



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## **Gender Equality Expert CONF/GEE(2016)RAPACT**

### **2016 ACTIVITY REPORT**

Gender equality is still a main priority for states, but budgets do not seem to be keeping up so as to permit the transition from *de jure* to *de facto* equality.

Having adopted a gender equality strategy for the period 2014 to 2017 with the unanimous support of its 47 member states, the Council of Europe is currently working on a new strategy to be implemented from 2018. This focus for the Council of Europe entails the participation of the Gender Equality Expert in the work of various decision-making and discussion bodies on this subject. The Council and its member states are confronted with challenges following the influx of displaced persons, and equality issues are key in looking after these refugees. The rise of populism in various member states is a concern for human rights and gender equality.

#### **1. Representation of the Conference of INGOs on Council of Europe commissions and committees or follow-up of work**

**1.1. The Gender Equality Commission** of the Council of Europe. It is mainly composed of members appointed by states and was chaired until 31 December 2016 by Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ukraine. It was set up in 2012 to help to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality in Council of Europe member states and to honour international commitments in the interests of European women and men, because everyone benefits from measures to promote equality. Genuine equality cannot come about in any other way. States take stock of the progress of their legislation and public policies and work has been done in various areas.

The Gender Equality Commission's various publications draw on the subjects that have been studied and followed up: gender equality, combating gender stereotypes and sexism, combating and preventing violence against women, guaranteeing women's access to justice, balanced participation in decision-making, and gender mainstreaming. ([link to the publications](#))

- 10-12 February 2016 in Strasbourg, seminar on "combating sexist hate speech" ([link to the report – English only](#))
- 27-29 April 2016 in Strasbourg, 9th meeting of the Commission ([link to the meeting report](#))
- 30 June–1 July 2016: Conference "Are we there yet? Assessing progress, inspiring action - the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017". The aims of this thematic

conference, organised by the Gender Equality Commission in partnership with the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, were to discuss the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, highlight progress and results, and exchange ideas for the preparation of the next Strategy

- 16–18 November 2016, Strasbourg: On the occasion of the Commission's 10th meeting, an exchange of views took place with the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights ([link to the Commissioner's work in this area – English only](#))

## **1.2. Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly**

- 11 March 2016, Council of Europe, Paris
- 9 September 2016, Senate, Paris
- 13 October 2016, Strasbourg
- 6 December 2016, Council of Europe, Paris

Outside personalities are frequently asked to speak, and the parliamentarians present the various reports to be found on the website, such as those on the role of women in the armed forces, cyberdiscrimination and online hate speech, the inclusion of people with disabilities, discrimination and violence against women refugees, migration from a gender perspective: empowering women as key actors for integration, the fight against female genital mutilation, putting an end to sexual violence and the harassment of women in public, the promotion of human rights and the elimination of discrimination against intersex persons, etc.

## **1.3. The Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention met on 26 April 2016 for the third time.**

States are continuing to ratify the Convention and they will soon be joined by the European Union. Parliaments are playing a key role. Ms Acar, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), said the evaluation procedure had begun with Austria and Monaco, marking the start of the implementation of the Convention. In March 2016, a very extensive questionnaire had been developed, which was addressed to states but was also very useful for NGOs wishing to contribute to the shadow report that they could draw up when their country was assessed.

The Gender Equality Expert, who represents the Council of Europe Conference of INGOs, informed the Committee about a future event to be organised by University Women of Europe and supported by the network Women Against Violence Europe. It is due to be held on 20 May 2016 at the ancient theatre in Syracuse, Italy.

#### **1.4. The Steering Committee for Human Rights, whose Conference of INGOs representative is Jean-Bernard Marie**

Following the sending out of a questionnaire on genital mutilation and forced marriages, which the Gender Equality Expert passed on to the Conference of INGOs, a drafting group responsible for drawing up a best practices tool for states to combat female genital mutilation and forced marriages, chaired by Rob Linham, United Kingdom, met on 21 to 23 September 2016.

#### **1.5. The Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape**

Eurimages has set up an *ad hoc* working group to draw up a recommendation on the presence of women in the audiovisual industry. The first meeting was held on 1 and 2 December 2016 at the OECD in Paris with a mixed panel of female directors, video games specialists and journalists.

### **2. Active involvement in the Conference of INGOs**

The Gender Equality Expert was present at all the meetings of the Conference of INGOs held in 2016. She proposed a strategic plan.

- 28 January 2016: organisation, at the Council of Europe, of a meeting on equality and on the contribution of the Istanbul Convention with Carolina Lasén Diaz and Cécile Gréboval, respectively Head and Programme Advisor of the Gender Equality Unit; Johan Friestedt, Administrator in the Violence against Women Unit and Secretariat member responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Ms Lasén Diaz described the dynamics of public communications without gender stereotyping. She gave the floor to two INGOs to enable them to describe their work, Bettina Hahne on behalf of Soroptimist International of Europe, and Evgenia Giakoumopoulou on behalf of ACCESS.

Various contacts were established with the Congress of the Regions.

21 June 2016: throughout the year, the Human Rights and Religions working group worked on a questionnaire to which about 1,000 replies were received. It resulted in a side event on the subject of *Are religions a place of emancipation for women? Progress and setbacks*, which met with a lively response.

The Expert also carried out various representation missions, including:

- 30 May-3 June 2016, speech at the Conference of European Churches
- 20 June 2016, *Sexism and Racism* in Strasbourg with the participation of young people, with animations on sexism and stereotypes.
- 17-18 October 2016, 3rd International Conference on Men & Equal Opportunities (ICMEO)
- 25 November 2016, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, speech on the Istanbul Convention at the Rouen Prefecture.

### **3. Lobbying activities**

- On the Istanbul Convention
- On the presence of women on boards
- In connection with COP 22
- On the CEDAW
- On equal pay for women and men

I wish to thank the following for their invaluable help and support: all the INGOs members of the Conference and those in the process of joining us, the Conference staff and President, the members of the Conference's committees and working groups and the various Council of Europe departments and INGO-Services, and everyone involved in our work, including Marion Minis, Edith Lommerse, Renée Gérard, Sonia Bressler, a philosopher who runs my blog, Anje Wiersinga with the members of her group, and all the friends of AFFDU, of University Women of Europe, of Graduate Women International, and of Réussir l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes.

Dr Anne Nègre  
Gender Equality Expert