



# GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION



## Implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

**Annual Report 2019**





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## Highlights

1. 2019 saw the second year of implementation of the new Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023 (the Strategy), which was adopted in March 2018 by the Committee of Ministers. The Strategy is testament to the Council of Europe's continued commitment, and the important role the Organisation plays in advancing equality between women and men. The Strategy includes a new objective related to the protection of the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls. A first stock-tacking with regard to this strategic objective resulted in the production of a factsheet, including a shorter version for policy makers.
2. Gender equality remains a priority area for the successive Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers and its benefits continue to gain ground in politics, the media and culture. Both Finland and France had strong gender equality components in their agendas, especially with regard to the promotion of the Istanbul Convention and Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2019. Georgia has indicated that this will continue under the Georgian Presidency.
3. 2019 also saw the election of Marija Pejčinović Burić as the new Secretary General, the second woman ever to hold this position, which contributed to the gender balance in senior positions.
4. The information made available by member States on the implementation of the Strategy shows that the number and intensity of national initiatives remains high. Several governments treat gender equality and violence against women as a governmental priority, and efforts are ongoing to improve access of women to justice and to political and public decision-making. Increased efforts will be needed at national and international level in respect of the protection of the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, which is still a new subject matter for a number of countries. The same can be said for gender mainstreaming, especially since the co-ordination of national policies to effectively implement a gender-sensitive approach in the broadest range of national policies remains a particular challenge. The present report highlights a number of examples of national approaches and solutions found to address the six strategic objectives, from which policy and law makers can draw inspiration.
5. Thanks to a solid institutional setting, gender mainstreaming is progressively becoming a powerful, transformative force within the Council of Europe. Gender mainstreaming requires a fundamental change in working methods. It means embracing an institutional culture and procedures that naturally take on board a gender equality perspective in the content of policies, but also in all aspects of communication, internal and external processes, and interactions between people. Such a change can only be sustained with commitment at all levels, as well as training and ownership by all actors involved.
6. Targeted bilateral or regional co-operation projects with Eastern Partnership countries, and bilateral projects in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, have continued to provide national authorities with tools and expertise to comply with gender equality and violence against women standards and to translate them into tangible steps and results. Programmatic support is also provided to EEA/Norway Grants country programmes in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. A new project was launched in Turkey in November 2019 focusing on the implementation of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) country recommendations. A report canvassing progress achieved under these projects and a brochure to explain their approach were produced for a project fair in May 2019.
7. As in previous years, the Council of Europe further developed and strengthened strategic partnerships with other regional and international organisations, and with civil society. Highlights include the G7 meeting on Gender Equality and prominent participation at the Beijing+25 regional review meeting.
8. Online gender-based violence has become an area of particular concern both for researchers and policy makers, prompting the inclusion of a thematic section on the subject in this report. It identifies a series of measures which can be taken in the field of legislation (new offences), new procedures to tackle harmful practices and content, prevention, dialogue with the industry and awareness-raising especially among women and young persons who are particularly targeted by the various forms of online gender-based violence.

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<sup>1</sup> All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

## Introduction

1. The Council of Europe launched its Transversal Programme on Gender Equality in 2012, with the aim of increasing the impact and visibility of gender equality standards and of supporting their implementation in member States and within the Organisation itself. Within this framework, the first Council of Europe Strategy on Gender Equality 2014-2017 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in November 2013. Building on the strength and successes of this first strategy and taking into account new challenges, the second strategy covering the period 2018-2023 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2018. It places a greater emphasis on the impact of socio-economic issues on women's empowerment and on the role of men and boys for the realisation of gender equality. A new objective was added to the Strategy, which now sets **six strategic objectives** (SOs):

- SO1: Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism
- SO2: Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence
- SO3: Ensure the equal access of women to justice
- SO4: Achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making
- SO5: Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls **(new)**
- SO6: Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

2. The Strategy is grounded on the belief that a strong commitment to **effective equality** (not just as proclaimed in fundamental principles and legal acts) between women and men at all levels and in all areas will benefit society as a whole, as well as future generations. This is fully in line with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015. The Strategy demonstrates the Organisation's commitment to continue to provide leadership – through legal standards and policy guidance – for regional and global efforts to implement the Beijing Declaration and Sustainable Development Goal 5 to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

3. The Strategy therefore establishes commitments towards the empowerment of all women, a change in both women's and men's roles – including equal sharing of household and care responsibilities – ending violence against women and domestic violence, and the elimination of sexism and gender stereotypes.

4. Through the Strategy, gender equality remains a priority area for successive Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers and member States are committed – individually and together – to the implementation of the above commitments. Moreover, these commitments apply to the Council of Europe's action as a whole and therefore to all activities conducted under its auspices. The Strategy thus follows the so-called dual-track approach: a) **specific policies and actions**, including positive action when appropriate, in critical areas for the advancement of women for the realisation of *de facto* gender equality, and b) **gender mainstreaming** in all policies and programmes, that is, the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels/stages, by the actors normally involved in making policy.

5. To assess progress in the implementation of the Strategy, the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) regularly takes stock of results achieved and prepares an annual report for the attention of the Committee of Ministers.

## I. Overall Progress and Implementation

6. Support to member States to implement standards in the area of gender equality is central to the activities, working methods and partnerships developed across the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality and to implement the Strategy. A thorough assessment of the situation and ongoing progress in the member States has enabled the Council of Europe to better respond to their needs. This has been achieved through:

### I.1. Development of activities, promotion, tools and co-operation programmes, monitoring/evaluation of standards to identify gaps and obstacles

7. **Engagement, regular consultations and exchanges** have continued with the core components of the Transversal Programme: the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) meetings twice a year, the Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) in the different committees and monitoring bodies, and the intra-secretariat Gender Mainstreaming Team which also meets twice a year. Within the framework of the Strategy, activities were undertaken in close co-operation and with the involvement of the different structures of the Transversal Programme, primarily the GEC.

8. One of the highlights of 2019 was the adoption by the Committee of Ministers, on 28 March, of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, which had been prepared by the GEC during 2017 and 2018.

9. The GEC annual conference, entitled “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism”, was held in Helsinki, on 28-29 March in the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers<sup>2</sup> and coincided with the adoption of the above recommendation. The event gave an additional opportunity to participants to discuss challenges and possible solutions in light of the latest available information from a variety of sources.

10. Particular efforts were deployed in parallel for the promotion of the sexism recommendation and a series of actions were launched, which will continue in 2020, for instance:

- the GEC member countries have been invited to promote and support the dissemination of the new instrument, for instance by ensuring its translation in national language(s) in order to facilitate its implementation by the many institutions and sectors of society concerned by the cross-cutting issue of sexism. Translations in more than a dozen languages (in addition to the English and French official versions) have already been completed;
- in mid-September, a dedicated action page entitled “Sexism: See it. Name it. Stop it.” was launched and a video clip released,<sup>3</sup> with key messages to present the importance of addressing sexism as one of the root causes of persisting inequalities and violence against women to the broader public and policy makers. Translations of the action page and dubbing/subtitling of the clip in national language(s) are also under way. The video was shown at different events including a large conference on the #MeToo movement (Iceland, 17 September 2019), a high-level conference of representatives of ministries of internal affairs (Strasbourg, 24 September 2019), the 17<sup>th</sup> Gender Summit Europe (Amsterdam, 3 October 2019), and the UNECE Beijing+25 regional review meeting (Geneva, 29-30 October 2019). The page/clip was one of the most viewed of the Council of Europe Human Rights Channel (more than 5,100 views in the first weeks).
- a quiz on sexism was prepared for online release on 25 November 2019, the international day for the elimination of violence against women;
- public campaigns: a call for proposals was made in August for an NGO grant to promote the fight against sexism. It aims to co-fund a project with activities to promote, in at least ten member countries, the implementation of the recommendation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For further information, see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/helsinki-conference-march-2019>

<sup>3</sup> For the webpage, see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-channel/stop-sexism>; for the video clip, see also <https://vimeo.com/356636533>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/-/call-for-proposals-ngo-grant-to-promote-the-fight-against-sexism>

11. The Council of Europe **website on gender equality**<sup>5</sup> through its ongoing updating and the publication of news items, continued to serve as a useful means to give visibility and to disseminate information about activities, developments and tools on gender equality in the member States and among the relevant structures, stakeholders, practitioners, partner organisations, NGOs, professional associations and unions, and others interested in the implementation of European standards in this field. The periodic newsletter on gender equality disseminated by e-mail drew further attention to information published on the webpages and to relevant Council of Europe developments.

12. **Dedicated co-operation projects on gender equality issues** are implemented through the Capacity Building and Co-operation Projects Unit established in January 2018 within the Gender Equality Division. The Strategy provides specifically for the provision of support to member States under the various SOs, especially SO2: Prevent and Combat Violence against women and domestic violence; SO3: Ensure the equal access of women to justice; SO4: Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making; SO5: Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

13. In 2019, the projects have involved the following Council of Europe member countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine; as well as Belarus and Kosovo\*.

