

Report

**The 5th International Conference
on Men and Equal Opportunities:
Men Who Care**

**3-4 September 2020
Estonia**

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Methodology

This report of the 5th International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities (3-4 September 2020, Estonia)¹ has been compiled by the Conference Rapporteur from a variety of sources, primarily active attendance online across the two days of the Conference, coupled with the following further information: the Conference concept note; pre-information from speakers and panel chairs; the keynote abstract; speakers' powerpoints (especially Aavik 2020a; Barker 2020; Hultman 2020; Mogensen 2020; van der Gaag 2020); summaries from workshop moderators; questions and comments from the online chat function; and video recordings. The panels consisted of an introductory expert talk on Challenges, followed by reflections from other panel members on Searching for Solutions or Providing and Supporting Solutions, and responses to the questions and comments in the online chat. The workshops were structured with, first, Food for Thought inputs, followed by those on Inspiring Action, then questions and discussion. Most of the workshop texts here are slightly edited versions of the Moderators' summaries. The attempt has been made to summarise the Conference presentations accurately within the space limits of this report; advance apologies are offered for any inaccuracies. The report summarises the Conference proceedings (see Conference Programme in the Appendix), with some brief Rapporteur commentary, before conclusions and recommendations. The summaries cover a range of perspectives, and thus are not to be taken as necessarily meeting the Rapporteur's or the Conference organiser's agreement on all points. The assistance of the conference organising team from the Equality Policies Department of the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, especially Kelly Otsman and Kätlin Sander, has been invaluable in producing this report.

Background

Despite wide-ranging efforts, achieving real gender equality is still an unmet challenge across all spheres of society all over the world. To achieve full gender equality, there is a critical need for active contribution by women, men, and further genders.

In addressing men, masculinities and gender equality, and building on much long-term preparatory action, the 1995 Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women was a crucial step:

The Platform for Action emphasises that women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world. ... The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. (United Nations 1995: sections 3, 41)

¹ 5th ICMEOP programme, the speakers' biographies, presentations and video-recordings are available at the dedicated homepage of the Ministry of Social Affairs: <https://www.sm.ee/et/uritused/5th-international-conference-men-and-equal-opportunities-men-who-care>

Since then, these issues have been increasingly taken up in the UN and other national and regional governmental political and policy discussions, alongside long-term critical scholarship on men, masculinities and gender relations, much of it involving policy-orientated research. In 2003, the UN's Division for the Advancement of Women organized a worldwide online discussion forum and expert group meeting in Brasilia on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality as part of its preparation for the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, with the following comments:

Over the last decade, there has been a growing interest in the role of men in promoting gender equality, in particular as the achievement of gender equality is now clearly seen as a societal responsibility that concerns and should fully engage men as well as women. (Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations 2003: section II)

The importance of men's and boys' active participation and responsibility as actors of change for gender equality, and their role as co-beneficiaries of gender equality policies, has thus been widely acknowledged in principle by many powerful institutional actors. However, this general awareness is not often backed up by long-term policy commitments and initiatives.

The question of men and gender equality figures, as a matter of principle, at different levels of European co-operation. For example, the *Council of Europe's "Gender equality strategy 2018-2023"* underlines the importance of men's and boys' participation and responsibility as actors of change for gender equality and the role of men working towards gender equality in public and private spheres. It emphasises that inclusion of men is needed, both as active promoters of women's human rights, and as beneficiaries of gender equality policies. The *European Commission's "Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025"* emphasises a focus on men, boys and masculinities in prevention of violence, and stresses that both parents need to feel responsible and entitled in family care, and that women and men should equally share caring and financial responsibilities. Gender equality work with a focus on men and masculinities is one of four priorities of the *"Nordic co-operation programme on gender equality for 2019-2022"*. It proposes that men and masculinity issues must be raised explicitly in gender equality work, and that current masculinity norms, both privileging and creating risks for boys and men, should be spelt out. More knowledge on masculinity, men, and gender equality is needed. However, general awareness is not very often put into practice by policy measures. With initiatives frequently project-based and limited in scope or time, the Nordic gender equality co-operation programme stresses a more long-term and prioritised commitment.

Following up from the work of Germany (2012), Austria (2014), Luxembourg (2016) and Sweden (2018), the 5th International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities (ICMEO) was held on 3-4 September 2020 in Estonia,² and organised by the Equality Policies Department of the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, in co-operation with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the European Institute for Gender Equality. The general aim of this series of conferences is to address both the issues of involving more men in promoting gender equality and of gender-specific challenges men face, including those due to restrictive gender norms. The 5th ICMEO aimed to "give further impetus for taking decisive steps towards achieving

² Due to COVID-19 and resultant constraints and uncertainties, the Conference was organised in hybrid format, enabling active virtual participation for speakers and registered participants.

gender equality and for developing such commitment and action”, “provide a space for furthering discussions and learning from each other’s experiences”, “take a positive and proactive approach, bring forward good and promising practices and search for innovative initiatives.” Furthermore, the Conference concept note asserted that: “Men should be seen and should see themselves as important actors in promoting gender equality and solving gender inequality related challenges in modern societies, especially those related to care, as well as beneficiaries of gender equality policies.”

The Conference had the specific theme of “Men Who Care”, that is: men’s responsibility to care for oneself, care for others, and care for the well-being and environmental sustainability of societies, including the promotion of gender equality. The focus on men, care and responsibility also meant addressing such wider societal challenges as: men’s shorter life expectancy, unequal sharing of care for children between women and men, labour market impediments women face, increasing care burdens with ageing societies and increasing dependent old people, labour shortages in the care sector, violence against women in private and public, online and offline, and standstills or backlashes in gender equality policies.

The Conference targeted a wide range of actors: gender equality policy-makers, researchers and experts; policy-makers, researchers and experts from related fields, such as youthwork, labour market, family policies, social inclusion, gender-based violence, environment; decision-makers, policy-makers and officials from international organisations; and other stakeholders, including in civil society. Both challenges and good, promising practices were discussed, with 68 speakers, approximately equal number of women and men, from at least 24 countries, among them policy-makers, researchers and activists; as well as contributions by online chat in the panels and in the workshops, from amongst the 433 registered persons.

Conference opening

The Conference was opened by the welcoming speakers: **Tanel Kiik**, Minister of Social Affairs, Estonia; and **Mogens Jensen**, Minister for Food, Fisheries and Equal Opportunities, and Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2020. The Conference theme of men and care was introduced, along with the multiple meanings of care, and a positive and optimistic note was struck by both speakers in considering the relations of gender, equality and society. The focus on men was opened up in terms of responsibilities, rights and opportunities, and the frame of both the problems that men create and the problems men experience.³ It was emphasised that any focus on men must also at the same time support women. Key issues of unequal gender divisions of labour, parental leave, and violence against women, as well as the costs thereby incurred, were highlighted.

³ This frame was developed in the EU Framework 5 CROME (Critical Research on Men in Europe) project: ‘The Social Problem and Societal Problematisation of Men and Masculinities’, 2000-2003 (Hearn & Pringle 2006).

Videoed high-level addresses

High-level representatives of previous organising countries of ICMEO provided videoed addresses. **Xavier Bettel**, Prime Minister, Luxembourg, made the basic and overwhelming case for the equality of all people. **Franziska Giffey**, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany, emphasised the complex, and contradictory, social expectations facing men, and boys, and how these questions of men, care and equality are a priority within the German EU Presidency. **Susanne Raab**, Federal Minister for Women and Integration, Austria, noted the diverse aspects of policy on men and gender equality, including the centrality of men's involved fatherhood, gender-equal sharing of care work, and the relations of work and private life; and **Rudolf Anschober**, Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria, continued on other policy areas, including gender gaps in pensions and violence, and then spoke at greater length on the Boys' Days project in Austria, introducing boys to the care sector and other 'non-stereotypical' jobs, as well as promoting life planning, and their wide take-up across many institutions and organisations. **Åsa Lindhagen**, Minister for Gender Equality, Sweden, spoke to the importance of questions of anti-segregation and anti-discrimination in governmental policy, and of learning and linkages across countries. These were all highly positive inputs.

