed the draft Gender Equality Strategy as it appears in GEC(2017)2 Rev 3. There was a lengthy and detailed discussion on the amendments proposed to the third draft by the member States which were highlighted in the draft document for transparency. The GEC members discussed each of the proposals and additional changes and consolidated amendments. The representative of the Russian Federation, while in agreement with most of the text and changes made, expressed her country's dissenting opinion on the draft strategy. The representative of Armenia expressed her disagreement with the footnote (number 4) which refers to the 2010 Baku Ministerial Conference on Gender Equality. The full text of her comments is attached in Appendix II to this report.

The GEC:

- *instructed the Secretariat to amend the document GEC(2017)2 Revised 3 – Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 in line with the decisions taken by the members. One delegation (Russian Federation) expressed its dissenting opinion on the draft Strategy.*
- *agreed to transmit the draft Strategy to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.*

2. Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017

a. Draft 2017 Annual Report

The Secretariat presented the draft 2017 annual report (GEC(2017)6) and explained that it had been prepared in line with the format and style of previous years, taking into account contributions received from 33 member states about their national activities and measures towards the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy.

- *The GEC adopted its 2017 annual report, as amended, and agreed to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers.*

b. Objective 1 - Combating gender stereotypes and sexism

- Preparation of a draft Committee of Ministers recommendation to prevent and combat sexism

The Chairperson of the Drafting Committee preparing the recommendation reported back about progress and the discussions which took place during the 2nd meeting of the Drafting Committee (Paris, 22 – 23 June 2017).

- *The GEC welcomed the work carried out by the Drafting Committee and took note of its second meeting report, as presented by its Chairperson in document GEC(2017)7. The GEC looked forward to continuing the discussion on this item at its next meeting.*

c. Objective 2 - Preventing and combating violence against women

- Update on signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention, latest publications, baseline evaluation reports, forthcoming event on FGM in the UK in 2018.

The Secretariat informed the members about the latest news concerning the Istanbul Convention, including the ratification by Cyprus and the publication the baseline evaluation country reports for Austria and Monaco (September 2017), and the forthcoming reports for Albania and Denmark (November 2017). A number of member states representatives gave information regarding the state of preparation of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in their countries. Some also stressed the difficulties faced due to the resistance of certain religious and conservative groups. The Secretariat informed the members about the Declaration adopted by the Committee of Ministers in September 2017 on the need to intensify the efforts to prevent and combat female genital mutilation and forced marriage in Europe

- *The GEC took note of developments in the member states in relation to the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention and other information related to objective 2 of the Strategy.*

d. Objective 3 - Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice

- Regional Project on “Improving women’s access to justice in six EAP countries”

The Secretariat informed the participants that the Regional Project had come to an end in October 2017. In addition to training seminars conducted in each of the beneficiary countries throughout the project, a [Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women’s Access to Justice](#) and Country Studies on Barriers, Remedies and Good Practices for Women’s Access to Justice ([Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), [Republic of Moldova](#), [Ukraine](#)) was also prepared. Information about the project activities and deliverables, including the Manual, are available on the gender equality website.

The members of the respective beneficiary countries gave their feedback about their experience of the project, which was mostly very positive, with room for improvement as regards dissemination of project-related information to the relevant GEC members.

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

The Secretariat informed the members that the [Analytical Report of 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](#) had been published on 17 October and there had been wide press coverage of the launch, including press articles and interviews in the mainstream media, as well as interviews on social media. The Chairperson encouraged members to disseminate the information among their national authorities, including parliaments, local and regional authorities, as well as Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs. Members were also encouraged to promote action to implement the recommendations included in the report, as well as to meet the standards set by the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation on this issue.

The Secretariat presented the [draft factsheet on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making](#) and informed the members that the document had been prepared using some information contained in the analytical report, as well as other sources.

The GEC:

- *agreed to disseminate the results and recommendations of the analytical report of the third round of monitoring the implementation in member states of CM Recommendation*

Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and promote the implementation of its recommendations at national level.

- *instructed the Secretariat to finalise and publish the factsheet on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making. GEC members were asked to send in any additional comments/amendments by 30 November 2017.*

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

- Gender Mainstreaming in Council of Europe Activities

The Secretariat informed the members about the latest [\(6th\) edition of the information document](#) on gender mainstreaming activities in the Council of Europe. Plans for 2018 in relation to gender mainstreaming were also outlined. The document on [activities promoting gender mainstreaming at the national level in Council of Europe member states, which compiles contributions from member states](#), was presented.

