

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)****8 March 2023***English only***Statement of the Advisory Council on Youth on  
8th March International Women's Day**

On this year's International Women's Day themed "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", we celebrate women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education. IWD 2023 explores the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities while also spotlighting the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence.

Recognizing the influential role of digitalization in shaping societies today as well as for the future, and the underrepresentation of women and girls in the digital sector, we support a gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology and digital literacy that can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement. Accessible education on human rights and digital citizenship is needed to ensure women and girls full and free participation in social life. The underrepresentation of women and girls across the creation, use, and regulation of technology not only limits their digital participation but also the transformative potential of technology as a whole – women's exclusion from the digital sphere has shaved \$1 trillion off the GDP of low and middle income countries in the last decade.

The Advisory Council on Youth calls on Member States and Youth Organisations alike to reaffirm full support of actors committed to protect women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment through the core values of the Council of Europe, as well as to combat all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence. The Advisory Council on Youth sees intersectional initiatives like the upcoming event under the Icelandic Presidency in cooperation with the Council of Europe SOGI unit on *preventing and combating violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ women in Europe* as innovative example of how this institution can lead approaches to tackle particular challenges of citizen groups who often are left forgotten. We encourage Member States to use this year's International Women's Day to actively promote yet more inclusive initiatives of women's involvement and active participation through digital means for a sustainable, fair and equitable society. The Advisory Council on Youth will continue to promote active cooperation through the Council of Europe youth sector – highlighting the efforts made by local, national and international youth organisations, both by working to empower women and girls to play an active and prominent role in the digital technology sector as well as actively working together and supporting civil society in Member States.

*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.*