Keynote: Expanding the circle of compassion

The Conference keynote was presented by **Kadri Aavik** (Tallinn University), on: *How men are expanding the circle of compassion: What vegan men can show us about care*. Animal justice is a social justice issue, and the consequences of consuming other animals for human beings are multiple: dangerous jobs in slaughterhouses, typically performed by racialised/ethnicised people; climate change impacts on vulnerable countries and communities in the Global South; and the rise in environmental refugees. Moving beyond Anthropocentric thinking, expanding feminist intersectional paradigms to include further species, and working towards more ethical and sustainable food practices, are urgent. Aavik also spoke on how in past decades, questions of gender equality and social justice more broadly have been increasingly linked with issues of ecology and sustainability. More recently, the role of men and masculinities has been examined in this context. The concept of ecological masculinities (Hultman & Pulé 2018) has been used to describe men's doing of gender in ways that support gender equality and ecologically sustainable ways of living, seeing these two aspects as intertwined. The current escalating climate crisis points to a profound lack of care for (non)human others and the Earth. The keynote examined these themes as part of expanding the circle of compassion, with a focus on humanity's massive consumption of other animals for food as a key driver of climate change. The links between meat eating and some forms of masculinity were noted. Within this context, of particular groups of men whose everyday food practices contribute to less violent, more caring and sustainable ways of living, vegan men stand out as an interesting case. Vegan men could be seen as active participants in a "sustainable food transition" (Twine 2017: 1). Vegan men can disrupt the link between hegemonic masculinity and meat eating (Adams 1990/2010), recognised as a powerful element in dominant constructions of masculinity, with positive implications for gender equality. The keynote speech demonstrated how feminist approaches to care inform policy and practice on how veganism could serve as a pathway for men to move towards more sustainable, egalitarian ways of living. Drawing on

interviews with vegan men in Finland and Estonia, Aavik argued that veganism can constitute one tangible way for men to cultivate and practice greater care towards (non)human others, the environment and the self. The keynote was a major intervention expanding the debate on men, care and gender equality, in multiple ways in resonance with many further urgent matters of environment and sustainability (see Aavik 2020b),⁴ including in relation to the ongoing COVID pandemic. Some of the issues raised were also taken up in the Panel 3: Men caring for environmentally sustainable societies.

Panel discussions

Panel 1: State policies supporting active fatherhood

Moderator **Christian Veske** (European Institute for Gender Equality)

The introductory speech, *Unlocking the power of men's care: Can the challenges of COVID bring about positive change*, from **Nikki van der Gaag** (Promundo), overviewed men's contribution to childcare and unpaid domestic tasks worldwide, and the huge discrepancies between women and men. For example, in Europe and Central Asia men spend less than half the time that women spend on unpaid work, and the difference between women's and men's share of unpaid care work has reduced by only 7 minutes a day over the last 15 years. Moreover, many women and men disagree on the extent to which childcare and housework is shared (Oxfam/Promundo 2020). In January 2020, Oxfam estimated that unpaid care and domestic work contributed to the global economy three times that of the world's tech industry (Oxfam 2020b). Improving laws and policies, changing social and gender norms, building the economic and physical security of families, helping couples and co-parents to thrive together, and putting individual father's care into action are all important parts of what is necessary for change. The MenCare campaign "50 minutes [more care work by men a day], 50 percent [of care work]"⁵ was advocated. Unpaid care work needs to be Recognised (unpaid and poorly paid care work mainly by women and girls as work), Reduced (total time of unpaid care), Redistributed (unpaid care work more fairly; shift responsibility to state and private sector), Represented (regarding the most marginalised caregivers) (Elson 2017).

Overall key messages from van der Gaag were the importance of: parental and paternity leave that is fully paid and non-transferable; high level commitments by international organisations and governments; investment in care services, specifically improved and affordable quality childcare and elder care and infrastructure; flexible working for parents and caregivers; policies and practices to prevent violence and support survivors; social protection for families that are vulnerable to poverty, including the expansion of family/child benefits. In addition, the continuing gender pay gap needs to be addressed, along with ensuring that women, in particular women of colour, do not disproportionately lose their jobs. Data should be collected and disaggregated by gender, as well as by race, sexuality and disability, among other dimensions. The last section addressed gender inequalities in the COVID era (e.g. men's

⁴ This presentation drew on Aavik's postdoctoral research in the project "Climate Sustainability in the Kitchen: Everyday Food Cultures in Transition" (2018-2021), University of Helsinki, funded by the Kone Foundation.

⁵ <https://men-care.org/what-we-do/advocacy/the-mencare-commitment/>

domination of decision-making; women doing 70% of care work; increased IPV; gender impacts on food consumption), and opportunities presented for revaluing care:

“The global community now has a fundamental choice: we can either recycle failed austerity measures, which are likely to further deepen inequalities, or set things right by enabling a recovery that re-values care, encourages men to play full and equitable roles in unpaid care, and builds an inclusive feminist future.” (Oxfam 2020a: 7).

In *Searching for Solutions*, **Christine Aumayr-Pintar** (Eurofound), an author of Eurofound (2019) report “Parental and paternity leave – uptake by fathers”, outlined variations and trends in parental leave across Europe, with some very limited provision in some countries. This research shows that in Europe there are a high number of parents, both men and women, who are not eligible for parental leave. She emphasised the interdependence of closing the gender pay gap and changing the domestic division of labour, and the need for both increasing leave provisions and for more flexibility in work and employment. **Jens Karberg** (MÄN) addressed issues around equal parenthood in Sweden, with one of the most inclusive parental leave schemes in Europe, and with up to four people able to share the leave. Compensation is still, however, too low for lowly paid workers, so putting pressure on the least earning parent. **Véronique De Baets** (Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men) spoke about the move to greater flexibility in parental leave in Belgium, and how that has assisted men’s take up. **Carla Tavares** (Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE)) addressed experience in Portugal in seeking to increase men’s share in care-taking activities, including through positive awareness-raising campaigns. **Van der Gaag** spoke of multiple initiatives outside Europe on men and care, from which European countries can look for inspiration and learn.⁶ Several speakers spoke of the need for legally entitled, non-transferable parental leave, to stop discrimination by employers, and how policy and practice can be extended to groups that are at times forgotten as parents, such as marginalised groups, refugees, same-sex couples, so all men are engaged in care-taking at home.

The chat discussion raised further issues, such as: helping men become more confident in their capacity of taking care of children; training men to care for children so they do not have to practice “trial and error” on children; the need for addressing not only the quantity of care time-wise when thinking about parental leave, but also quality of care and the actual reality of families. Some of the issues raised in the Panel were taken up further in Workshop 2.

Panel 2: Preventing and countering gender-based cyber violence, online hate speech and anti-gender/misogynistic online-movements

Moderator: **Marina Kaljurand**, Member of the European Parliament for Estonia, former Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Challenges were set out in *Angry young men* (and then Even angrier young men) by **Christian Mogensen** (Danish Center for Digital Youth Care) with a prime focus on digital

⁶ Among many useful sources, see, for example, Sweetman (2019).

radicalisation. He outlined a model of some young men's possible movement along a dimension from happiness to sadness, ostracism, loneliness, unhappiness, despair, anger, noting an assumption among some young men that unhappiness and vulnerability, for example, are not (to be seen as) manly, then leading onto radicalisation, in some cases (Mogensen & Holding Rand, 2019). For some young men, 'resolving' this situation of unmanly vulnerability is found by escaping that unwanted uncertainty, seeing dangers elsewhere, and blaming others, within a more confined, self-contained, masculinist online community – albeit in different ways between Alt-Right (with links to white supremacists) and Incels (feeling oppressed by women). Both groupings favour what they might see as a form of 'egalitarianism', within a newly found 'brotherhood', whilst fearing progressive external change. Such 'counter-cultures' have their opinion leaders and role models. Mogensen spoke of research and interventions against these tendencies, through open and closed forums, case studies, interviews, and early phase interventions.