14. The Council of Europe continued in 2019 to provide strategic advice on violence against women and domestic violence in the context of Norway Grants (2014-2021) national programmes in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Romania and Slovak Republic. In the context of the Partnership on Good Governance framework, 2019 saw the launch and first activities of Phase II, in co-operation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. A new project in Turkey under the EU-funded Horizontal Facility, Phase II was launched in November 2019 focusing on GREVIO recommendations.

15. These projects are based on the idea that violence against women is not an individual phenomenon but one of the most serious and prevalent human rights violations, a form of discrimination against women and an obstacle to achieving gender equality. Grounded in the principles of the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS 210), also called the “Istanbul Convention”, these projects promote a comprehensive rights-based approach to end violence against women in accordance with the four pillars (the four “Ps”) enshrined in the Istanbul Convention: **p**revention of violence, **p**rotection of victims, **p**rosecution of perpetrators and comprehensive **p**olicies.

16. Therefore, in 2019, the activities continued to focus to a large extent on implementation support concerning the Istanbul Convention, as it remains a high priority for many member States and for the international community. So far, 34 countries have become parties to the Istanbul Convention, with the addition of Ireland which ratified in March 2019. There are 11 further countries which are signatories and two countries have not signed it (Treaty Office, consulted last on 4 December 2019). The EU also is a signatory to the Convention.<sup>6</sup> Many of the countries which have not ratified (or signed) as yet the Convention are currently involved as beneficiaries in the co-operation projects implemented, including through *ad hoc* events. For instance a high level Council of Europe contact visit to Armenia on the Istanbul Convention (31 October-1 November 2019) was organised with the participation of the President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), the Vice-President of the Venice Commission, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly’s Network Women Free from Violence, and representatives of the Council of Europe’s Secretariat. Several meetings were held to raise awareness about the Istanbul Convention and to clarify its provisions and objectives, as well as to discuss the Venice Commission’s recent opinion on the constitutional implications of the Istanbul Convention, which dispelled a number of misconceptions about the convention.

17. The following projects were launched in 2019:

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality>

<sup>6</sup> The EU signed the Istanbul Convention in June 2017 and the accession process was ongoing in 2019. Proposals were worked out by the Council, which prompted eventually the European Parliament to request (in April 2019) an opinion from the Court of Justice on the compatibility with the Treaties of the proposals for the accession and on the procedure for that accession. The opinion is pending (situation as of 23 January 2020, when the webpage hereinafter was consulted for the last time). For further information, see <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-area-of-justice-and-fundamental-rights/file-eu-accession-to-the-istanbul-convention>

- The project “Co-operation on the implementation of the Russian Federation National Action Strategy for Women (2017–2022)”, was officially launched in January 2019. The project has an 18-month duration, from November 2018 until May 2020 and it is being implemented by the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Financial support for this project is provided by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Activities and events included the Conference “Taking Action to Improve Women’s Participation in Public and Political Decision-Making” (Sochi, Russian Federation, 17-18 October 2019).
- The project “Raising Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutional capacity to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence” was launched in February 2019 for a total duration of six months. The project had two main outputs: providing high quality human rights training for legal professionals through the Council of Europe HELP Programme and strengthening the capacity of the Agency for Gender Equality, with the aim of supporting the establishment of the functional system of data collection and analysis of gender-based violence and femicide cases.
- The project “Reinforcing the fight against violence against women and domestic violence in Kosovo\*-Phase II”, was launched in May 2019 for a total duration of 24 months. The activities focus on the prevention and protection pillars of the Istanbul Convention, with a strong focus on building longer term capacity building of institutions in Kosovo\* in charge of running awareness-raising initiatives, providing justice, as well as supporting services for victims.
- The project “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Armenia: continuing the path towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention”, was launched in July 2019 and will run until the end of August 2021. The launch event was attended by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and other senior policy makers. The project aims to pave the way for the country’s ratification of the Istanbul Convention and to increase the knowledge and skills of legal professional, police officers, social workers and others dealing with the cases of violence against women and domestic violence in Armenia and will support mainstreaming gender perspective in Armenian schools.

18. In May, in the margins of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GEC, an event was organised to present the capacity building and co-operation projects managed by the Gender Equality Division as well as an analysis report on these co-operation projects identifying *inter alia* areas which can be improved. The event included a “Project Fair” (exhibition) which was an opportunity to present the different projects in the presence of representatives of donor and beneficiary countries who are based in Strasbourg (in addition to GEC members), and project staff from Council of Europe’s field offices and Headquarters in Strasbourg. A new brochure, which presents the Council of Europe approach to projects on combating violence against women and domestic violence was also prepared for this event.

19. **Monitoring** implementation is used as a tool to support member States in their efforts to meet Council of Europe standards.

- On the basis of preliminary work done in 2018, a follow-up exercise on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 to member States on gender equality and media was conducted in 2019. An analytical report was prepared jointly by the GEC and the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI). The report was discussed by the GEC at its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting (13-15 November 2019) and subsequently by the CDMSI (3-5 December 2019) and it will be finalised and published in the first quarter of 2020.
- Within the framework of the "ALL IN: Towards gender balance in sport", a joint European Union (EU) and Council of Europe project that started in 2018, support is given to public authorities and sport organisations to ensure the implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)2 on **gender mainstreaming in sport**.



20. **Reference to Council of Europe standards** – expertise and sharing of good practices with member and non-member States and other regional and international organisations has increased visibility of Council of Europe standards among its strategic partners. References continue to be made regularly to the Strategy, the Istanbul Convention and other Council of Europe standards and tools in the field of gender equality in UN, OSCE and EU documents. In 2019, for instance:

- the European Commission’s Report 2019 on equality between women and men in the EU stresses the importance of the Istanbul Convention, including from the perspective of the EU becoming a party to it;
- in a statement released on 31 May 2019, the Platform of independent United Nations and regional expert mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights, called on all States taking part in the negotiations of a new International Labour Organization (ILO) instrument to address violence and harassment in the world of work, to uphold standards from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and a series of regional treaties including the Istanbul Convention;
- at the high-level conference “Europe for Gender Equality – tacking stock, taking action” (Helsinki, 30 September-1 October 2019), the need for the EU to become a party to the Istanbul Convention was stressed by several participants.

21. The Council of Europe **website on gender equality**<sup>7</sup> through its ongoing updating and the publication of news, continued to serve as a useful means to give visibility and to disseminate information about activities, developments and tools on gender equality in the member States and among the relevant structures, stakeholders, practitioners, partner organisations, NGOs, professional associations and unions, and others interested in the implementation of European standards in this field. The periodic newsletter on gender equality disseminated by e-mail drew further attention to information published on the webpages and to relevant Council of Europe developments.

## **I.2. Ensuring ownership by the member States of the Strategy and related processes and activities**

22. As in previous years, **high-level events were organised in 2019 by the gender equality sector or other parts of the Organisation**, allowing for useful exchanges and discussions on gender equality-related issues; these are mentioned in other parts of this report concerning the GEC’s own activities and those in co-operation with partners, and other Council of Europe initiatives – see paragraphs 20 and 59 et seq. in particular, and Appendix 3 for an overview of activities carried by different sectors of the Organisation. The planning and design of co-operation projects also regularly involve meetings with senior policy makers in addition to the various bodies directly concerned by the projects (ministries, training institutions for the police and justice system, gender equality bodies, NGOs, etc.), see examples in paragraphs 12 et seq.

23. Practical tools and publications, visibility and promotion materials on the Council of Europe standards and their implementation were prepared and widely disseminated throughout member States and other stakeholders during national, regional or global events. Such publications are in high demand from member States and internal/external partners, and are considered to be very useful tools to monitor progress and compliance with benchmarks and standards in the area of gender equality. They include:

- the launching of a series of actions to promote Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism (see above, paragraphs 8-10);
- a factsheet on “Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls”, published in July 2019<sup>8</sup> pointed to the various forms of discrimination and violence with which refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls are confronted. These are usually the result of a lack of gender-responsive policies and measures in countries of origin and destination. In light of its findings, the GEC agreed to propose to the Committee of Ministers that a recommendation be prepared on the subject and that a drafting (sub)committee be established to start working on such an instrument in 2020;

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality>

<sup>8</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/prems-089319-gbr-2573-protecting-the-rights-of-migrant-refugee-and-asy/168096608a>

- the preparation of a survey on good practices on gender-sensitive approaches in the justice system (to be presented at an event in 2020);
- the regularly updated factsheet prepared by the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) on its case law related to gender equality, and one specifically produced by the Gender Equality Division covering further pertinent case law aspects;
- an electronic newsletter with the Council of Europe's gender equality news;
- various documents and brochures produced in the context of co-operation projects (see also Appendix 2): Methodology and tools on Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention standards; Information brochure on Projects on combating violence against women – the Council of Europe's approach; study Technical co-operation programmes/projects implemented in 2016-2019: analysis and lessons learned; general brochure on Making European standards on gender equality a reality for all women: call to support Council of Europe co-operation projects on gender equality and violence against women; Administrative data collection on violence against women and domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in line with Istanbul Convention standards.

