

## THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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### **Recommendation 148 (2004)<sup>1</sup> on gender mainstreaming at local and regional level: a strategy to promote equality between women and men in cities and regions**

The Congress,

1. Recalling that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;
2. Recalling that achieving effective equality between women and men is an integral part of these ideals and principles and that equality between women and men is a fundamental dimension of the protection and promotion of human rights and constitutes a strong indication of the quality of democracy;
3. Having regard to the Declaration of equality of women and men, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 November 1988;
4. Bearing in mind the objectives set out in the declaration and platform for action adopted by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995);
5. Underlining the gender mainstreaming approach, adopted in 1996 by the European Commission (Commission Communication of 21 February 1996 “Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities” COM (96) 67 final) and consolidated in the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005);
6. Recalling Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the member states on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making adopted 12 March 2003;
7. Having regard to the Declaration on equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy, adopted by the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between women and men (Istanbul, November 1997);
8. Welcoming the report on gender mainstreaming, produced by the Steering Committee on Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) in 1998, setting out the conceptual framework for gender mainstreaming and a methodology for its implementation, accompanied by examples of good practice;

9. Recalling that the CDEG defined gender mainstreaming as the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making;

10. Welcoming Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R (98) 14 to member states on gender mainstreaming, inviting them to draw inspiration from the CDEG’s report and implement the strategy at national level, and the Committee of Ministers’ Message to Steering Committees of the Council of Europe on gender mainstreaming, encouraging them to use this strategy in their programmes of activities;

11. Welcoming the report on gender mainstreaming, produced by the Steering Committee on Equality between Women and Men (CDEG), setting out the conceptual framework for gender mainstreaming and a methodology for its implementation, accompanied by examples of good practice;

12. Believing that the most important prerequisite for gender mainstreaming to be effective is political will;

13. Recalling its work in promoting women’s participation in local and regional authorities, in particular the report by Patrizia Dini, Resolution 85 (1999) and Recommendation 68 (1999) on women’s participation in political life in the regions of Europe,

14. Calls on member states of the Council of Europe to:

- a.* evaluate the current situation of men and women, including by collecting statistics (gender disaggregated statistics) in order to define policies and assess the impact that gender has on who benefits, or does not, from particular policies;
- b.* adopt a gender equality policy and develop national action plans to implement equality between women and men and to promote gender mainstreaming as a strategy, in the framework of the definition, implementation and evaluation of the policies and actions carried out by the government;
- c.* implement the recommendations and specific measures outlined in Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to the member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
- d.* adopt specific consultation methods to discover the views, wants and needs of women and men about the policies and services they are responsible for in order to improve the participation of women and men in the decision-making that concerns them;
- e.* assess new and existing policies for their impact on women and men and change them if necessary to ensure fairness;

*f.* monitor policies to see if the results of changes are having the required impact;

*g.* establish or strengthen the structures and machinery, ensuring that they have the necessary financial and human resources to carry out these actions;

*h.* consider using existing performance-management processes to establish targets to implement gender mainstreaming;

*i.* adopt a variety of measures to raise the awareness of civil servants at national level about the impact their procedures and practices have on the beneficiary women and men and to encourage and embed change;

*j.* introduce effective and on-going training programmes for civil servants, including in national public administration, so that they can collect and interpret gender equality indicators, take them spontaneously into account in their field of action and carry out effective consultation exercises, carry out gender impact assessments when defining, implementing and evaluating policies and action and establish effective monitoring and evaluation to assess progress, notably based on the good practices developed by national training centres in Europe;

*k.* contribute to a collection of good practices in the area of gender mainstreaming and to ensure their dissemination;

*l.* promote the practice of gender mainstreaming through procurement policies and with other organisations that run public services;

*m.* promote awareness-raising of the importance and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in the media and through education at all levels;

15. Invites the Council of Europe:

*a.* to pursue its activities in the field of gender mainstreaming, notably by developing appropriate instruments for the implementation of this strategy, identifying good practices and supporting the setting-up of networks, as well as the publication and dissemination of the results of the work in these fields;

*b.* to incorporate gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting within all its actions and activities;

*c.* to pursue its activities on the issue of gender budgeting, as a specific application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process, and publish and disseminate the output of the work in this field in order to raise awareness in the member states about this new concept.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 27 May 2004, 3rd Sitting (see Document. CG (11) 10, draft recommendation presented by Britt-Marie Lövgren ( Sweden, L, NR), rapporteur.