In Searching for Solutions section, **Michael Flood** (Queensland University of Technology, Coordinator of XY online), spoke on interventions in: changing social, economic conditions and pathways; empowerment and educational strategies; and rehabilitation. He also addressed the general issues of anti-feminist discourses, as well as the more specific question of those online spaces that are in themselves harmful. **Christoph May** (Hetox Magazine, Detox Masculinity Network) discussed the harmful aspects of all-male monocultures, and the need to create safe, secure online spaces, that recognise men's structural power. He spoke of the need for key rules or principles online: speaking of men in terms of masculinities; recognising intersectionality within intersectional feminism and profeminism; not attacking other people's tone of voice, voice or emotions; and no victim blaming. **Iris Luarasi** (GREVIO, Council of Europe; Counselling Line for Men and Boys, Albania) began by noting high levels of online abuse of women and Black journalists, and some results from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) study of violence against women: 18% of women in Europe experienced some form of cyber violence since age 15, corresponding to about 9 million women; 77% of women who have experienced cyber harassment experienced at least one other form of sexual or physical violence from an intimate partner; risk of a suicide attempt 2.3 times higher for a victim of cyber violence than non-victims. She reviewed policy change developments in Europe, such as France having recently adopted a law strengthening the definition of cyberbullying to include cyberbullying from "digital raids" by several persons acting in concert. Discussion on synergies between the Istanbul Convention and the Cybercrime Convention are ongoing. GREVIO has approved the terms of reference of the Working Group on a General Recommendation on the Digital Dimension of Violence against Women. **Tuija Saresma** (University of Jyväskylä) turned attention to the question of the affective aspects of anti-feminist and misogynist online communities, and the importance of affirming an intersectional approach to the issues at hand. **Seán Cooke** (Men's Development Network) returned to the theme of sadness, sense of loss, and slowness in emotional expression, and argued for a (personal/interpersonal) developmental approach, which was based in love, respect and dignity, including online, in working with men. **Sam de Boise** (Örebro University) argued that the issues raised by cyber violence are actually not new. Rather, he saw current trends as part of the 'eternal masculine', and even noted the 'rational' aspects of such online forums (in their own terms). He also highlighted the wider picture of how these forums of young men can be deliberately manipulated and used by political actors.

Discussion points raised ranged widely, including on: the implications of technological change online, for example, deepfakes; the need for monitoring, alongside national and international legislation, law enforcement and prevention; and how a focus on the influencers who promote and capitalise on the anger and vulnerabilities of young men can be accompanied by support for vulnerable young men too. The positive potential of credible ex-forum members as You-Tube influencers was noted. These “angry young men” do not recognise the existence of a patriarchal system, let alone it being designed to discriminate women, but also affecting men negatively. To approach this lacuna require recognising the concept of privilege. Anger is not only among young men, but older men too, who also tend to be most powerful and therefore most dangerous. The role of pornography in normalising violence against women and misogyny was raised; yet states are reluctant to tackle this. States should do more to address online sexual harassment and abuse.

Panel 3: Men caring for environmentally sustainable societies

Moderator: **Marion Pajumets** (independent researcher)

The Challenges were introduced by **Martin Hultman** (Centre for Studies of Climate Change Denial (CEFORCED); Chalmers University of Technology) in the framework of *Ecocidal logic at the end of the Anthropocene*. The urgent challenges for environmentally sustainable societies are multiple. They include urgent challenges around energy production and consumption (with 83% from fossil fuels globally), water (as evidenced by e.g. melting glaciers, droughts, expanding oceans), and tipping points (as in Siberia, Greenland, the Amazon region). These challenges are mirrored by uneven power distributions within and between societies (inequality, racism, militarism, lobbyism, widespread hunger, absence of human rights, and the massive wealth of the richest 1 percent). Hultman outlined how these challenges are themselves complicated and exacerbated by human denial (as in denial of climate science, and belief in end-of-pipetech); the continuation of laws facilitating extractivism; and values based in industrial/breadwinner or ecomodern masculinities. These challenges and crises were related by Hultman to rule by men and heteromascularity, whether industrial/breadwinner masculinities, ecomodern masculinities promoting ‘ecological modernisation’ or rebranded masculinity, rather than more thoroughgoing change in ecological masculinities (drawing on masculinities politics, deep ecology, ecological feminism and feminist care theory) (Hultman & Pulé 2018). Hultman analysed these urgent issues in relation to capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy.

In the Searching for Solutions, **Marina García Alonso** (Directorate-General for Climate Action, European Commission) introduced the EU Climate Pact on Climate Action to be produced in November 2020. While the problematic aspects of men and masculinities were not yet included in these documents, feedback and input into this ongoing EU process were welcomed by Alonso. **Bob Pease** (Deakin University; University of Tasmania) spoke on societal questions of the relations of (pro)feminism, gender, men, privilege and masculinities. He argued for going beyond current formulations of and rebranding of masculinity, as in some forms of hybrid masculinity, to a feminist politics of men, masculinities, anti-violence and environment. He linked environmental sustainability to the politics of violence and anti-violence. **Kadri Aavik** (Tallinn University) highlighted the importance of activism around men, masculinity and ecology change in relation to policy development and research.

The end discussion was extensive, raising further important questions especially around environment, economy and violence. A crucial question was if hegemonic masculinity reflects power relations intrinsic to capitalism – to what extent can we change this masculinity in a more sustainable direction, without changing the economic system? Similarly, how could capitalism and patriarchy be dismantled fast enough to avoid a total collapse? It was suggested that the environmental crisis deepening even more is what is needed for systemic instead of incremental change. Questions raised from the online chat included: whether a more equal sharing of power between men and women would help tackle climate challenges; whether climate change denial related more to ignorance, fear, or perhaps both; and could it be that the understanding of what is going to happen rather soon is already too scary to acknowledge and therefore easier to deny. It was also commented from the online chat that destruction of nature is going on faster than ever, so much so that there seems to be some sort of anger towards the environment and all that is living, with angry old men expressing their frustration. People can fight for their rights, forests cannot. Attention was also drawn to MenEngage Alliance discussion paper on Men Masculinities and Climate Change.⁷

Panel 4: State commitment to promoting gender equality with and for men

Moderator: **Rait Kuuse** (Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs)

The Challenges were introduced by **Gary Barker**⁸ (Promundo) in the presentation *Privilege, power and cost: Acknowledging the complexity of male allyship in gender equality policies*. Barker summarised key findings from IMAGES national surveys.⁹ These included that: many younger men are supporting gender equality, but change is not linear and backlash is increasing; men tend to accept gender equality more in countries with greater economic and political stability; many young men are buying into gender equality, yet may still support a tough guy version of manhood; early childhood gendered experiences matter, which means that involved fatherhood tends to bring benefits later, while receiving and witnessing violence in early life tends to have continuing negative effects; and men who support gender equality are happier and healthier. Barker outlined five challenges to building support for and engaging men in gender equality, with, first, the challenge of making visible the societal costs of harmful, restrictive masculinity. Having harmful male attitudes is associated with: suicide ideation, binge drinking, traffic accidents, and depressive symptoms; experiencing physical bullying (2-4 times more); perpetrating physical bullying (3-7 times more); sexual harassment and other violence against women or girls (3-6 times more). A second challenge is convincing men that gender equality has not been achieved, even with the gender unemployment gap (11% in EU), gender wage gap (16% in EU), women doing more care work (1.2-2 times in Europe), and men's violence against women. Third, the Men's Rights backlash is real and not going away, as with Incels, MGTOW, the Manosphere, and many young men thinking feminism has gone too far. Next, care work needs to be looked at beyond parental leave. Such leave only goes so far. Under COVID, men are doing more care work, but inequality continues. There is the need for men to support childcare and elder care and see the unpaid and paid

⁷ <http://menengage.org/men-masculinities-and-climate-change-a-discussion-paper/>

⁸ Some technical issues meant that Barker's input was provided in shorter time at the end of the panel.

