

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (84) 17

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN THE MEDIA

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 September 1984
at the 375th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage ;

Noting that these ideals and principles include equality between women and men ;

Being aware that, as emphasised in the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the promotion of equality between women and men necessarily presupposes a change in "the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (Article 5) ;

Recognising that the media play an important part in forming social attitudes and values and offer immense potential as instruments of social change ;

Referring to the work and the results of the Seminar on "the Contribution of the Media to the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men" organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg from 21 to 23 June 1983 ;

Bearing in mind the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ;

Recalling its commitment to the principles of freedom of expression and the free flow of information as embodied, *inter alia*, in its Declaration of 29 April 1982, which enable men and women to understand political, social, economic and cultural questions better and discuss them more freely ;

Emphasising the principle prevailing in member states whereby media organisations are self-governing and independent of governments as regards particularly the content of programmes ;

Recalling its Recommendation No. R (81) 17 on adult education policy and Recommendation No. R (84) 3 on the principles on television advertising,

Recommends that the governments of member states contribute to the promotion of equality between women and men in the electronic and printed media by taking appropriate steps with a view to implementing the following measures :

1. providing those responsible for the media with documentation and information on measures and/or initiatives taken by national authorities and, if possible, by any intergovernmental organisations to promote equality between women and men ;

2. stimulating and, as far as possible, co-ordinating national research on public preferences and satisfaction in the matter of news and non-fiction programmes, with a breakdown according to sex, age, educational level, etc. ;
3. stimulating evaluation by national research of the impact and influence of entertainment programmes where sex stereotyping and prejudices are concerned ;
4. encouraging research on the selection, perception and understanding of messages, and on the appropriate use of affective and rational forms of language ;
5. promoting the development, possibly in co-operation with organisations such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), of adult education programmes to be broadcast through the media, particularly for sections of the population that are isolated from the major currents of public life, for example women in rural areas and women migrants. Programmes for these two and other target groups could be seen as part of the objectives of the "European Declaration on Cultural Objectives"¹ ;
6. encouraging adoption by the media organisations of positive action programmes to improve the situation of women, particularly at decision-making levels and in technical services ;
7. developing channels of education and training facilities for women in the new media technology ;
8. ensuring application of the principle of equal treatment between women and men as a result of rules laid down for the recruitment, training, remuneration, promotion and any other conditions of employment of persons employed in the media ;
9. encouraging the presence of women in an equitable proportion in media supervisory and management bodies ;
10. encouraging wider participation by women in talks and discussions broadcast by the media ;
11. ensuring that in publicity campaigns sponsored in the media by the public authorities, the dignity of women is safeguarded and a positive image of them is projected and also that the factual reality of relationships between women and men based on partnership is reflected without any sexual stereotyping, and that any exploitation of the bodies of women and men to draw attention to goods or services is barred ;
12. encouraging awareness in the media and among the general public of the problems of equality between women and men in the media, in particular by the nationwide organisation of meetings and seminars on this question.

1. Adopted at the 4th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs (Berlin, 23-25 May 1984).