24. Efforts continued to be made to increase the visibility and impact of the work done to **promote gender mainstreaming within the Organisation (SO6)**, on the basis of the new website section on this topic which was created in 2018.<sup>9</sup> This has led to greater recognition of efforts in the member States to comply with Council of Europe and other international standards, and an easier flow of information and experiences among the member States. The regular updating of the gender equality website, as well as the increasing number of translations of Council of Europe standards by member States, have contributed to raising the visibility of those standards and activities among experts and the general public. As indicated earlier, particular efforts were made in 2019 to promote the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism (which is now available in more than a dozen languages) and the co-operation projects run by the Gender Equality Division have a strong focus on the promotion and implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

#### **Contribution of the member States to the implementation of the gender equality strategy**

25. The GEC compiles every year a list of national activities and measures towards the achievement of the six objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 (see Appendix 1). This body of work developed at the level of member States also feeds into and contributes towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this 2019 report, 38 countries (situation on 31 December 2019) provided responses to a questionnaire which had been disseminated to assist in the reporting of national developments in relation to the six SOs and other relevant aspects.

26. Activities to promote gender equality carried out by member States in 2019 are often explicitly related to Council of Europe's standards and tools, or reflect these:

- **Concerning in particular the implementation of provisions of the Istanbul Convention, legislative and policy measures concerning, or to prepare for its ratification, were reported in particular by:** Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic (even though the ratification process was eventually stopped), Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom.
- **Many reported developments and activities, without being connected explicitly to the implementation of specific Council of Europe standards and policies, nonetheless mirror (or even predate) these,** for instance when it comes to combating gender stereotypes and sexism, combating domestic and other forms of violence affecting women, awareness-raising initiatives targeting women workers or specific social groups or groups of professionals, addressing persisting gender inequalities in the access to the labour market or employment conditions (including the gender pay gap and access to senior positions), the equal sharing of

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-mainstreaming>

care work and more equitable parental rights also for fathers, the generalisation of gender mainstreaming in relation to law- and policy-making, etc. References have also been made to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Protocol, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Sustainable Development Goals and other global standards: Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom and others.

27. Overall, the **number of initiatives reported by member states is at a high level** and **gender equality** often features in 2019 in a good place on the political agenda. Several governments treat gender equality and violence against women as a governmental priority. Some even describe their top executive as a “feminist government” and/or have included it on their foreign policy agenda, accompanied by one or more dedicated strategies/action plans (sometimes in relation to a presidency such as that of the EU Council). There are also countries where it has become a central priority of the president’s term of office. The important role of the dedicated ombuds-person or body/agency on gender equality (where it exists) is often emphasised. Sometimes, the government is committed to action by the parliament and by a legislative framework requiring periodic reporting on achievements, for instance concerning the reduction of discrimination against women. In Spain, the concept of “State Pact against Gender Violence” is used to mobilise all political forces for the achievement of an important policy, as this has also been the case for employment and economic policies and education. The idea behind such a pact is that the topic remains as a national priority regardless of the colour of the government. Similarly, a 10-year strategy is used in Norway to “prevent and combat men’s violence against women” (2017-2027).

28. The subject of **violence against women** is often central among the above priorities, sometimes as a clear consequence of international review and follow-up mechanisms (Beijing Platform, the EU Commission’s annual report, GREVIO’s monitoring). The information submitted by countries shows that it sometimes leads to a combination (or a confusion) with initiatives against sexism. Several countries have translated the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism into the national language, which was adopted in March 2019, and is now available in 15 languages (situation as of 23 January 2020). The recommendation was disseminated after that and a few specific initiatives are reported (action on gender-inclusive language or in education and progressive integration in ongoing inter-ministerial work). It is probably too early to expect meaningful feedback on a possible systematic or dedicated approach for the implementation of the above recommendation and the review of progress, as provided for under its Chapter III.

29. Some countries report that they have now incorporated for the first time a gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting approach (SO6) in national practices including through legal/statutory requirements. This is an encouraging development. There are countries which have already accumulated significant experience with co-ordinated action for the purposes of gender mainstreaming and which have managed to involve a sizeable number of agencies in those efforts. But even in such a favourable situation, it is sometimes acknowledged that ways still need to be found to ensure the effective implementation of gender-specific elements in the respective policy areas by all those concerned. SO5 (Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls), which was included in the present Strategy, appears to remain a new subject matter for several countries which do not report any development in this area. **The above suggests that increased efforts will be needed in the near future in respect of several of the SOs (especially SO5 and SO6), both at national level and at Council of Europe level and that dedicated action to implement the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism is still needed in the vast majority of countries.**

30. **Across the European region, cultural factors remain a challenge to overcome for policy makers involved in gender equality.** These factors can make it difficult, for instance, to achieve parity or the prescribed quotas of women in parliaments and municipal elected bodies, or they still prevent improvements in the field of equal pay and women’s unemployment. **For a few countries, mindsets and attitudes are a major issue.** They refer to the persistence of situations involving deliberate actions by conservative movements promoting the idea of a so-called “gender theory conspiracy”. Conservative environments place emphasis on the biological differences between women and men and on the resulting “natural” division of labour (where men are breadwinners and women take care of the household and children), and these continue to have a strong influence in certain societies, including on the government’s action. Even when the terminology of gender-equality policies has been accepted for many years, the fundamentals of these concepts are interpreted incorrectly or deceptively, and sometimes exploited politically and/or to halt the process for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This has an impact on the pace of ratifications of the Istanbul Convention. In one case (Slovak Republic), the government/parliament

stopped the ratification process which had been initiated. In the case of Armenia, the country requested in July 2019 an opinion from the Venice Commission, which was made available in October.<sup>10</sup>

31. **The opinion can assist policy makers of other countries, some of which** have already actively engaged in a communication process with the larger public to dispel misconceptions about the Istanbul Convention and/or which have gathered positive experience with the development of an active co-operation with civil society organisations to overcome certain social resistances.

32. As indicated previously, comprehensive information was submitted by the GEC delegates about initiatives taken by their country. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the main trends. The examples hereinafter are provided for illustration purposes only and the comprehensive compendium of responses (see Appendix 1) will provide comprehensive and more detailed information on interesting and new initiatives which could inspire other countries as well.

➤ **SO1: prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism**

33. Activities and developments reported by countries concern:

- research, especially on the effectiveness of existing equality policies and laws, on the persistence of gender gaps in remuneration, employment and access to certain professions/responsibilities, on sexist content (e.g. in schoolbooks) and in the media;
- awareness raising, either *ad hoc* or as part of campaigns organised with various partners, especially in the education system (teaching the teachers, gender equality in the context of sex education), the media, or targeting specific groups (e.g. youngsters, the political class, healthcare and social workers, men and boys, business, media managers and journalists, justice/police/army); often in the form of brochures or more commonly online tools and events; the focus is often on equality aspects, combating sexism and stereotypes with regard to professional activities; avoiding sexist language; sometimes gender equality is part of a broader focus (social inclusion and multiculturalism);
- institutional and policy-making developments: new dedicated gender equality body or co-ordination structure(s), dedicated gender equality officers or services in specific public and private structures; gender equality advice (e.g. to business, administrations, employees, management), new or updated strategies and actions plans on gender equality and/or related subjects;
- legal changes made or planned concern: rules on anti-discrimination and new requirements for employers, parental leave and support to care-work, equality in public and private sector workplaces, introduction of new offences to counter certain forms of sexism and violence (sexist hate, sexist outrage in public spaces, online sexist violence), but also statutory arrangements and duties such as in the education system;
- making anti-discrimination measures more effective, especially as regards the career and employment conditions;
- mechanisms to deal with sexist content (advertising, etc.) and involving an advisory body, reporting channels for the general public;
- initiatives to promote the visibility of women (in sport, science and engineering, media);
- making funding available for projects: gender equality, sexism, etc.);
- intersectional approaches (ethnicity, religious background, persons with disabilities, persons in rural areas, sexual identity, ...).