⁹ <https://promundoglobal.org/programs/international-men-and-gender-equality-survey-images/>

care work agenda as their agenda too. A final challenge is including vulnerable men and men's vulnerabilities, and doing so in a relational, intersectional way – for example, understanding men's health and lower life expectancy without it being pitted against women's health, and attending to the needs of migrant, ethnic minority, low income men. Barker concluded with key points on men and gender policies: 1) national care plans and policies; 2) national men's health agendas linked to women's and children's health; 3) national plans and campaigns for male allyship in gender equality from school age onward; 4) national plans on violence prevention with early primary prevention, parent support and restorative justice; 5) regular data collection on men's attitudes and behaviours; 6) engaging men as allies.

In discussing Providing and Supporting Solutions, **Katharina Greszczuk** (German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth) reflected on priorities, with Germany having been the first country hosting an ICMEQ conference. The importance of policies and practices on men and gender equality within the German Presidency of the Council of the EU programme was reasserted, including action on gender-based violence and the protection of women. **Karin Strandås** (Swedish Ministry of Employment) spoke about drawing on the experience from the previous ICMEQ conference in Stockholm. The Stockholm conference theme of the situation of some boys in schooling and education was discussed, as well as the continuing importance of working against gender-based violence across society. **Charles Ramsden** (Gender Equality Commission, Council of Europe) described some of the continuing inequalities in Europe, for example, men's domination in management generally and health leadership particularly, as a key issue in the COVID pandemic, and women contributing three times as much unpaid work compared to men. He reaffirmed the Council of Europe's commitment to enhancing men's contribution to gender equality and gender equality debate. **Lopa Banerjee** (UN Women) gave an expert overview of the gains that have been made in recent years for girls and women globally, for example, in education and poverty reduction, before turning to various problems women and girls still face, including sexual and physical (intimate partner) violence, discriminatory laws, and lack of legal protection, and emphasising the powerful pushback and connected reversal of rights in many societies, particularly in areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights. She also pointed out even further negative impacts of COVID which could set back gender equality by a generation and that dramatic steps are needed to prevent this. She emphasised the critical role of men in leadership in taking feminist action and policies. **Ralph Kass** (Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality Between Women and Men) explained how the 3rd ICMEQ conference organised in Luxembourg in 2016, helped to change mentalities in the society and in organisations dealing with gender equality, invigorate open discussions on issues of care also from the perspective of men, and show clearly the need for more men in care work and for work-life balance also for men, and that stereotypes concern men and boys as well. He mentioned that specific projects can provide opportunities to further discussions.

In the discussion, the impact of early childhood experiences on boys and men, moving from gender equality in abstract to gender equality in practice, and addressing boys and men directly, were noted as important. At the EU level, there is a need to bring Member States who are backsliding in terms of gender equality back around the table. In governments' promoting of gender equality, both consistent messaging and financial support are needed; from a governmental point of view, it can still often be difficult to convince the general public that gender equality is a key issue. Working together across national and federal government/local government/civil society remains a major challenge.

Workshops

Workshop 1: Men sharing the burden of professional care work

Moderator: **Mari-Liis Sepper** (Praxis Centre for Policy Studies)

In the workshop, issues around men working in the care sector, persisting gender stereotypes and gender equality were discussed. **Alexia Delfino** (Bocconi University) examined why men do not tend to enter social work. Drawing on a nationwide field experiment on an innovative hiring design that might help attract men in female-dominated jobs, Delfino argued that “breaking down the barriers” to men’s entry can improve diversity and overall quality of the workforce. Contrary to common understanding, the expectations of rewards to skills matter more to men than barriers related to gender composition. **Blandine Mollard** (European Institute for Gender Equality) overviewed EIGE’s research on gender segregation in the care sector. Across the EU-28, men make up under 30% of all care professionals (health professionals 28%, education workers 27%, cleaners and helpers 16%, personal care workers 12%). Mollard discussed why care work is so gendered as women’s work. In conventional economics that distinguishes ‘productive’ and ‘unproductive’ work, the work done by men is widely acknowledged, with most men considered economically ‘productive’, while women engaged in full-time household care are commonly viewed as ‘not working’ and ‘unproductive’. Feminist economists have theorised the concept of ‘care work’, overcoming the distinction between the spheres of ‘care’ and ‘work’. The neoclassical devaluation of care translates into the labour market, where paid care is stereotypically considered a ‘woman’s job’ and underpaid compared to male-dominated sectors. The concentration of women in low-paid sectors and occupations is primarily due to the disproportionate burden of care on their shoulders, thus contributing to maintaining the gender pay gap. On a policy level, gender segregation still remains neglected in gender equality policies. This might change somewhat since the COVID-19 has shed light on the essential role of care and low societal value given to it; some countries are acting on this in increasing investment and salaries in the care sector.

Daniel Holtermann (Dissens - Institute for Education and Research) talked about the international project BOYS IN CARE – Strengthening Boys to pursue Care Occupations”, that, among other things, challenges gender norms associated with care work. The project has developed and disseminated tools for teachers and vocational counsellors to support boys in atypical vocational choices. One of the lessons from the project has been that, when addressing boys about career options in the care sector and overcoming gender stereotypes linked to care work, it is important to explain the role of care in our daily life and to diversify images and ideas people commonly have about the care work. **Blake K. Smith** (American Association for Men in Nursing) discussed caregiving history, and barriers men face when considering nursing as a career option, focusing on persistent gender stereotypes linked to care work. Blake enlisted number of reasons why nursing is an excellent career option, such as flexible hours, return on investment, high moral prestige of nursing profession nurses as one of the most reliable of professionals. **Catarina Lindahl-Petäjä** (Health and Social Care College in Kronoberg) would have discussed changing gender norms at the College, and whom they want to attract to nursing programmes.¹⁰

¹⁰ Due to technical reasons, the presentation was not given.

During the discussion, the need to empower care professionals, men and women, was highlighted, along with improving working conditions in care-related jobs. The issue of the self-care of carers also needs attention, as care jobs often attract people who tend to put the needs and wishes of the others above their own, which may in turn lead to burnout. The discussion evolved also around gender stereotypes, and it was observed that more action is needed to overcome gender stereotypes associated with care in order to attract more men into care sector. There are many initiatives and campaigns to attract girls to the STEM and ICT sectors, but less attention to issues around boys choosing a career path in care.

Workshop 2: Active fathering and shared parenting

Moderator: **Bredesen Nordfjell** (Reform – Resource Center for Men)

Bredesen Nordfjell started the workshop by asking what is needed for the fathering revolution to continue? Building on the concept of a ‘fathering revolution’ (Løkke 2000), and the IMAGES surveys, Nordfjell argued that over the last 20 years there has been a fathering revolution – fathers taking a stance against distant, authoritarian fatherhood; wanting equal relationships with partners; wanting to have contact with own feelings, and be emotionally available for their children, and learning to know them when growing up. Of course, this development is not as strong everywhere, and the timelines are different, but it is a global phenomenon. So, how can policy and institutional practices promote this development and make the fathering revolution manifest itself – also in the situations where parents split up?

From her research, **Emma Fransson** (Stockholm University and Uppsala University) described how an increased number of children in Sweden now live with both parents after they split up (joint physical custody). For many parents this is becoming the preferred alternative, with better psychological and developmental outcomes for children. The development is connected to other social policies such as maternal employment and availability of day care. Gender equality policies and post-divorce arrangements are closely linked. The possibility to have a work-life balance for all genders in the first place was the main message in talk of **Kaori Hayashida** (Fathering Japan). Employees, and especially men in the time of life that many become fathers, are expected to work long hours. And the overall gender gap in time use for informal household and care work is large. In 2016 in Japan, mothers of children below six years of age spent on average ten times more time than fathers on childrearing, and five times more time on housekeeping. The Fathering Japan organisation targets employers with a multitude of measures and courses. Underpinning the quality of life aspect of gender equality, one of the indicators the organisation has adopted in their work is the “number of smiling fathers”. If a society has a large gender gap in childrearing and in income-generating work, as in Japan, the same gender gaps will be reflected in most parents’ custody arrangement after divorce. **Anna Tarrant** (University of Lincoln) continued giving, in her talk, a broadened sense of fathering with case-stories from research on grandparenting. These involved grandfathers not just adjusting to an ideal of contributing grandparents but working hard to live up ideals of contemporary fathering that they never acquired when parenting their own children.

