

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

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English only

Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 March 2024

The Advisory Council on Youth warmly welcomes the adoption of the new Gender Equality Strategy for 2024-2029 by the Committee of Ministers. Approved two days preceding International Women's Day, this is the Council of Europe's third and latest Gender Equality Strategy and a crucial milestone in ensuring the continuous commitment of the member States to ensure access to equal rights for all.

The Strategy's importance is emphasised by the concerning climate of anti-gender movements and anti-rights policies in an increasing number of European countries. We see the dangerous trends of gender-based discrimination and violence being dismissed by regressive narratives fuelled by misinformation and sexist hate speech. The Strategy cements the Council of Europe's leading role in the area of gender equality and mainstreaming by paving the way for the member States' work and co-operation on closing the gender gaps in many critical spheres of public and private life.

While acknowledging the great relevance of the Strategy, we want to highlight the significant value of placing young people at the centre of the conversation on gender equality. Young women are disproportionately affected by gender-based discrimination in different fields and consistently face numerous challenges stemming from gender stereotypes, institutional biases, and societal norms. Thus, it is imperative that young people be recognised as key stakeholders and actively involved in addressing and combating these structural inequalities.

A noteworthy issue, raised in the strategy is the gender-based violence affecting the lives of young women, who are disproportionately targeted by sexual harassment, domestic violence, threats, online violence and abuse, violence in public spaces and often have to endure short and long-term mental and physical health consequences. Furthermore, young people – especially young women and gender minorities – are often under-represented in political decision-making processes and leadership positions, which impedes the full functioning of our democracies. Therefore, integrating an intersectional approach to gender equality in all policies and measures, as embedded in the Strategy, is needed to create more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable solutions that address discrimination and oppression faced by youth and other marginalised groups, such as LGBTI+, Roma and Travellers, women in rural areas, migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women.

The Advisory Council on Youth endorses and commits to the objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 and encourages member States to dedicate sufficient resources to actively tackle the backlash against human rights and structural gender inequalities faced by young women and girls.

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.