**Examples of campaigns and online resources on sexism** (information submitted by various countries):

Genderklik campaign; Zerosexism; Girls day Boys day project; Equality Girls-Boys; “Partner Violence - Men can be victims too” (Belgium); Genderman project, Invisible Power campaign - focus on Roma women, “The Migrant among Women – Health and Protection from Violence project” - focus on migrant women (Czech Republic); Break ! (Estonia); www.signalement-violences-sexuelles-sexistes.gouv.fr (France); Genderleicht – gender inclusive writing and speaking; Werbemelder.in to report sexist adverts (Germany); “Say it with a poem, say it with a story, does the heart have a gender?” (Greece); Lapartitaditutti (Italy), Act4respect (Netherlands); Gender balance scoreboard in the country’s largest companies (Norway), “We are all equal” -

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2019\)018-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2019)018-e)

university-specific (Poland); “Because I say no” (Slovak Republic); Platforms for free advisory service on equality in the workplace and for the award of grants (Spain).

**Study on gender sensitivity and inclusiveness in governmental communication** (information submitted by the Netherlands)

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science has requested a study on the way in which government organisations present themselves in their various communications. The results will provide the basis for a discussion about how the public sector can improve and set a good example with regard to gender-sensitive communication.

**Policies and awareness-raising to counter sexism in the public sphere** (information submitted by Ukraine)

A dedicated action plan was adopted for 2019 on gender approaches in the field of audio-visual broadcasting, involving *inter alia*: a) training courses for media workers, central executive bodies, employees of the State broadcasting authority and other actors; b) translation and publication of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism; c) regional workshops on combating sexism and stereotypes in advertising and the media (approximately 150 journalists participated), with the presentation of videos as part of a communication campaign called “Everyone is equal in the profession”; d) a guide “Media Without Bias: Words Matter” was prepared for media representatives and government press offices; e) an advisory office was established under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Policy to deal with complaints of gender discrimination. In 2018-2019, it received 78 complaints, following which 57 advertisements were withdrawn and 8 lawsuits were filed.

➤ **SO2: Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence**

34. Activities and developments reported by countries concern:

- establishment of dedicated strategies/action plans and bodies, e.g. national council for the prevention of domestic violence, inter-agency working group or task force on the same or neighbouring subject areas (human trafficking, forced marriage, online hate) – including in respect of the implementation of GREVIO’s findings;
- research on gender-based violence, domestic violence, cyber violence, female genital mutilation, sexual assault and bullying, hate speech in the political sphere; research on the implementation of specific criminal law mechanisms, on the impact of policy measures and action plans on violence against women, on the quality of reactions and assistance in police stations, health and other front-line services;
- substantive legal changes adopted or being drafted: to align national law on the Istanbul Convention and/or other international texts; redefinition of/increased sanctions for discrimination, unlawful threats, molestation, insulting behaviour, sexist hate, harassment, rape (based on the absence of consent), genital mutilation; criminalisation of “economic abuse” and “controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse”;
- procedural changes: restriction orders regarding locations/communications (for instance in case of domestic violence), simplified/faster judicial and police responses for victims; policy guidelines for prosecutors and police with protocols for cases of sexual and gender-based violence;
- policies on sexual harassment in the workplace and compensatory mechanisms for victims; psychological violence in close relations (family, etc.);
- improvements on protection and support infrastructures, e.g. hotlines and apps for adult victims or for youngsters (on dating violence), new shelters, new advice centres (dedicated to forms of violence against women or centres with a component on women victims); programmes for the treatment of offenders; pilot projects initiated in those areas; specific policies for women drug users victims of violence, protection of trafficked persons, secret shelters for victims in extreme cases;
- state funding made available for initiatives by/with NGOs, victims support and consultancy services, other policy partners and actors (hospitals, municipalities);
- agreements: with municipalities (“safe cities”), with the industry (media) on combating sexual and other harassment;

- education, awareness-raising and guidance documents for the general population or target groups: campaigns on violence (also forced/under-age marriages) for the general public, for young people, in schools, for the elderly, for men and boys, on new rules against harassment in the public sector, programmes for the education of family members confronted with violence; production of multilingual brochures (e.g. on domestic and other violence, for public officers on the detection of forced marriages);
- training for frontline practitioners (criminal justice, police, social workers and psychologists, nurses, health care institutions).

**Strengthening the arsenal of measures against domestic violence** (information submitted by Armenia)

Following the promulgation of the Law on the prevention of domestic violence, the protection of victims of domestic violence and the restoration of solidarity in family (1 February 2018), further subsequent amendments were prepared with a view to prepare for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. A series of implementing decisions and orders have been adopted concerning for instance the establishment of the Council for the prevention of domestic violence (December 2018), the creation of shelters and their staffing and of a special fund for the assistance to victims (both in March 2019). Others are being prepared, for instance on a centralised database with information on cases of domestic violence.

**Addressing misconceptions about the Istanbul Convention** (information submitted by the Czech Republic)

There have also been multiple awareness-raising activities concerning the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in the monitored period, as the Public Opinion Research Centre's survey revealed that those with the knowledge of what the Istanbul Convention is about are more likely to support its ratification.<sup>11</sup>

The Department of Gender Equality has launched a website [www.instanbulska-umluva.cz](http://www.instanbulska-umluva.cz) and Facebook page *Istanbulská úmluva*<sup>12</sup> to address the main misinterpretations regarding the Istanbul Convention. *The Analysis of the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) in Selected Countries of the Council of Europe*<sup>13</sup> was also published by the Department in July 2019. The analysis looks at the countries, which ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2013 and 2014 and ha[ve] thus undergone the entire monitoring cycle, and evaluates whether the worries, which are being brought up in the Czech public discussion, are founded on reality. A new translation of the Istanbul Convention was also finalised by the Department in July 2019.

**Broad range of measures to counter violence against women and domestic violence** (information submitted by Sweden)

In addition to the various legislative measures which came into force in 2018, e.g. introduction of consent-based sexual offences, of new restriction orders (concerning contacts with a protected person), of new rules on grooming (criminalising at an early stage sexually motivated contacts of adults with juveniles), the rules against forced marriage and child marriage were tightened up further in January 2019, preventing in particular the recognition in Sweden of foreign child marriages.

Complementing the ten-year National Strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women (agreed in 2017), as well as the Action Plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings, and the Action Plan against genital mutilation of girls and women (both agreed in 2018), the Swedish Government has entrusted the Public Health Agency with the drafting of a national strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights in order to develop a culture where every person has an unconditional right to personal and sexual integrity and sexual self-determination.

The county administrations, the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority and

<sup>11</sup> More information at: [https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com\\_form2content/documents/c2/a4797/f9/pm190111.pdf](https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a4797/f9/pm190111.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> More information at: <https://www.facebook.com/istanbulskaumluva>

<sup>13</sup> The analysis is available at: [https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Aktuality/Rozbor-dopadu-Istanbulske-umluvy\\_3.pdf](https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Aktuality/Rozbor-dopadu-Istanbulske-umluvy_3.pdf)

the Swedish Gender Equality Agency are running various campaigns and information initiatives, individually and together with other actors, with a focus on the violent consequences of certain masculinity models: ChoosetoStop (helpline for persons who are violent partners); voluntarysex (to promote sex as an act of free will); umo and youmo (targeting the younger public); Youdecide (targeting buyers of sexual services) (Sweden)

➤ **SO3: Ensure the equal access of women to justice**

35. Activities and developments reported by countries concern:

- development of a strategy to increase the gender sensitivity of the criminal justice system; research and analyses on proceedings and processes regarding domestic violence and sexual offences (dealing with the trauma, benefits of video interviews at an early stage, functioning of local public advice centres), and analyses of court decisions;
- review of legislation, e.g. exemption of liability of victims of trafficking for crimes committed during the period of victimisation, review of family and civil law to remove inequalities between spouses/partners which could generate risks of victimisation in relation to a divorce (as regards the child custody, premises, property, etc.);
- protective legal measures (see SO3: restriction and barring orders, etc.);
- review of police routines for cases of domestic violence, sexual offences, etc.;
- accessibility of information to victims about protective measures and legal aid (including witness support services and online assistance), and co-ordination of support services;
- measures to introduce or improve access to free legal aid, especially for victims of domestic or gender violence, or of sexual violence;
- inclusion of the subject of violence against women in training curricula of judges and prosecutors, medical doctors and physiotherapists, lawyers, psychologists, nurses, etc.;
- training for police and for justice officials, lawyers/legal aid providers and other front-line professionals on the specificities of certain issues (domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual violence, harassment, etc.), on communication in the courtroom and with the victims/parties; awareness-raising measures to counter gender bias in the justice system and on the preventive role of the police;
- measures for the protection of human rights defenders, ability for NGOs to file lawsuits.

**Assessing the gender-sensitiveness of the justice system** (information submitted by Croatia)

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality carried out a research entitled "Analysis of criminal and misdemeanour court decisions on violence against women cases 2012-2016", visiting 22 courts and looking at 3,295 criminal and 1,092 misdemeanour court decisions (...). A quantitative analysis of the empirical research was completed in 2018, while the qualitative, in-depth analysis continued in 2019, and will be followed by the final phase of the project related to the training of target groups (judges dealing with criminal and misdemeanour proceedings, prosecutors, police officers), to be implemented in the period September-November 2019.