In different ways, many of the speakers asserted the need, on micro- and macro-levels, for cooperation and support for active fathering, and for fathers cooperating and supporting mothers. Even though cooperation can be difficult, many parents manage it. From an interview study of parents of children of 0-4 years with equally shared arrangements, Fransson gave examples of good practices: sharing pictures; preparing the child for who is

picking them up that day; if emotions make cooperation difficult, keeping cooperation business-like; using neutral communication; using apps to calculate who should pay what. Parenting skills are not set once and for all, said Fransson, as exemplified in a quote from one of her interviewees, a mother of a three-year-old: “Part of why we separated was because he wasn't an engaged parent, but he is now and that's great.”

One of the participants in the workshop asked: after a split up, if the child's needs are to be put first, what kind of support or counselling are to be given to the fathers. Any support or counseling is positive, **Markus Theunert** (männer.ch.) answered bluntly, because fathers often have a great need for social and moral support, whilst informal or formal support measures are non-existent or scarce. He underlined that that escalation of conflict should be avoided, and it is important to keep the dialogue between the parents going. Theunert and **Elina Klavina** (Foundation Tēvi) are experienced in providing support for fathers after divorce and gave examples from their work, such as parental skill courses, divorced fathers support groups. Theunert presented a number of “lessons learnt” from Männer's work with fathers, and fathers after divorce, for example, pregnancy and birth constitute a sensitive period concerning paternal involvement, and being engaged as a father from the beginning is key to prevent divorce; in the case of divorce, the traditional male breadwinner risks finding no way back into the family; and always remember: it's not about “men versus women”, it's about “gender equality and sharing fairly versus gender inequality and sharing unfairly”.

Nordfjell complemented the organisers on deciding to have a workshop about fathering and shared parenting in a European governmental gender equality conference. The workshop, and the ICMEQ conference, give a clear signal for the need of this policy shift. Shared custody and parents' situation after divorce must be part of state gender equality policies. He summed up that, although we have had a fathers' revolution, this is not the case everywhere. Going further means shared responsibility and involving the women's movement. Organisations working for men and for men as caregiving fathers have to work together and not opposing feminists' strategies and feminist organisations.

Workshop 3: Primary and secondary prevention of gender-based violence

Moderator: **Roman Krölov** (Estonian Social Insurance Board)

The workshop discussed the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) through work with perpetrators, and why and how this work should be organised. The speakers brought many conceptual ideas and practical recommendations for the effective organisation of work with people who perpetrate violence. Article 16 “Preventive intervention and treatment programmes” of the Istanbul Convention 2011 was presented as the main argument, which requires countries that have ratified the Convention to implement preventive programmes. Speakers brought examples of inspiring actions that they have been involved in within their organisations and in collaboration with others.

Jan Vrkoč (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt¹¹) highlighted that gender-based violence will not stop unless men stop using violence, and emphasised that, if

¹¹ Federal Association for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Germany.

perpetrators are not held accountable, the next partner could be the next victim. The key question is not “why” or “if” perpetrator work should be done, but “how” it needs to be done. As an example of such work, he cited standards developed in Germany based on the Social-Ecological Model. Among the core content elements of perpetrators’ programmes, Vrkoč named: examination of perceptions of violence and violent actions; reconstruction of violent acts and the effects of violence; developing non-violent strategies of behaviour and communication patterns; emergency planning; exploration of male and female images and gender stereotypes; parental behaviour, role and responsibility as a father; and perpetrator’s own experiences as a victim.

Katja Zabukovec Kerin (Slovenian Association for Nonviolent Communication) presented a vivid account of 25 years of experience of her organisation in the field of victims’ assistance and work with people who have perpetrated violence. The speaker highlighted the necessity to start prevention of GBV at an early stage, to stop violence before it begins. As an example of such inspiring actions, she spoke of the training of kindergarten and schoolteachers, organising workshops for children and youth in schools, and individual work with children and youth at risk. In the context of prevention of GBV, she noted the importance of developing programmes for perpetrators. The speaker also told about programmes training social skills for perpetrators, training of parental skills (including for women), caring dads’ groups, groups for teenage boys, and individual counselling. She stressed that participation in such groups or counselling should not mean avoidance of criminal punishment for the person perpetrating violence. According to speaker’s expertise, the most effective way could be based on a combination of criminal sentence and participation in treatment or training groups.

Alessandra Pauncz (European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN)) presented the main achievements of the organisation in the field of primary and secondary prevention of gender-based violence. WWP EN is a large network which is now becoming the main European hub of knowledge, highly qualified expertise and training for many professionals, who work in a field of combating violence. According to the organisation’s mission, violence in close relationships should be addressed, as a gender-based phenomenon. Improving the safety of women and children is possible through fostering gender equality and promoting effective work with perpetrators. Pauncz emphasised that providing effective work with perpetrators means that victims are safe, the voices of women and children are heard, and perpetrators’ behaviour is changed. The importance of evaluating the outcomes of perpetrators’ programmes and obtaining comparable data from different programmes across Europe was stressed, as, for example, with large-scale studies conducted in 2018 in the UK and IMPACT project measures implemented by WWP EN. Information was also shared on further WWP EN projects in different areas that focus on: the development of better forms of collaboration between perpetrators programmes and women’s support services; setting up programmes which work within the prison system and also provide connection with a therapeutic community when perpetrators leave imprisonment; helping front line professionals to recognise “help requests” from the perpetrator or the person with problematic behaviour; and projects directed to migrants and safety online.

Hannah Mars and Patrick Engels (Emancipator), told about their efforts in preventing violence by transforming masculinity norms among youth. The speakers emphasised that gender justice and feminism issues are not only about women and LGBTQ+ people, but men also have to contribute to this agenda, and also gain from that. This latter process is also a challenge to social norms and societal expectations regarding men and masculinity. According to the

speakers, violence against women happens in a context that excuses, normalises and reinforces sexism, gender inequality and violence. The speakers presented a very useful visualisation of this thesis – a pyramid, which showed that actions like rape, assault or murder (which are not normalised or accepted in society) and actions like victim blaming, sexist jokes, locker room talks, homophobia, unequal treatment (that are often accepted and normalised in most contexts) are two parts of one problem. The existence of the upper layers of the pyramid is supported by the presence of the lower levels.

The various speakers stressed that, for effective violence prevention, working with masculinity norms amongst boys and young men, projects directed to youth, and involving men in awareness-raising campaigns are crucial – as is work with people who perpetrate violence proceeding from the baseline of victim safety. The main objective of programmes should be prevention of further violence. The focus should be on increasing acceptance of responsibility by those who perpetrate violence, and their learning to use non-violent communication strategies. Participation in such activities should not relieve offenders from criminal punishment. In the discussion, the audience raised the topic of prostitution and the problem of demands for sex as gender-based violence.

