

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 30 October 2017

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GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

Gender equality: the long road ahead

**Conference to launch the Council of Europe
Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023
(Copenhagen, 3-4 May 2018)**

Discussion document

Achieving gender equality is important to the fulfilment of the Council of Europe's mission: safeguarding human rights, upholding democracy and preserving the rule of law.

Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life. It also implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men. Even if progress is visible and the legal status of women in Europe has undoubtedly improved during recent decades, effective equality between women and men is far from being a reality. Gender gaps and structural barriers persist in many areas, constraining women's opportunities to benefit from their fundamental rights. Progress is very slow as regards women's political participation, access to justice and the elimination of harmful gender stereotypes and sexism. Violence against women is both a violation of women's human rights and a major obstacle towards gender equality. Gender equality is also not a given for men in certain spheres of life such as health, parenthood, caregiving or education.

Growing inequalities, economic difficulties and subsequent austerity policies, political uncertainties, rising nationalism, anti-gender equality agendas and religious fundamentalism and their attacks on women's rights, challenges that come with the inflow of migrants and refugees, the decrease in resources for gender equality mechanisms and policies, failure to implement agreed standards, have all created new challenges and exacerbated some of the problems that persist in society's roadmap towards full respect for women's rights, men's roles and gender equality.

The adoption of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 shows political commitment to address current and emerging challenges and to remove barriers to achieve substantive and full gender equality.

The strategy is grounded on the belief that a strong commitment to *de facto* equality between women and men at all levels and in all areas, alongside women's empowerment, a change in both women's and men's roles, including equal sharing of household and care responsibilities, ending violence against women and domestic violence and the elimination of sexism and gender stereotypes will benefit future generations and society as a whole.

Thursday 3 May 2018

9.30 – 10.00 am **Registration of participants and coffee**

Opening Session

Moderator: TBC

10.00 – 10.15 am **Welcome by host and Council of Europe**

10.15 – 11.30 am Political commitment: an imperative for gender equality
5' motivational speech by high level Danish representative
Reaction by State Secretaries/Ministers/high-level
government representatives

Q & A with audience

11.30 – 12.00 pm **Coffee break and networking opportunities**

Planet 50/50 by 2030: Reality or Utopia

Moderator: TBC

12.00 – 1.00 pm Council of Europe
UN Women
European Union
Non-governmental organisation

Q&A with audience

1.00 – 2.30 pm **Networking lunch**

Decision making: glass ceilings and sticky floors

Moderator: TBC

2.30 – 3.30 pm Council of Europe expert
Woman politician
Representative of a political party Denmark

Q&A with audience

3.30 – 4.30 pm **Coffee break and networking opportunities**

Gender stereotypes and sexism: holding women and men back

Moderator: TBC

4.00 – 5.30 pm Motivational speaker
Danish expert
Private industry

Q&A with audience

7.30 pm Networking dinner/social event

Friday 4 May 2018

Upholding human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seekers

Moderator: TBC

10.00 – 11.15 am Motivational speaker
Refugee/migrant
Non-governmental organisation

Q&A with audience

11.15 – 11.45 am Coffee break and networking opportunities

The way ahead

Moderator: TBC

11.45 am – 12.30 pm Engaging with the audience
Conference Rapporteur
Council of Europe /Danish representative

Close of Conference