**A portal for reporting sexual and gender-based violence** (information submitted by France)

Inaugurated on 25 November 2018, this reporting portal is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the websites [www.signalement-violences-sexuelles-sexistes.gouv.fr](http://www.signalement-violences-sexuelles-sexistes.gouv.fr) and [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr), via a computer, a tablet or a smartphone. In the form of a "chat" or instant interactive contact, the internet user can exchange directly with a dedicated trained police officer. This facilitated access, without any obligation to declare one's identity, is part of the objective of allowing as many victims as possible to come forward with agents whose mission is to assist them in filing a complaint and, in case they are not ready to do so, to direct them to the institutional partners and thus facilitate their social and psychological care.

**Free legal aid for victims of domestic and intimate partner violence** (information submitted by Serbia)

As provided for in the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2020, the Law on free legal aid was adopted in 2019. Among other improvements, it provides that victims of domestic and intimate partner violence are entitled to free legal aid, regardless of their nationality and financial situation.

**Increasing the specialisation of judges and prosecutors in gender-sensitive approaches** (information submitted by Spain)

In December 2018, a series of measures were adopted through amendments to the Law on the judiciary: the subject of discrimination, gender perspectives and cross-cutting issues were included in the competitive examinations for the recruitment of future judges and prosecutors and in the initial and continuous training (as a mandatory subject matter) provided by the General Council of the Judiciary. It was also specifically included as a field of mandatory specialisation for those judges who are appointed to the criminal and civil courts dealing with violence against women and gender-based violence.

➤ **SO4: Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**

36. Activities and developments reported by countries concern:

- review of the impact of existing legislation on balanced participation;
- the setting of objectives on equal representation in national action plans, in legislation or in government resolutions, e.g. equality in the composition of certain public collegial bodies, at least 40% of women and men on the boards of all large and medium-sized public limited companies by 2020 (and similar initiatives concerning private sector companies listed on the stock exchange);
- increasing existing quotas which have now been achieved (40% instead of 33%);
- legally binding parity quotas for the composition of list of candidates to regional elections;
- dedicated programmes to promote a greater gender balance in political and public decision-making (targeting women, political parties, the media);
- gathering of gender-disaggregated data on the gender balance in given sectors and research on the causes of the under-representation of women;
- quotas and financial incentives/bonuses (through the public funding of parliamentary groups and political parties) for the presentation of women candidates for election to the national assembly or local councils; similar measures for the boards of public sector or joint stock-companies e.g. no more than two-thirds of seats to be occupied by persons of the same gender;
- campaigns and rules of conduct developed in partnership with the industry and/or recruitment firms on the promotion of women in senior positions; targeted training events to prepare women for senior positions;
- training and awareness-raising events focused on women politicians (including in the form of “fireside chats”), or addressed to a broader political public to gather support for higher quotas, addressed to men who can mobilise other men to support gender equality (“barbershop” seminars), or mentoring programmes for migrant women who could become candidates or represent their community at local/regional level.



**Fireside chats for women politicians** (information submitted by Armenia)

"Fireside Chats" meetings for/with local women politicians and women leaders of international organisations acting in Armenia were conducted in 2018 (April, July) and 2019 (February, May). These addressed the economic and political empowerment of women, the role of community leaders in shaping an atmosphere without sexual discrimination, the prevention of domestic violence, solidarity, women's participation and gender equality, etc. These meetings were attended by 60 local women politicians.

**Role models and partnerships to promote women in leading positions** (information submitted by Denmark)

In 2018, the Minister for Equal Opportunities helped launch the campaign "Lead the Future" in co-operation with a famous electronic music group and a number of large Danish companies. The campaign used role models to inspire young women to choose an education that will help them reach management positions. 33 women managers took in the campaign on social media by presenting their stories at educational institutions. In April 2019, the same ministry, together with the Copenhagen Business School and seven major recruitment agencies launched a code of conduct for recruitment agencies about diversity in management and boards. It consists of eight principles for diversity in recruitment and they include presenting clients with at least 33% female candidates and raising awareness about the effects of unconscious bias. The Copenhagen Business School monitors the development in companies that have signed up to the code of conduct.

Statistics Denmark is currently collecting data on the gender distribution in different levels of management in the public and private sector. The results will be published before the end of 2019.

**Parity-laws at *Länder* level** (information submitted by Germany)

To ensure balanced political representation at *Länder* level, Brandenburg has become the first German Land or state to introduce a legally binding quota. On 31 January 2019, the Brandenburg Parliament adopted the Act on Inclusive Parity ("Inklusives Parité-Gesetz" – Third Act Amending the Brandenburg Act on State Elections). Under the act, women and men will in future be given equal consideration when drawing up the state list of electoral candidates. When drawing up the lists, equal representation will be prescribed by alternate listing of women and men.

In July 2019, a similar law was passed by the parliament of Thuringia.

**Webpages to encourage the active participation of women in politics** (information submitted by Switzerland)

"Helvetia Calls", a website and initiative run by a non-partisan group of women (including MPs), aims to increase the number of women decision-makers in Swiss politics by means of a targeted three-point plan. Moreover, the President of the National Council has launched the "Women in Politics" website, which aims to encourage women to enter politics and to follow the example of the pioneers who entered the Federal Parliament in 1971.

➤ **SO5: Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls**

37. Activities and developments reported by countries concern:

- greater attention paid to women-specific aspects in migration/ asylum/integration/anti-trafficking policy frameworks, e.g. through explanatory documents, inter-agency co-operation protocols (also with regional authorities), awareness-raising for people implementing policies on the ground;
- review of asylum rules and practices to provide for increased protection in case of domestic and other violence affecting women, or threats in the country of origin: risk of persecution and inhuman treatment irrespective of sexual orientation, risk of sexual mutilation and other traditional harmful practices;

- review of rules and regulations applicable to public reception and accommodation facilities to ban discrimination/harassment/sexual violence, to include the gender-sensitive approach to needs of women and young girls, and to detect child abuse in migrant communities;
- additional places created for women and underaged migrants in such facilities, additional funds made available for projects concerning migrants and violence against women (assistance and support, research on intersectional discriminations etc.) run by public bodies or NGOs;
- research, e.g. on how gender perceptions are impacted during migration, on the integration of migrants with regard to labour, education, etc., with increased focus on vulnerable persons and women;
- making justice practitioners, border police, customs, social services and those involved in migration issues generally more aware of the gender-specific dimensions of migration, refugees and asylum seekers; activities to develop their capacity to detect instances of human trafficking;
- projects to combat female genital mutilation (in the host country or during holiday trips to the country of origin);
- projects to empower migrant women including to become leaders/interlocutors at local level, awareness raising targeting migrant women: planning and contraception, women's rights, voters' rights, countering forced and religious marriage and divorce and female genital mutilation; brochures published in various languages;
- projects to facilitate the integration of juvenile migrants in the education system.

**Standards for the reception of applicants for international protection** (information submitted by Belgium)

Since 2015, Fedasil (Belgian Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) has developed a series of minimum standards (adopted in March 2018), based on European directives, legislation and good practices in the field, which cover material aid, support (social, legal, daily, medical and psychological), infrastructure, furniture and security. Specific needs related to gender, unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups have been taken into account. In parallel, an extensive study on the identification and care of vulnerable persons with specific needs in reception structures (including pregnant women, young girls and single mothers, victims of gender-based violence, etc.) was released in December 2018.<sup>14</sup>

Since 1 October 2018, the new internal regulations (ROI) have been in force in all reception structures (collective centres and individual accommodation). The prohibition of discrimination, harassment and sexual and gender-based violence are included. It is available in 12 languages and is explained to each new beneficiary.

**Initiatives concerning traditional marriages and divorces** (information submitted by Denmark)

In autumn 2018, the Minister of Gender Equality and the Minister of Immigration and Integration launched three initiatives to raise awareness among Muslim women of their rights when entering into a traditional marriage: a) training of professionals, primarily social workers, on religious marriages and the Danish law; b) research on the phenomenon in a Danish context and women's knowledge of their rights; c) awareness campaign based on education and dialogue with 2000 Muslim women in Denmark. The research work showed that for many women, being held back in religious marriages against their will results in violence and psychological pressure. The campaign therefore aims to increase women's knowledge on their individual rights and offers individual consultations with professionals who can provide personalised guidance and support. This campaign will be linked to an already existing campaign on equal rights among young and adult immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> More information at see <https://www.fedasil.be/fr/publications>

<sup>15</sup> Link to the existing campaign: <http://ret-til-ligestilling.dk/>

Link to a press release on the initiative: <http://uim.dk/nyheder/2018/2018-09/nye-initiativer-om-ophaevelse-af-religiose-aegteskaber>

**New regulations to protect women and other vulnerable persons in refugee accommodation centres** (information submitted by Germany)

On 21 August 2019, a new law made the protection of women and other vulnerable persons mandatory in refugee accommodation centres. Section 44 (2a) Asylum Act states that: "The *Länder* shall take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of women and vulnerable persons when accommodating persons requesting asylum (...)."