Workshop 4: Men, masculinities and ageing

Moderator: **Häli Tarum** (Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs)

The Food for Thought section was introduced by **Miranda Leontowitsch** (Goethe University Frankfurt). She explained initially: how age and gender are both social categories that are continuously produced and reproduced with variations depending on time and place; how power relations among men, and between men and women, in relation to other social categories have been conceptualised through hegemonic masculinities; the concept of caring masculinities, with its roots in critical studies on men and masculinities and feminist care theory;¹² and “doing age”. The difference between caring for (in practical tasks) and caring about was clarified. Following this, some results from the ALMA project on older men living alone were outlined via case studies. The qualitative study has researched older men living alone, taking care of somebody and in meaningful relationships with others, and how care work as a form of agency featured in the men’s lives. The notion of caring masculinities allows an examination of how the men oscillate between their gendered privilege of seeing care as “women’s work”, and care as agency within a life-stage of shrinking possibilities. In terms of equality, older men living alone and caring for others contribute to gender equality, albeit in small ways. **Naoki Kondo** (Kyoto University) continued from a social epidemiology perspective, seeing gender as an important determinant of health, and noting how crisis tends to widen health gaps. After retirement, men become vulnerable in the community or at home. The social determinants of health include daily living conditions, strength of governance, and health equity. The JAGAS study is an intervention study in 16 municipalities providing communities with diagnostic data and supporting health sectors on how to utilise it. The result was that this participatory intervention brought more support for men than women. Partnerships beyond health sectors are critical to address gender inequality in health. He also

¹² The concept of caring masculinities has been foregrounded in recent years, e.g. in the EU project ‘FOCUS – Fostering Caring Masculinities’ (Hrženjak et al. 2006), and the wide-ranging EU project *Study of the Role of Men in Gender Equality* (Scambor et al. 2013) on many relevant aspects of men, masculinities and gender equality.

reported that “toy hospitals”¹³ where older men fix toys, connecting them and children in the community are popular in Japan.

In the Inspiring actions section, **Josep M. Armengol** (University of Castilla-La Mancha, international project “MascAge” Cultural Representations of Ageing Masculinities), reported on the MascAge project that is analysing intersections between masculinity and ageing studies, and rethinking older men and masculinities through studies of their engagement in cultural, literary and film resources. He reported on historical and literary studies of old men, and later commented on how suicide is higher for older men than for older women in many cultures. **Kaupo Lõhmus** (Meeste Garaaž [Men’s shed]) noted how one of the main necessities of life and the basis of well-being is communication with other people; a man is a human who needs meaningful relationships. Through communication, positive emotions are experienced, new goals set, and understanding of different life events gained. The Meeste Garaaž organisation offers opportunities to create new relationships and to take part in meaningful activities, with initiatives on what to do coming from the men themselves. Meeste Garaaž is not focused on one hobby, but the sharing of experiences from different areas of life. The organisation also arranges popular lectures on health topics for the men. **Christine Milligan** (Lancaster University) spoke more broadly on the expanding number of Men’s Sheds in the UK, and their bringing men together around an activity, not just being in the same room. She described how increasing numbers of lonely and socially isolated older men present risks for health and well-being, and reported that service provider organisations find it difficult to engage older men in generic non-gender specific social activities. The Sheds offer gendered spaces in which older men can still perform their masculinity, whilst providing spaces for the promotion and maintenance of health and well-being amongst older men. Milligan suggested that as an intervention for older men, it appears to work best as ‘health by stealth’ approach.

Among the many points raised on the chat discussion, the issues raised included: the need to focus on preventing the negative aspects of ageing on men, not just dealing with consequences, as now; and the question of how is it that there are still gender-specific activities for men in their old age, when placing the issue within the broad frame of gender equality developments? Discussion continued on whether older men adapt their notions of masculinity to a more “forgiving” or accepting standard as a means of coping, and does it become less vital to be defined as a “man” and more important to be a “good person” with an increased need for relationality as a form of agency. In a gendered society, there can be a tendency to translate all-human characteristics into being “a real man” or “woman”, even if they might involve the same characteristics. While caring masculinity seems a fruitful concept through which to renegotiate hegemonic masculinity, the question remains: what makes it specifically masculine? Is it the fact that the care is done by men or more than that?

Workshop 5: Men promoting gender equality

Moderator: **Karel Parve** (independent expert)

In the Food for thought section, **Sandy Ruxton**¹⁴ (MenEngage Europe) was going to focus his

¹³ <https://www.toyhospital.org/>

¹⁴ The workshop was delayed due to some technical difficulties, which resulted in the non-participation of Sandy Ruxton. However, as the organisers had his materials, some parts of what he was going to share is included in this summary. For fuller information, see the paper by Ruxton (2020).

presentation on the challenges and opportunities for men to be involved in different aspects of gender equality. As the main challenges in increasing men's involvement in gender equality, he emphasised the societal pressure on men and boys to conform to traditional gender norms and from that a general apathy or resistance to change. The main opportunities to foster greater involvement of men in the area would come from highlighting the benefits of gender equality for men and considering the diversity among men themselves. Importance should be placed on focusing on the various opportunity moments in men's lives and understanding the process of change for men. Men can act as change agents in a variety of social sites and activities, as in relation to early childhood, schools, fatherhood and care, the environment, anti-violence initiatives, organisations and workplaces, and the broader mobilising of men.

Subsequent speakers focused on examples of how men who have understood the opportunities that arise from an equal status between men and women have taken action to foster that change in their sphere of influence: how men can be powerful change agents in educational settings, care environments, anti-violence programmes and campaigns, and environmental and social justice movements, and at senior levels in various organisations. **Ander Bergara** (Emakunde), for example, stressed the idea of redefining masculinity and the fact that equality can be seen as making men more manly. It means giving the ideas of what is manly and a manly man a new meaning – how showing vulnerability takes much courage, independence, and a strong sense of self: traits that are traditionally considered to be more masculine. **Gerhard Hafner** (Psychologist, UN Women Germany) and **Fikri Anil Altıntaş** (Author and #HeForShe Catalyst for UN Women Germany) discussed in their shared presentation how the #HeForShe movement shifted focus during the COVID pandemic – namely, how the need to shed light on the importance of shared care work at home came about, with all members of the household in an equal position (i.e. in quarantine). Nonetheless, the main takeaway was that male advocates, when they come together, are still very much engaged with the support of women. **Troy Roderick** (Male Champions of Change) shifted focus to the growing number of CEOs in Australia who are looking towards creating more equal environments for men and women. The idea was that men invented the system, men largely run the system, and men should also take responsibility in changing the system. It is not the oppressed who should build spaces for these conversations to happen, but those who hold dominance in the situation who should. **Jake Stika** (Next Gen Men) and **Lana Wells** (University of Calgary) shared their insights in creating a gender equality index (8 indicators, 42 practices) in helping men identify their pro-feminist actions. Their presentation was a good way to end the session; they concluded that the main findings and recommendations to foster positive change are to: invest in existing male leadership, bring pro-feminist men together, give men and boys the opportunity to learn and educate themselves on the topics.

Among the questions raised from the audience were: what is one policy measure that governments should undertake in their Gender Equality Strategy to include men in promoting gender equality? It was also commented that: the longer men are engaged in the household, the better is the outcome, and that parental leave should be at least 6 months and mandatory; schools and curricula should include gender equality; and progressive employers should remove the terms, primary and secondary caregiver.

Conference closing

The Conference closed with brief feedback of some key points from the proceedings: first, the Conference Rapporteur's conclusions and recommendations (see next Section), followed by positive and affirmative closing remarks on the theme of *Europe needs to care more about care*. First, **Carlien Scheele** (European Institute for Gender Equality) spoke on the question of how men can contribute to gender equality, and what may hold men back from so contributing. To engage men in gender equality can lead to what may sometimes be difficult conversations. In addition, there are large variations even across the EU Member States in expectations around how men and women behave or should behave. Policy development is also uneven, as, for example, with the limited access to and eligibility for parental leave in many parts of the EU, and in terms of parents' employment status. Attention was then turned to violence, interpersonal violence (mainly against women and children, sometimes against men), and rising domestic abuse in the COVID pandemic. These are urgent challenges for individual men, groups of men, and Member State policy and practice. Work against violence is complicated by the rise of cyber violence, hate speech, and anti-gender narratives. The implications of these developments are far-reaching, for example, self-censorship of journalists, and women's fear of speaking out online. Cyber violence is not yet legislated against at the EU level, though there are national initiatives. All these issues need to be taken up at management levels in EU and other institutions. In short, we need to care more about care. **Liina Kanter** (Equality Policies Department, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs) gave the closing speech of the Conference, with thanks to all concerned – the speakers and moderators, all the institutional, national, ministerial, and Member State and EU partners, the local organisers, the listeners and participants, and the technical support and entrepreneurs – for making this a successful conference. She looked forward to the continuation of this work and the next ICMEQ Conference in two years' time.