The participants were also informed about the recent adoption of two recommendations by the Committee of Ministers: CM/Rec (2017)9 on [gender equality in the audiovisual sector](#) and CM/Rec (2017)10 on [improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe](#).

The Chairperson informed the participants about the appointment of Ambassador Keith McBean (Ireland) as Focal Point on Gender Equality in the Committee of Ministers.

The GEC took note of the:

- *presentation made by the Secretariat on progress on gender mainstreaming in the different sectors of the Council of Europe, plans for 2018, and a compilation of activities at the national level promoting gender mainstreaming.*
- *6th edition of the information document "Gender Mainstreaming activities at the Council of Europe", as well as the 5th issue of the Gender Equality Newsletter.*
- *appointment of Ambassador Keith McBean (Ireland), Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H) as the Focal Point on Gender Equality of the Committee of Ministers.*

IV. Thematic discussions:

- i. Situation of migrant women and families – Czech Republic and Germany
- ii. Men/boys and gender equality – Denmark and Iceland

The GEC followed with interest the presentations made by Beáta Szakácsová from the Office of the Public Defender of Rights of the Czech Republic, and Nele Reich, Desk Officer for the Protection of Women from Violence of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens and Youth of Germany, on the situation of migrant women and families, and related public policies. Their presentations are available on the [Gender Equality website](#).

Because of time constraints, Denmark and Iceland proposed to postpone the presentations made by Denmark and Iceland on “men/boys and gender equality” to the next GEC meeting in April 2018.

- *The GEC took note of the presentations by the Czech Republic and Germany during the thematic discussion on the situation of migrant women and families.*

V. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

– Council of the European Union - gender equality agenda:

- Maltese Presidency (January – June 2017): The Maltese member informed the GEC that a meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming had been organised, as well as a conference on combating violence against women. The Maltese Presidency coordinated the EU activities at the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of women, and activities also took place on LGBTI issues.
- Estonian Presidency (July – December 2017): The Estonian member informed the GEC that an informal EPSCO Council took place in July and that a Trio Presidency Declaration was adopted by Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria (the EU Member States holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the 18-month period from July 2011 to December 2018). A meeting of the High level Group on Gender Mainstreaming was organised in September on the topic “women and the future of work”. In October, the Presidency had co-organised the launch of the EIGE Gender Equality Index and draft Council Conclusions were adopted on horizontal segregation of education, training and the labour market. The Estonian Presidency is leading negotiations on the draft work-life balance directive and an event on digital violence against women will take place in December 2017.
- Bulgarian Presidency (January – June 2018): The Bulgarian member informed the GEC that Bulgaria intends to promote gender equality throughout what will be the first Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. They will organise a High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, co-operate with EIGE on women in the digital world, work with the Social Questions Working

Party on the work-life package and organise a side event during the 62nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

- *The GEC took note of the reports by the representatives of Bulgaria, Estonia and Malta about their respective Presidencies of the Council of the European Union.*

VI. Events attended by GEC members, experts and the Secretariat

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson informed the members about events at which they participated. The Chairperson had an exchange of views with the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination in September 2017. The Vice-Chairperson represented the GEC at the 2017 Council of Europe Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue "Migrants and refugees: challenges and opportunities - What role for religious and non-religious groups?" and the 6th International Conference of Roma Women's participation in local, regional, national and European elections, both of which took place in Strasbourg in November 2017.

- *The GEC took note of the information given about events at which members of the GEC and the Secretariat participated since the previous GEC meeting.*

VII. Current and future activities at national level and at international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:
 - Czech Republic Chairmanship (May – November 2017)

The Czech member informed the GEC that gender equality was one the priorities of the Czech Republic Chairmanship. The conference and a roundtable on data collection organised the day before the GEC meeting had been the main events. The Czech member thanked contributors and participants in these successful events including the GEC meeting.

- Danish Chairmanship (November 2017 – May 2018)

The GEC member from Denmark presented the document concerning the conference to launch the new Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023, which will take place in Copenhagen on 3-4 May 2018. She outlined the draft programme of the conference and encouraged members to make proposals for speakers. She also informed members about the side event on the subject of sexism which Denmark and the Council of Europe will organise during the 62nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

- *The GEC took note of the reports from the Czech Republic and Denmark representatives about their respective Committee of Ministers' Chairmanship. The GEC further noted the information*

from the representative of Denmark about the forthcoming conference to launch the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 which will take place in Copenhagen on 3-4 May 2018.