Rationale: "Women and vulnerable persons are in need of particular protection when it comes to their accommodation. For the purposes of this law, vulnerable persons are, in particular, minors, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, pregnant women, lesbian, gay, bi, trans or intersex persons, single parents with minor children, survivors of human trafficking, persons with serious physical conditions, persons with mental health conditions and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence such as gender-specific violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or violence on sexual, gender-related, racist or religious grounds."

*Joint Circular concerning the Residence Rule*

In an effort to properly address the specific needs and concerns of refugees affected by gender-related and domestic violence, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Elderly Citizens, Women and Youth has teamed up with the Federal Ministry of the Interior to draft a joint circular which provides guidance for the consistent application of protective measures in cases of violence.

➤ **SO6: Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures**

38. Activities and developments reported by countries concern:

- the inclusion of gender-sensitive approaches to impact assessment and budgeting in the national strategy action plan/work of the inter-ministerial body; use of pilot projects on budgeting in selected ministries; introduction of mandatory gender-impact assessment;
- development of a unified gender equality monitoring system for all public entities and a statistical system generalising gender-specific data;
- action plans to develop gender equality in specific designated areas (e.g. STEM, academic world, sport, care sector, use of EU funds);
- ongoing work of the dedicated gender mainstreaming body (inter-ministerial working group) and/or of the co-ordinators and working groups in each ministry; public periodic reporting on gender mainstreaming; research on ways to develop mainstreaming;
- production/updating of guidelines, tools and manuals for policy makers on mainstreaming, gender-impact assessments and budgeting, measuring equality;
- consultation of gender equality bodies on draft legislation and its conformity with gender equality requirements;
- legal initiatives to introduce or foster gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting and planning;
- exploring and importing foreign experience in the field of gender-responsive budgeting;
- training and awareness-raising measures on gender-mainstreaming, gender-sensitive policy making/budgeting/impact assessments (cross-institutional or in certain public sectors), including as part of human resource management policies or action plans; online (e-learning) courses for the public sector;
- publication/updating of material on gender mainstreaming and gender equality (in events, language, reporting, etc.).

**Periodic reporting to the Parliament on the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Act and Plan** (information submitted by Belgium)

The report on gender mainstreaming, concluding the term of office of the government, was presented to the Council of Ministers in April and subsequently sent to parliament. It highlights what has been achieved by the government and the administration during the period concerned as regards the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Act and the Federal Gender Mainstreaming Plan  
[https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/gm-rapport\\_de\\_fin\\_de\\_legislature-final.pdf](https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/gm-rapport_de_fin_de_legislature-final.pdf)

**Training for all those involved in policy planning, budgeting, gender equality and staff training** (information submitted by Cyprus)

Following the preparation of the Handbook on the integration of gender mainstreaming in public policies, a specific training plan was designed (for 6-day training sessions), which are expected to start by the end of September 2019. Participants in this training are going to be members of the budget and strategic plan teams of the public authorities, equality officers and officers responsible for the education and training of public servants.

**Pilot phases on gender-sensitive budgeting** (information submitted by France)

“Equality-based budgeting” (EBB) was included as an experiment on the agenda of the inter-ministerial committee on gender equality in 2018. The implementation started in 2019 with pilot phases in the Ministries of Agriculture, of Culture, of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, of Social Affairs. Two circulars were adopted in April and August 2019 calling *inter alia* all ministries to develop performance and gender disaggregated indicators to prepare for a future generalisation of EBB, and integrating EBB in the national policy for cities. A broader use of EBB will be decided after an assessment of this test phase.

**Gender mainstreaming included in legislation for the first time** (from information submitted by Greece)

Act 4604/2019 on substantive equality entered into force on 26 March 2019 (initiated by the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSFPGE)). It aims at implementing a mainstreaming approach and at eliminating gender inequalities in the public and private sphere. The notions of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are introduced for the first time into a legislative text and all the basic concepts and relevant mechanisms, institutions and stakeholders are explicitly specified. The PanHellenic gender-based violence network by the GSFPGE and the municipalities is institutionalised (counselling centres, shelters, a 24-hour SOS 15900 helpline). Specific provisions concern the social dialogue, the drafting of “Equality Plans” in the workplaces by employers, awards for enterprises which adopt gender equality policies, the use of gender-neutral language in official documents. Special arrangements are made to involve the education sector and the mass media/advertisement business (to eliminate stereotypes) and the principle of gender mainstreaming is set in the fields of health and social solidarity (e.g. special attention to the status and the needs of vulnerable groups of women).

➤ **Other matters and lessons learnt from the design and implementation of gender equality policies**

39. As regards the **conceptualisation of policies, narratives and communication**, a counter-productive effect was sometimes observed where the subject of gender equality was reduced to a “women’s only” issue, for instance in the field of research and higher education. Recognising gender equality in research and innovation as a factor positively influencing economic performance can also contribute to elevating the importance of gender-targeted measures including on the agenda of decision makers. For certain governments, it is now a priority to focus its efforts on creating the conditions for a more balanced division of family obligations between women and men, and to make achievements of gender equality policies more visible and recognised as a democratic norm.

40. **A number of countries report that inter-institutional co-operation in the design and implementation of policies remains crucial for the development of concerted actions and/or the mainstreaming** of gender equality-related policies. They often highlight the importance of the quality of co-operation between domestic partners. Many policy aspects concerning gender equality, domestic and sexual violence, the protection of vulnerable women (isolated mothers, victims of trafficking) rely on the involvement and concerted action of a variety of public actors (ministries and administrations, justice and law enforcement bodies, social and health services) including at the regional/provincial and communal levels. This is particularly obvious for the implementation of gender mainstreaming approaches including with regard to policy design and implementation but also gender-sensitive budgeting. Moreover, NGOs, charity and religious organisations and other civil society initiatives play an important role also in the implementation of certain policies (support and advice centres, shelters, assistance to migrants).

41. Interactions with partner countries and international organisations are also underlined both as a requirement for the implementation of recommendations for improvements (emanating from the international community) and for the exchange of know-how and expertise on gender equality and national action plans. These international interactions can also be an additional asset for central gender equality bodies to achieve the involvement of national actors, for instance in relation to the (rotating) Presidency of the EU Council as it implies an intensification of contacts and interactions in the country concerned.

42. A broad variety of co-operation models are used across the member States:

- the comprehensive model of “State Pact against Gender Violence”, as in Spain, which involves horizontally a number of ministries and State authorities, and vertically the actors from the national, regional and local level as well as other actors, through a series of collegial and co-ordination bodies and fora for interactions and meetings with civil society; the concept of pact implies that the subject remains high on the political agenda irrespective of changes of government and political majorities;
- central bodies with an inter-ministerial composition for an extended period of time or *ad hoc* for a specific time (task force) are often in place. Sometimes, such a co-ordinating body is also expected to increase the interactions at regional/local levels. But local and regional authorities can also be involved through co-operation memoranda; a network of contact persons has proven to be useful;
- horizontal co-operation in the implementation of gender equality policies can also be positively supported by law or regulations: this is for instance the case in Montenegro, in respect of all ministries, as they have a legal duty to contribute to the design and implementation of gender equality policies and they are additionally required to report back to the ministry in charge;
- this co-ordination can be further supported by **dedicated strategies and/or operational action plans on gender equality**. Many countries have established such medium-term frameworks for action, often accompanied by some sort of follow-up or periodic reporting mechanism, including to pursue specific priorities such as the development of gender responsive budgeting.

43. The establishment of an inter-ministerial or inter-agency co-ordination body is not in itself a guarantee of success. It has been pointed out that such a body should have sufficient authority for it to hold to account the various institutions involved in the implementation of a strategy or action plan. Likewise, the level of authority of co-ordinators designated in the respective ministries/bodies can also become an asset or an issue. In Spain, the fact that equality policies were entrusted with the Vice-Presidency of the Government is retrospectively described as something which has proven to be a “vital factor” of success. On the other side, giving additional tasks to a central gender equality body (to deal with further specific categories of persons also affected by discriminations) and not providing it with commensurate resourcing are mentioned as factors which can have detrimental consequences.

### **I.3. Transversal and close co-operation with the various bodies and institutions in the Council of Europe to ensure gender mainstreaming in all Council of Europe policies and measures:**

44. As pointed out earlier, the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 applies also to the Council of Europe. Especially – but not only – as regards gender mainstreaming. Contacts are kept throughout the Council of Europe through intra-Secretariat meetings and the network of Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) who lead the efforts to integrate a gender dimension into their specific work and activities with the support of their respective secretariat and of the Gender Equality Division. Gender mainstreaming and synergies are also created through mutual exchanges of views involving representatives (usually the Chair or a senior Secretariat member) of working bodies and committees.