Conference Rapporteur's conclusions and recommendations

When the words, "gender" and "gender equality", are mentioned, the conversation still often, for various reasons, soon turns to women and girls. On one hand, women and women's voices have long been, and continue to be, subordinated; on the other, to limit work, policy and politics for gender equality and women's empowerment as a task only for women may let men off the hook, and may even suggest that women, rather than men, have to change.

First, some basic principles on work on men, boys and gender equality need to be set out:

- Men, boys and gender equality work need to be part of broader gender equality work and empowerment of women and girls
- Men and boys are diverse, intersectional, and both gender- and sexuality-diverse
- Work with men and boys means working across structural contexts, privilege, practical policy/action/initiatives, changing behaviour, and across all levels and sectors of society: supranational, national, federal and local governments, and civil society
- The theme of care and caring masculinities is powerful, for: self, others, the planet.

More **specific recommendations** from the Conference for more specific areas now follow.

Active care/caring/fathering, shared parenting:¹⁵

- Challenge and change masculine norms distancing men from women and family
- Provide support to men seeking to take equal responsibility in childcare
- Extend care leave, flexible working of different kinds, for parents and caregivers
- Extend legally entitled, fully funded, non-transferable parental leave, as a legal obligation on employers
- Connect reducing gender pay gap and increasing men's care work at home
- Ensure that women, particularly women of colour, do not disproportionately lose their jobs
- Provide social protection for families vulnerable to poverty
- Promote shared custody of parents after divorce in state gender equality policies
- Refocus economy to increase support for and valuing of care and education
- Extend policy and practice to groups that are at times forgotten as parents, e.g. marginalised groups, refugees, same-sex couples

Men sharing the burden of professional care work:

- Increase the valuing of care and investment in care services - improved affordable quality childcare and elder care and infrastructure
- Increase the proportion of men in professional care work
- Increase action to educate, encourage and attract boys and men into the care sector
- Empower care professionals
- Improve work conditions in the professional care sector
- Promote the self-care of carers, work against lack of self-care in masculinity norms

Primary and secondary prevention of gender-based violence:

- Enact policies and practices to prevent violence and support survivors
- Ensure those who perpetrate violence are held responsible, including through criminal punishment combined with intervention and preventive work
- Work to stop violence at all levels: zero tolerance, change social conditions, law/regulation/policy development, education, empowerment, rehabilitation
- Implement Article 16 "Preventive intervention and treatment programmes" of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention)
- Build gender violence prevention into education system at all levels
- Provide all young people with information and analysis about the roots of the widespread problem of gender-based violence, along with education and training on how they can play their part in prevention
- Encourage men to join/support (pro)feminist groups and movements dedicated to building gender equality and ending violence

Preventing and countering gender-based cyber violence, online hate speech and anti-gender/misogynistic online movements:

- Recognise dangers of men-only, monocultural, homosocial, misogynist online spaces – for participants, those affected, and use by authoritarian politics and politicians

¹⁵ Drawing on Panel 1 and Workshop 2.

- Work to stop gender-based cyber violence at all levels (as in the previous section)
- Implement (preventive) interventions with men and boys in such online movements
- Create and encourage alternative online forums, with credible facilitation and voices
- Strengthen law reform and regulation: via the Istanbul Convention and the Council of Europe; and working with IPs, social media platforms and other institutions

Age and ageing:

- Develop gender equality policies and practices with, for, by old(er) men
- Facilitate and support care by men
- Expand this relatively underdeveloped policy area that has often been mainly health or medical in orientation
- Work to prevent negative aspects of ageing, rather than dealing with consequences
- Engage old(er) men, including those isolated, alone, and with mental health challenges, e.g. through promoting meaningful aspects of life besides work, and friendships, and non-work activities
- Develop suitable and diverse social spaces for old(er) men, which may be gender-specific and/or gender-diverse, age-specific and/or age-diverse

Men promoting gender equality:

- Assess the factors and obstacles in encouraging men to promote gender equality
- Highlight benefits of gender equality for men, and women, boys and girls, children and young people
- Include gender equality, men's involvement in care in education and school curricula
- Realise the potential of key moments, e.g. becoming a father, ending relationships
- Address the problems that some men experience, and the problems men create
- Men promoting gender equality – in whatever context, organisational, state, social movement, group, individual – should build alliances and accountability with women and women's groups
- Men promoting gender equality, in organisations, states, social movements, groups, and as individuals, need to engage with environmental issues and movements
- In gender equality initiatives, involve men who are in senior levels of organisations
- In government initiatives, use clear public statements on why men and boys should be involved in gender equality strategies, and the reasons for men and boys to support gender equality

State commitment to promoting gender equality with and for men:

- Gain high-level leader commitment in governments and international organisations
- Make clear the issues of privilege, power and costs in current ways of being men
- Acknowledge the complexity and contradictions of male allyship in gender equality
- Make visible the societal and financial costs of harmful, restrictive masculinity, in terms of, e.g. perpetrating and receiving violence, ill-health, suicide, life dissatisfaction
- Challenge myth that gender equality is achieved
- Bring change in care work broadly, beyond parental leave
- Engage with conservative backlashes, and how they work against male allyship for gender equality
- Make visible needs of vulnerable boys and men, and men's vulnerabilities broadly

- Change men in leadership and men's leadership in taking feminist action and enacting feminist policies across state, institutional and civil society

Men caring for environmental sustainability:¹⁶

- Recognise the urgency of the situation of the Planet!
- Reduce gender gaps in attitudes, practices and actions
- Promote (gender equality) policies and practices on and in relation to men, the environment and sustainability, including men's non-exploitation of non-humans, and working against climate change
- Make environmentally sustainable food policies and practices a priority, for individuals, institutions and governments, e.g. disconnecting meat-eating, masculinity and men
- Promote veganism, as a practical step for men
- Transform (institutional) food politics, e.g. in schools, workplaces
- Facilitate movement towards ecological masculinities, in and by e.g. policy development, leadership training, activism
- Oppose the eco-suicidal logic of the (m)Anthropocene
- Move from linear economies to the promotion of circular economies
- Enact environmentally sustainable policies and practices on, for example, extraction, water, transport, energy, the oceans, amongst other arenas

In addition, there are a number of **Cross-cutting Conclusions: the 10 Cs**

- Keep *Continuity* with and extend progressive policies; use previous research studies
- *Collect* data disaggregated by gender, as well as ethnicity/race/racialisation, sexuality and disability, among other dimensions
- Understand how *Care* – as against violence – is a strong synthesising theme
- Recognise the importance of *Context*, and the need to *Change* underlying social and economic *Conditions*, including resource distribution and allocation
- Maintain *Commitment* to and make *Connections* between the policy areas above
- Recognise the inequalities arising from and reinforced by *COVID-related Crises*; and use the COVID-caused situation as an opportunity for change

Reflections for the Future and Further Actions

Different men, as individuals, groups and collectivities, can have complex, even contradictory, relations to gender equality and other (in)equalities, between: men's power and privilege, and marginalisation and suffering of some men; and engaging men in gender equality, and caution against recentring of men, dissociation from violence (Burrell 2020), and remasculinisation (van Huis & Leek 2020) and redirection of policy. The relation of men and gender equality is neither a zero-sum game, nor a simple win-win situation. Greater gender equality does not mean that if women gain, men automatically lose; but neither does it mean that women's gains are necessarily always immediately beneficial for all men. With women's and girls' empowerment, men and boys, in different social positions, as individuals, groups and collectivities, are likely to face reduced formal power and domination over resources, but

¹⁶ Drawing on the Keynote and Panel 3.

also unevenly gain, not least in reductions of violence, war, armed conflict and ecological damage, and the experience of happier and healthier lives.

