

Strasbourg, 28 March 2018

GEC (2018) 2

## GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION

3rd meeting of the Drafting Committee to prepare a draft  
Committee of Ministers recommendation to prevent and combat sexism  
(GEC-DC Sexism)

Paris, 1-2 March 2018

REPORT



1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda
2. Election of Chair

The Drafting Committee adopted its agenda as set out in Appendix I to the present report.

The Drafting Committee re-elected Charles Ramsden (UK) as Chairperson, by acclamation.

The Chairperson informed the Drafting Committee of its Terms of Reference for 2018-2019, as a subordinate body of the Gender Equality Commission. He further informed participants of the forthcoming adoption of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, on 7 March 2018, which refers to the preparation of the draft Recommendation to prevent and combat sexism.

3. Presentation by the « *Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes* » on the main elements of their report on sexism, which is currently under preparation

Claire Guiraud (Secretary General), Margaux Collet (Head of Research) and Françoise Vouillot (Chairperson of the Commission on Stereotypes) presented the work of the French High Council on Gender Equality (HCE) as regards the preparation of their first report on sexism in France, which will be completed by the end of June 2018. They addressed, respectively: the [definition of sexism](#); [measuring the prevalence of sexism in France](#) (measured through annual public and private surveys and studies), including issues related to data collection and data use; and the [need to strengthen action against sexism](#). The representatives of HCE put forward a number of recommendations, including the need to prevent sexism, to help and assist the victims, and to punish the authors of sexist acts. In addition, the HCE highlighted the need for transversal action in the field of training to prevent and combat sexism, to better take into account of the intersectionalities between sexism and racism, and for further research on this issue.

The exchange and discussion that ensued focused on the link between sexism and stereotypes. In their intervention, the HCE representatives stressed that gender stereotypes are not the root cause of sexism but rather come subsequently: sexism stems from male domination, manifested through behaviours and practices, while gender stereotypes are created to legitimise sexism and its manifestations, making them the norm. Members of the Drafting Committee were also interested in discussing the definition of sexism as an ideology, also put forward by the HCE, and as a phenomenon that affects women but also men when they take on “feminine” roles. Participants also discussed the role of schools and education in tackling the high social tolerance of sexism.

4. Presentation by Kat Banyard, Director of UK Feminista, about her organisation's work to combat sexism and about the #MeToo and related movements, followed by a discussion on their impact on the draft recommendation

Kat Banyard presented the work of UK Feminista, set up in 2010, focusing on action to address sexism in the education system and institutionalise change. She highlighted the findings of the report conducted by the National Education Union and UK Feminista in 2017 - "[It's just everywhere](#)" - about sexism in UK schools, the lack of tools and policies adapted to the needs of teachers, pupils and education institutions and recommendations for how to tackle it. Based on the fact that different manifestations of sexism do not happen in isolation and sexism is not inevitable, she stressed the need to "join the dots" and connect all sectors where sexism should be eradicated. Kat Banyard also pointed out the links between sexism and prostitution, and highlighted the fact that sexism is actively encouraged by the global sex trade. She noted the different approaches taken in different countries, from criminalising clients, pimps and traffickers to abolitionist legislation on prostitution, or its legitimisation as a regulated economic activity.

The discussion that ensued focused on a diversity of topics, including the #MeToo campaign and, as a result, the need to engage with young men; the need to tackle the under-reporting of sexist acts; sexism in academia; the perception and portrayal of feminism in the media and evolving views of feminism among the wider public; and gender equality education, including for migrant communities in Europe.

5. Presentation of the draft preamble and operative paragraphs of the draft recommendation, followed by a discussion on the draft text

The Secretariat introduced the [working draft recommendation](#) and drew attention to changes introduced since the version which was submitted to the Gender Equality Commission in November 2017. Participants were also reminded that the "[Compilation of standards related to the notion of sexism](#)" and the "[Compilation of good practices to prevent and combat sexism in Council of Europe member states](#)" are regularly updated and member States can still submit contributions.