45. Gender mainstreaming activities continued to progress within the Organisation in 2019, both in terms of organisational changes and in terms of specific sectors or bodies either continuing or initiating new gender mainstreaming initiatives.

➤ **Building an institutional culture conducive to mainstream gender equality issues.**

46. Several important initiatives were undertaken or continued in 2019 in order to strengthen an institutional culture and processes that support gender mainstreaming. The Council of Europe **Directorate for Human Resources (DHR)** was an important driver in this direction. Efforts were made to make different human resources tools more gender sensitive in terms of language (i.e. recruitment forms, databases). A pilot **gender mainstreaming training for all staff** was also introduced, comprising different strands and levels. The aim was to fulfil the needs of different staff members working on policy, monitoring and co-operation projects and feedback from staff was very positive. A total of 280 staff members were trained in 2019.

The new People Strategy 2019-2023 prepared by DHR contains a specific key objective about Diversity and Equal Opportunities. One of the aims is to mainstream and implement good practices on gender equality and diversity in all domains of the Organisation and DHR will monitor this. DHR also organised four focus groups to get input from staff for a specific Council of Europe implementation plan on diversity and equal opportunities.

47. The **Office of the Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP)**, which co-ordinates Council of Europe co-operation activities in member States and non-member States in its neighbourhood also continued its gender mainstreaming efforts. The internal Toolkit on gender mainstreaming in co-operation activities that was first produced in 2018 was developed further and disseminated both at Headquarters level and in field offices. Staff working on co-operation projects in Headquarters and in the field offices followed gender mainstreaming training. ODGP also embedded a gender mainstreaming culture in project management processes.

48. As regards **communication**, the Gender Equality Division developed a training module on gender-sensitive communication and a training session was organised with communication staff dealing with internal communication. Continuous efforts are made to reach out to the different services working on communication within the Organisation.

➤ **Continued gender equality and gender mainstreaming activities in Council of Europe sectors**

49. Several sectors, which had been active on gender mainstreaming in the last years undertook further significant activities:

- The sport sector followed up on previous work by implementing the “ALL IN Towards gender balance in sport” project aiming at providing support to public authorities and sports organisations in the design and implementation of policies and programmes addressing gender inequalities in sport, and the adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy. Outputs of the project notably include data on gender equality in sport and a toolkit on gender mainstreaming in sport.
- The media sector of the Council of Europe also built on previous work and initiated a monitoring exercise of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media together with the GEC.
- The sector on electoral assistance developed its work on women voters and candidates by integrating a gender equality dimension in its new ElecData project, a compendium of electoral data comprising **interactive maps and graphics**.
- Eurimages, the cultural support fund of the Council of Europe has been addressing the issue of gender equality in the film industry. A Gender Equality Working Group meets quarterly, and activities are ongoing to achieve the equal distribution of co-production funding between women and men by the year 2020. Since the end of 2017, Eurimages regularly interviews women film directors who receive support from the fund to address the problem of gender invisibility. They also share know-how via interviews and across social media. During this year's edition of the Venice Film Festival (28 August-7 September 2019), a Seminar on Gender Equality, Inclusivity and the Film Industry was hosted by La Biennale di Venezia and Eurimages in the Spazio Incontri of the Hotel Excelsior.

- The Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) undertook specific activities to better address the gender equality dimensions of human rights, including the drafting of a checklist on gender mainstreaming and the promotion of human rights together with the GEC in 2019. The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) commissioned a study on “Gender, Corruption and Fraud”, which highlights the need for further data in this area. GRECO, in its ongoing fifth evaluation round dealing with integrity in top executive functions and the police, regularly recommends a greater gender balance, motivated by considerations such as the following: “the police should represent, as much as possible, society as a whole. Seeking a better gender balance is not only a requirement of equality under international law, but diversity in the police in general, including at managerial level, can have positive effects on the profession as a whole (e.g. in contacts with the public, in creating a more heterogeneous environment in some parts of the police which could counter a possible code of silence, further developing multiple-eyes routines, etc.)”.
- Other bodies including the European Court of Human Rights, the Commission for the Efficiency of Justice and the Cybercrime Convention Committee continued some previous work on gender mainstreaming.

➤ **New sectors starting to work on gender mainstreaming and gender equality**

50. It is encouraging to observe that the efforts made since 2016 to promote gender mainstreaming throughout the Organisation continue to bear fruit as new sectors start taking on board a gender dimension in policies they are dealing with:

- In 2019, the Committee on Bioethics, which is looking at the implementation of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and at the protection of human rights in the field of biomedicine commissioned a study on the gender equality-related aspects of its work.
- In the same way, the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) organised a seminar on gender mainstreaming in law reform.
- The European Committee on Democracy and Governance also sped up its efforts to include a gender equality dimension in its work, for example in relation to looking at the inclusion of provisions against sexism in codes of conduct in the public sector.
- As regards the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicine, a gender mainstreaming exercise was conducted for the preparation of a Draft Resolution of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the effective implementation of pharmaceutical care.
- Criminal law co-operation: In September, the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law organised in co-operation with the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, a conference entitled: “The fight against domestic violence: the role of the police”. The event involved high-ranking representatives of European Ministers of Internal Affairs, police officers, associations and experts who exchanged experiences and good practices including new measures enabling the police to fight domestic violence more effectively. The overall objective of those efforts was to reduce the number of women killed by their spouses or ex-spouses, but also to strengthen confidence in the police. The Istanbul Convention and the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism were presented/discussed on this occasion.

51. These meetings gave an opportunity to also hold a special thematic presentation or discussion. As part of the Gender Mainstreaming Team meeting in June, the Gender Equality Division thus hosted a presentation and discussion on the gender equality implications of artificial intelligence. The presentation, given by a senior scientist and entrepreneur involved in machine learning, gave an opportunity to gather further gender equality-specific inputs in the perspective of possible future Council of Europe activities on artificial intelligence.

52. Gender mainstreaming is also promoted through **human resource management** policies within the Council of Europe: a pilot training on gender mainstreaming was organised between April and June 2019, involving 17 training sessions both in Strasbourg and in field offices, and 320 participants (it covered gender mainstreaming of internal documents, e.g. internal and external vacancy texts, gender sensitive communication in human resource documents, etc.).

53. Thanks to the commitment of different sectors in the Organisation and to a solid institutional setting, **gender mainstreaming is progressively becoming a reality** in a growing number of areas. Gender mainstreaming requires fundamental changes in working methods, and to introduce an institutional culture and procedures that take naturally on board a gender equality perspective in the content of policies, but also in all aspects of communication, diverse internal and external processes and interactions between people. Such change cannot take place overnight and requires commitment at all levels, training and ownership by all actors involved. Efforts in this direction in the Council of Europe are visible and begin to show a real change of approach and increased awareness of the need to address gender equality in all areas, as a condition for better policy making. Such efforts need to be continued and underpinned with resources, training and commitment at all levels.

➤ **Gender equality in core sectors of the Council of Europe**

54. It is encouraging to see that **never in the history of the Council of Europe have so many senior positions been occupied during the same period by women**, in particular: the Secretary General (the second woman in the Organisation's history) and the Deputy Secretary General, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly (the fourth president in the Assembly's history), the Commissioner for Human Rights (the first woman in this position). Figures released at the beginning of 2019 also show that in 2018, the total number of women members of the Parliamentary Assembly represented 34% of members, which is clearly above the percentage of women members of parliament in Council of Europe member States<sup>16</sup> (less than 26%, according to data collected by the Inter-parliamentary Union in June 2018). Efforts towards gender balance contribute to the achievement of SO4: Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, but can also contribute undoubtedly to a higher credibility of the Organisation's action and to the promotion of its gender equality standards. At the level of the European Court of Human Rights, women represent less than one third of the judges.

55. Gender equality continues to feature prominently on the international agenda and the successive Presidencies of the **Committee of Ministers** (Finland, France) have greatly supported efforts and policies in this field throughout 2019. This dynamic shows every sign that it will be maintained, in spite of certain gender backlash movements.

56. Gender equality-related issues continue to feature prominently on the agenda of the **Parliamentary Assembly**, which counts nine committees including the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination (which is itself composed of three sub-committees).<sup>17</sup> Several important initiatives were taken in 2019 including:

- following social media campaigns such as the #MeToo movement and following the joint IPU/PACE study released in 2018, the Assembly invited all parliaments to join and support the #NotInMyParliament initiative to raise awareness of a pattern of widespread and systematic gender-based violence against politicians;
- through Resolution 2274 on "Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment" (April 2019),<sup>18</sup> the Assembly called on all parliaments of member States to adopt a series of measures including: rules of conduct prohibiting sexist speech, sexist acts and sexual harassment and introducing sanctions for breaches of this obligation; reviewing immunity rules to ensure immunity from prosecution does not hamper proceedings against MPs for sexual harassment and violence against women; complaint mechanisms;

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<sup>16</sup> Source: <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=25252&lang=en>; a trend downwards is observed, however.