VIII. Other business

- *The GEC took note of the information provided by Denmark and Iceland about plans to organise a Barbershop event at the Council of Europe in 2018.*

IX. Items for the agenda of the next meeting

The Vice-Chairperson (in the absence of the Chairperson) asked the members if anyone had items they wished to propose for the agenda of the next meeting (April 2018). He reminded the members that the discussion on "men/boys and gender equality" (Denmark/Iceland) had been postponed to April's meeting. Croatia proposed women and sport, as this would be one of the priorities of the forthcoming Croatian chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Iceland seconded the proposal. Malta proposed gender equality and youth and the perception which young people have about gender equality. The proposals were accepted and the Vice-Chairperson said that the Secretariat would get in touch with the relevant GEC members about their participation in these future exchanges. .

- *The GEC agreed to include in the agenda of the next meetings, thematic discussions by member states on men/boys and gender equality (Denmark, Iceland), women and sport (Croatia, Iceland), gender equality and youth (Malta).*

X. Adoption of the abridged report of the 12th GEC meeting (15-16 November 2017)

The abridged report of the 12th meeting of the Gender Equality Commission was adopted for transmission to the Committee of Ministers.

APPENDIX I

Agenda

- I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda
Draft Agenda *GEC(2017)OJ 2 Rev 2*
- II. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson
- III. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality
1. Draft Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 *GEC(2017)2 Rev 3*
 - Launch of new strategy (3-4 May 2018, Copenhagen) *GEC(2017)11*
 2. Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017
 - a. Draft 2017 Annual Report *GEC(2017)6*

Activities and measures in member states towards the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy *GEC(2017)10 Rev*
 - b. Objective 1 - Combating gender stereotypes and sexism
 - Preparation of a draft Committee of Ministers recommendation to prevent and combat sexism

Report of the 2nd meeting of the Drafting Committee preparing a draft Committee of Ministers recommendation to prevent and combat sexism (Paris, 22-23 June 2017)
GEC(2017)7
 - c. Objective 2 - Preventing and combating violence against women
 - Update on signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention, latest publications, baseline evaluation reports *Oral presentation*

Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the need to intensify the efforts to prevent and combat female genital mutilation and forced marriage in Europe
Online version only

d. Objective 3 - Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice

- Regional Project on "Improving women's access to justice in six EAP countries"
Oral presentation

[Training Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice](#)

Online version only

Country Studies on Barriers, Remedies and Good Practices for Women's Access to Justice: [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), [Republic of Moldova](#), [Ukraine](#)

Online versions only

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

- [Analytical Report of 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](#) *Publication*

[Press coverage following the launch of the analytical report](#)

Information document

- Follow up to analytical report in the member states
- [Draft factsheet on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making](#) *GEC(2017)9*

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

- Gender Mainstreaming in Council of Europe Activities *Oral presentation*

[6th edition of information document \(October 2017\)](#)

Online version only

[Activities promoting gender mainstreaming at the national level in Council of Europe member states](#)

Online publication

- [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe](#) *CM/Rec(2017)10*
- [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality in the audiovisual sector](#) *CM/Rec(2017)9*

IV. Thematic discussions:

- i. Situation of migrant women and families – Czech Republic and Germany
- ii. Men/boys and gender equality – Denmark and Iceland

V. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

– Council of the European Union - gender equality agenda:

- Maltese Presidency (January – June 2017)
- Estonian Presidency (July – December 2017)
- Bulgarian Presidency (January – June 2018)

[Overview of follow-up on progress in implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) *Information document*

VI. [Events attended by GEC members, experts and the Secretariat](#)

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VII. Current and future activities at national level and at international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:
- Czech Republic Chairmanship (May – November 2017)
 - Danish Chairmanship (November 2017 – May 2018)

VIII. Other business

IX. Items for the agenda of the next meeting

X. Adoption of the abridged report of the 12th GEC meeting (15-16 November 2017)

Appendix II

Statement by Armenia

Armenia cannot agree with and accept the footnote in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023, page 6) which refers to the conference in Baku (25 May 2010), since it believes that a conference or any meeting organised by or under the auspices of the Council of Europe should not take place in any location, if at least one member State of the Organisation cannot, or is not allowed to participate, due to circumstances beyond its own control.

We are convinced that while choosing the host country for any Council of Europe event the Secretariat should pay attention to such facts as human rights situation in the country, including an atmosphere of racial hatred, intolerance or war propaganda. All these factors lead to the lack of security measures for the representatives of some countries and therefore their inability to participate in the Council of Europe event.

We declare that Armenia cannot be guided by any documents referred to in this strategy, in the elaboration and adoption of which it has not participated, due to circumstances beyond its own control.

APPENDIX III

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