Upon request of a delegation, the title of the compilation related to the notion of sexism was amended to read "Compilation of instruments related to the notion of sexism". The representative of the Conference of INGOs informed the Drafting Committee about the [Resolution](#) adopted in January 2018 which replaces "*droits de l'homme*" with "*droits humains*" to avoid sexist language and terminology.

The Chairperson recalled that the written comments submitted by the Danish member of the Drafting Committee, circulated prior to the meeting, would be considered as part of the discussions on the draft text of the working document.

The Drafting Committee:

- *discussed the draft preamble and operative paragraphs of the draft recommendation;*
- *agreed on a number of amendments;*
- *decided to postpone the discussion on the scope of the draft recommendation as regards sexism in the private sphere until consideration by the Drafting Committee of the proposed measures on this topic included in the Appendix;*
- *instructed the Secretariat to incorporate the agreed amendments, check the references to other texts in the draft preamble, and prepare a revised version of the draft preamble and operative paragraphs in light of the discussions, to be circulated to the members of the Drafting Committee.*

6. Presentation of the draft definition of sexism, followed by a discussion on the draft text

The Secretariat presented the draft definition of sexism as it appeared in the working document, including the proposals for discussion at the meeting. The Drafting Committee had an in-depth discussion of the draft definition and agreed to amend it substantially.

- *The Drafting Committee instructed the Secretariat to include the agreed amendments and circulate the revised version of the draft definition of sexism.*

7. Presentation of the appendix to the draft recommendation by Christine Chinkin, Council of Europe expert, followed by a discussion on the draft text

The Drafting Committee discussed the draft guidelines for preventing and combating sexism, included as an Appendix to the draft recommendation.

Due to lack of time, it was not possible to review the sections on media, the workplace, the public sector, the justice sector, educational institutions, culture and sport, the private sphere, and the chapter on reporting and evaluation. The Drafting Committee agreed to send written comments on the aforementioned sections.

The Drafting Committee:

- *agreed with the overall approach to the guidelines and the format of presenting them in two main sections, covering general and specific tools;*
- *agreed to shorten the rationale, to review the text on intersectionality, and to make a number of amendments to the section on general tools and measures for addressing sexism, the sections on language and communication, the internet, social media and online sexist hate speech;*
- *agreed to include relevant references to artificial intelligence in relation with sexism;*
- *agreed to send written comments on sections III.C on The Media; III.D on The workplace; III.E on The Public Sector; III.F on The Justice Sector; III.G on Educational Institutions; III.H on Culture and Sport; III.I on the Private Sphere; and section IV on Reporting and Evaluation.*

- *instructed the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the parts of the draft guidelines appended to the draft recommendation, in line with the agreement reached, and circulate the revised version to the members of the Drafting Committee.*

#### 8. Next steps

A revised version of the draft recommendation integrating the agreement reached on the preamble, operative paragraphs, definition of sexism, and parts of the draft guidelines discussed, will be circulated to members of the Drafting Committee in March 2018.

A further meeting of the Drafting Committee is envisaged in 2018 (possibly September 2018, dates to be confirmed) in order to review and take a decision on all comments/input received.

## Appendix I

## Agenda

Thursday 1 March 2018

- 2.30 pm 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda
2. Election of Chair
3. Presentation by the « *Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes* » on the major parts of the report on sexism which is currently under preparation, followed by a discussion
- 4.00 pm 4. Presentation by Kat Banyard, Director, UK Feminista, about her organisation's work to combat sexism and about the #Metoo and related movements, followed by a discussion on their impact on the draft recommendation

Friday 2 March 2018

- 9.30 am 5. Presentation of the draft preamble and operative paragraphs of the draft recommendation, followed by a discussion on the draft text.
- 10.00 am 6. Presentation of the draft definition of sexism, followed by a discussion on the draft text.
- 11.15 am 7. Presentation of the appendix to the draft recommendation by Christine Chinkin, Council of Europe expert, followed by a discussion on the draft text
- 2.30 pm 8. Discussion on the draft appendix to the draft recommendation (contd.)
- 4.15 pm 9. Discussion on the draft appendix to the draft recommendation (contd.)
- 5.00 pm 10. Next steps

## Appendix II

## List of Participants

Representatives/Représentant-e-s

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*UK Feminista*

Kat BANYARD

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