Further High Priority Areas for Future ICMEO Conferences and Policy Change are:

- first, gendering what may appear, to some, as ‘non-gendered’ policy areas, such as foreign policy, transport, agriculture, forestry and security (Hearn 2015)
- second, questions of migration, racism, xenophobia, authoritarianism and colonialism
- third, violence, violence against women, cyber violence and the manosphere
- fourth, the economy, finance, business corporations and capitalism, and
- finally, the urgency of caring for the Planet within the (m)Anthropocene.

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Appendix: Conference programme

The 5th International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities: Men who care

3-4 September, Tallinn

Programme

Thursday, 3 rd of September 2020	
09.00 – 09.30	Logging in
Moderators: Marleen Pedjasaar and Siim Vahtrus, SpeakSmart	
Opening Session	
09.30 – 09.50	Opening remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Tanel Kiik, Minister of Social Affairs, EstoniaMogens Jensen, Minister for Food, Fisheries and Equal Opportunities and Minister for Nordic Cooperation; Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2020
09.50 – 10.00	Opening performance
Keynote speech	
10.00 – 11.00	<i>How men are expanding the circle of compassion: what vegan men can show us about care</i> Kadri Aavik, Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Tallinn University
11.00 – 11.30	Networking break
Panel 1 – State policies supporting active fatherhood Moderator: Christian Veske, Stakeholder Relations Officer, European Institute for Gender Equality	
11.30 – 11.45	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Unlocking the power of men's care: Can the challenges of COVID bring about positive change</i> Nikki van der Gaag, Senior Fellow, Promundo
11.45 – 12.45	Searching for solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Jens Karberg, Project Manager, MÄNChristine Aumayr-Pintar, Research Manager, EurofoundVéronique De Baets, Attachée, Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and MenCarla Tavares, President, Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE)Nikki van der Gaag, Senior Fellow, Promundo

12.45 – 13.00	Questions and discussion
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
High-level addresses	
14.00 – 14.15	Video addresses by high-level representatives of previous organising countries of ICMEO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, Luxembourg • Franziska Giffey, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany • Susanne Raab, Federal Minister for Women and Integration, Austria • Rudolf Anschober, Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria • Åsa Lindhagen, Minister for Gender Equality, Sweden
Panel 2 – Preventing and countering gender-based cyber violence, online hate speech and anti-gender/misogynistic online-movements Moderator: Marina Kaljurand, Member of the European Parliament for Estonia, former Minister for Foreign Affairs	
14.15 – 14.30	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Angry Young Men</i> Christian Mogensen, Special Consultant, Danish Center for Digital Youth Care
14.30 – 15.30	Searching for solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Flood, Associate Professor, Queensland University of Technology, Coordinator of XY online • Christoph May, Researcher, Hetox Magazine, Detox Masculinity Network • Iris Luarasi, First Vice-President of GREVIO, Council of Europe, Executive Director of the Counselling Line for Men and Boys, Albania • Tuija Saresma, Senior Researcher, University of Jyväskylä • Seán Cooke, CEO, Men`s Development Network • Sam de Boise, Senior Lecturer, Örebro University • Christian Mogensen, Special Consultant, Danish Center for Digital Youth Care
15.30 – 15.45	Questions and discussion
15.45 – 16.15	Networking break
Parallel workshops	
16.15 – 18.00	Workshop 1: Men sharing the burden of professional care work Moderator: Mari-Liis Sepper, Equality Policies Expert, Praxis Centre for Policy Studies
	Food for thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexia Delfino, Assistant Professor, Bocconi University • Blandine Mollard, Research Officer, European Institute for Gender Equality

	Inspiring action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Holtermann, Researcher, Dissens - Institute for Education and Research, international project “Boys in Care” • Catarina Lindahl-Petäjä, Business Manager, Health- and social care College in Kronoberg • Blake Smith, President, American Association for Men in Nursing
	Questions, discussion, conclusions
16.15 – 18.00	Workshop 2: Active fathering and shared parenting Moderator: Ole Nordfjell, Chief Adviser, Reform – Resource Center for Men
	Food for thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Fransson, Researcher, Stockholm University and Uppsala University • Anna Tarrant, Associate Professor, University of Lincoln
	Inspiring action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markus Theunert, Director, männer.ch • Elīna Kļaviņa, Head of the Board, Foundation Tēvi • Kaori Hayashida, Director of Fathering Japan
	Questions, discussion, conclusions
16.15 – 18.00	Workshop 3: Primary and secondary prevention of gender-based violence Moderator: Roman Krõlov, Anti-violence hotline Coordinator, Estonian Social Insurance Board
	Food for thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan Vrkoč, Member of the Board, Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt
	Inspiring action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanga Aziz, Co-founder and Chair, Locker Room Talk • Katja Zabukovec Kerin, President, Slovenian Association for Nonviolent Communication • Alessandra Pauncz, Executive Director, WWP European Network • Hannah Mars and Patrick Engels, Project Officers, Emancipator
	Questions, discussion, conclusions
16.15 – 18.00	Workshop 4: Men, masculinities and ageing Moderator: Häli Tarum, Head of Social Welfare Department, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs
	Food for thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miranda Leontowitsch, Senior Researcher, Goethe University Frankfurt • Naoki Kondo, Professor, School of Public Health, Kyoto University
	Inspiring action:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josep M. Armengol, Senior lecturer, University of Castilla-La Mancha, international project "MascAge" • Kaupo Lõhmus, Member of the Board, Meeste Garaaž • Christine Milligan, Professor, Lancaster University
	Questions, discussion, conclusions
16.15 – 18.00	Workshop 5: Men promoting gender equality Moderator: Karel Parve, independent expert
	Food for thought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandy Ruxton, Honorary Research Fellow, Durham University, MenEngage Europe
	Inspiring action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troy Roderick, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Insights, Male Champions of Change • Ander Bergara, Head of Institutional Cooperation Area, Emakunde • Gerhard Hafner, Psychologist, UN Women Germany and Fikri Anıl Altıntaş, Author and #HeForShe Catalyst for UN Women Germany • Jake Stika, Executive Director, Next Gen Men and Lana Wells, Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Associate Professor, University of Calgary
	Questions, discussion, conclusions
18.00	End of day 1

Friday, 4th of September 2020	
Moderators: Marleen Pedjasaar and Siim Vahtrus, SpeakSmart	
Panel 3 – Men caring for environmentally sustainable societies	
Moderator: Marion Pajumets	
09.30 – 09.45	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>On the verge - Politics at the End of the Anthropocene</i> Martin Hultman, Associate Professor, Chalmers University of Technology
09.45 – 10 .45	Searching for solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Pease, Honorary Professor, School of Humanities and Social Science, Deakin University, Adjunct Professor, Institute for Social Change, University of Tasmania • Marina García Alonso, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Climate Action, European Commission • Kadri Aavik, Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Tallinn University

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Hultman, Associate Professor, Chalmers University of Technology
10.45 – 11.00	Questions and discussion
11.00 – 11.30	Networking break
Panel 4 – State commitment to promoting gender equality with and for men Moderator: Rait Kuuse, Deputy Secretary General on Social Policy, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs	
11.30 – 11.45	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Privilege, Power and Cost: Acknowledging the Complexity of Male Allyship in Gender Equality Policies</i> Gary Barker, President & CEO, Promundo
11.45 – 12.45	Providing and supporting solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ralph Kass, Advisor, Luxembourgish Ministry of Equality Between Women and Men • Katharina Greszczuk, Head of Division of Gender Equality Policy for Boys and Men, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth • Karin Strandås, State Secretary to Minister for Gender Equality, Swedish Ministry of Employment • Charles Ramsden, Chair, Gender Equality Commission, Council of Europe • Lopa Banerjee, Director, Civil Society Division & Executive Coordinator, Generation Equality Forum, UN Woman • Gary Barker, President & CEO, Promundo
Closing session	
12.45 – 13.05	Conference Rapporteurs` conclusions and recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Hearn, Professor, Örebro University
13.05 – 13.30	Closing remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Europe needs to care more about care</i> Carlien Scheele, Director, European Institute for Gender Equality • Liina Kanter, Head of Equality Policies Department, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs
13.30	End of conference