

# Gender sensitive communication checklist

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## Background

**The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023** has identified gender mainstreaming in policies and measures as one of its strategic objectives. The Strategy states the Council of Europe will ensure that all new initiatives and standards are gender sensitive, this also requires adopting a gender sensitive approach in communication and visibility work that promotes the advancement of equality.

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the [Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation CM7Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism comprising a comprehensive set of measures on prevention and to condemn sexism in several areas, among them in language and communications. The recommendation notes that non-stereotypical communication is an important step to raise awareness, educate and prevent sexist behaviour.

Gender sensitive communication means using inclusive language which promotes gender equality and the equal and fair visibility of women and men. Usage of language plays a critical role in the way we shape and interpret our view of the world. By using a gender sensitive language in all our communication work we contribute to challenge gender stereotypes, instead of enhancing them. With a conscience effort in promoting a gender sensitive perspective in all our communication activities, we demonstrate to the general public that both women and men are equally benefitting from our co-operation work in a positive way.

The purpose of the checklist is to bring awareness and operationalize the usage of gender sensitive communication for project staff. For additional guidance see the Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for co-operation projects and the [gender equality glossary](#)

The checklist aims to:

- Raise awareness in usage of language and pictures in combating gender stereotypes
- Provide guidance for inclusive language in both written and visual communication
- Provide concrete suggestions on wording and methods for increased gender sensitiveness

	<b>Gender sensitive checklist</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<b>Sex-disaggregated data</b>	If reporting on data on individuals, are you ensuring collection on sex-disaggregated data?			<p>Any data on individuals should be sex- disaggregated.</p> <p>By reporting on the participation of women and men, we highlight the equal contribution of women and men, as well as communicating that our activities are beneficial for the entire society.</p>
<b>Gender stereotypes</b>	Are you conscience on combating gender stereotypes by refraining from portraying women as victims or using wording such as “women and other vulnerable groups”?			<p>Women are not victims just by being women, just as men are not privileged just by being men.</p> <p>Refrain from referring to women as victims and avoid writing “women and other vulnerable groups”. Clarify who are “other vulnerable groups” in the context of your project/activity</p>
	Are you ensuring quotations from expert opinions from both genders?			<p>When using quotations or expert opinions, quote both women and men. Achieving gender equality is not only about equal representation. It means eliminating all gender based discrimination and gender stereotypes in all areas. Sexism in the media is manifested through unbalanced representation and the lack of meaning participation of women in diverse and informative roles as experts and commentators, especially with respect to minority women. When using expert opinions, you can challenge gender stereotypes and sexism by choosing experts in non-traditional occupations, such as women in the police and prison sector and men in educational sector etc.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Equal and fair visibility</b></p>	<p>Are you ensuring usage of images that promote gender equality?</p>		<p>Equal visibility based on numbers is often not enough. Through our images we must ensure fair visibility which can be achieved by portraying men and women in a diverse set of roles and by paying attention to how they are positioned in the images we used.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gender sensitive language</b></p>	<p>Are you ensuring usage of gender sensitive language?</p>		<p>Refrain from using “male” and “female” as it refers to the biological sex and often used to define biological distinctions and to describe animals. When writing about humans we should use “woman” and “man” as it includes the gendered aspects outside of the biological sex. Grammatically “male” and “female” are adjectives, “woman” and “man” are nouns.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Female parliamentarians - Women in parliament</li> <li>- Male rate labour participation - Labour participation of men</li> </ul> <p>When referring to professions and job titles:  Policewoman or policeman - Police officer  Chairwoman or chairman - Chairperson</p>
	<p>Is your article exclusively aiming to be inclusive towards non-binary gender?</p>		<p>If yes, consider using gender-neutral language and use gender-specific pronoun (use they, them etc) or use an inclusive gender-sensitive language with alternative pronoun such as “hen”, “ze” or other pronouns according to the local context.</p>