<sup>17</sup> Currently, these are: Sub-Committee on Gender Equality; Sub-Committee on the Rights of Minorities; Sub-Committee on Disability, Multiple and Intersectional Discrimination.

<sup>18</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-en.asp?FileID=27614&lang=en>



- through Recommendation 2157 to the Committee of Ministers “Towards an ambitious Council of Europe agenda for gender equality”<sup>19</sup> (June 2019), calling *inter alia* to step up the efforts to achieve effective gender equality, including by supporting gender mainstreaming in all Council of Europe policies and activities, and to fully implement Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism.
- In the week of the adoption of this text, the chair of the GEC was invited to a hearing organised by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination which discussed current priorities and trends, the importance of CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, and allowed to share some key messages notably that combating sexism and violence against women is also men’s business. The debate which followed addressed the current gender backlash and the need for closer co-operation with civil society and political parties.

57. The new Council of Europe **Commissioner for Human Rights**, Dunja Mijatović, presented in 2019 (in April) her first annual activity report<sup>20</sup> in a debate before the Assembly. While the report covers a variety of the most pressing human rights issues in the Council of Europe member States, the Commissioner highlighted women’s rights as one of the five most pressing topics of her work (the others being migration, human rights of persons with disability, the protection of human rights defenders and the safety of journalists). As regards women’s rights specifically, the Commissioner underscored the need to tackle gender stereotypes and prejudices and to put an end to violence against women. She also called on national authorities to reduce the gender pay gap, which remains a “major obstacle to effective equality between men and women, and a widespread problem all over Council of Europe member States, both in the public and private sectors”. In October 2019, during a meeting with the Ministers’ Deputies, the Commissioner stated that she would lend her support to the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism and call on member States to implement it.

#### **I.4. Strategic partnerships with other regional and international organisations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders**

58. The Council of Europe continues to maintain ongoing strategic partnerships with regional and international organisations such as: the European Union-European Commission and its Advisory Committee on Gender Equality, the European Parliament, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA); the United Nations – in particular UN Women, UN Global Compact, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Human Rights Council; the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Organization of American States (OAS); the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet); networks of women’s organisations (European Women’s Lobby, Women against Violence Europe Network); other international NGOs, the private sector, research and think-tank institutes. In this context, the chair or members of the GEC, as well as the Gender Equality Division, regularly provide input to the work of partners, including through attendance at events.

59. These interactions were further developed in 2019, including with new partners, notably on the following occasions and events:

- 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the **UN Commission on the Status of Women – CSW** (New York, March 2019).
- **G7**: The Council of Europe was invited to the ministerial meeting held in Paris on 9-10 May 2019 specifically to speak and comment at the working session on the “Biarritz partnership” on how to combat violence against women.

<sup>19</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?FileID=28019&lang=EN>

<sup>20</sup> See <https://rm.coe.int/annual-activity-report-2018-by-dunja-mijatovic-council-of-europe-commi/168093a9a7>

- The Council of Europe hosted in May an **International conference “Women’s rights at the crossroads”** on the improvement of international co-operation to end violence against women, in co-operation with the UN and the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. The event, which was open to the media, brought together high-level participants from across the globe, including (then) Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland; Marlène Schiappa, French Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination; Dubravka Šimonović, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences; and Feride Acar, the (then) President of GREVIO.
- The Council of Europe took an active role at the **UNECE Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting** (Geneva, 28-29 October 2019). The President of GREVIO and the Chair of GEC were panellists in two plenary sessions on violence against women and on regional progress on the global goals. In addition, two side events were organised:
  - a) "The Istanbul Convention in practice: holistic care for victims of sexual violence", in co-operation with the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the UN in Geneva"; and
  - b) "Ending Violence against Women and Girls: Prevalence, Proposals and Partnerships", in co-operation with the International Council of Women and co-sponsored by the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN in Geneva, UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and NGO/CSW Geneva.

60. Moreover, Council of Europe representatives/GEC members organised, participated in and contributed to a number of events, which gave further opportunities to promote the cause of gender equality, as well as the relevant Council of Europe standards, including:

- launching of the Initiative “Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries” – AGEMI (Brussels, February 2019),
- Women 7 Summit (Paris, April 2019), meetings of the Advisory Committee on Gender Equality to the European Commission (May and November 2019),
- the European Federation of Journalists’ conference on “Increasing diversity and gender equality in the workplace” (Istanbul, May 2019),
- two conferences on the “role of and status of women in modern society” and on “Towards a Europe free from violence against women and girls – the Istanbul Convention (...)” (Bucharest, May and June 2019, under the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council),
- annual conference of Victims Support Europe (Strasbourg, June 2019),
- exchanges of views organised by the Assembly Committee on Equality and Non-discrimination (Strasbourg, 25 June 2019) and the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Stuttgart, 28 June 2019),
- Europe Regional Consultation on “Women’s Human Rights in the changing world of work” organised by the OHCHR (Geneva, June 2019),
- conference “Boys in care – Encouraging boys to pursue care occupations” (Florence, June 2019),
- Nordic Council international conference on the impact of the #MeToo movement (Reykjavik, September 2019),
- international workshop on “The role of media in raising awareness on violence against women and domestic violence” (Pristina, September 2019),
- conference on Beijing + 25: achievements, gaps and challenges for the European Union (Madrid, September 2019),
- high level conference “Europe for gender equality: taking stock, taking action” (Helsinki, September/October 2019),
- Gender Summit 17 (Amsterdam, October 2019);
- Equinet Conference on Sexual Harassment at Work (Brussels, October 2019),
- annual conference of the Internet Governance Forum - IGF (Berlin, November 2019),
- Open Day organised by the Directorate General for Democracy for permanent representations to the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, November 2019).

61. Outside the context of formal events, opportunities for further promoting the cause of gender equality and international standards occurred *ad hoc* on various occasions, for instance at a visit from a delegation of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (its Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission) (July 2019), at bilateral discussions with key partners in the implementation of co-operation projects (Moscow, September 2019), or by giving a presentation to French judges and prosecutors attending in-service training at the Council of Europe (October 2019).

## II. Thematic section: online gender-based violence

Based on a report prepared by Dr Becky Faith,<sup>21</sup> Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom.

Please note that the reports from member States on the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 were taken into account when drawing up this thematic section.

### Introduction

62. The United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development SDG 5 explicitly links gender-based violence and gender equality in Target 5.1 “*End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere*” and Target 5.2 “*Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private sphere*” (United Nations 2016). Online gender-based violence (online GBV) is a growing global concern, as reflected in the Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (Human Rights Council 2018), which refers to various UN resolutions recognising online GBV in the international human rights framework on women’s rights and violence against women.

63. Yet the legal and regulatory mechanisms in place to deal with online GBV are inadequate, and this contributes to an overarching context of impunity for perpetrators (APC 2015). The most recent CEDAW General Recommendation on gender-based violence against women encourages online media companies to address gender-based violence against women that takes place through their services and platforms.

64. In March 2019, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the first set of international standards on preventing and combating sexism, as the underlying enabler of gender-based inequality and violence: Recommendation to member States CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism. The text calls both for general policies and for a series of measures in respect of nine priority sectors, including the Internet, social media and online sexist hate speech. These provisions of chapter II.B of the recommendation are reproduced at the end of this paper.

65. Online violence, and online GBV specifically, are discussed in an increasing number of international fora, including the annual meetings of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) (which also applies a gender-sensitive approach in relation to reporting on sessions and workshops). The importance of online GBV was also recognised by the G7 Ministers in their declaration in May 2019. The G7 Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality ended with the adoption of a meaningful and unprecedented joint declaration by the seven countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and United States):

*Ending violence against girls and women benefits all and is a shared responsibility in which everyone, including men and boys, has a critical role to play. We are resolved to end all forms of gender-based violence and strive for a future where the same rights and fundamental freedoms that individuals have offline are also protected online. Online violence cannot be separated from other types of violence against women and girls. Like intimate partnership violence, it is rooted in gender inequality, discriminatory social norms and unequal power relations. Online violence, harassment and abuse of women and girls constitute an alarming phenomenon of global proportion. It undermines women and girls’ human rights as well as their safety and personal integrity both off and online, and limits their ability to access resources online that could otherwise accelerate their economic, educational and social development. (...)* (G7 Ministers 2019)

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<sup>21</sup> [b.faith@ids.ac.uk](mailto:b.faith@ids.ac.uk)

66. The issue cuts across all the themes of the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Strategy. For as long as women are unable to express their political views online without fear of harassment and violence, it will be impossible to achieve balanced participation in political and public decision-making, thereby frustrating the achievement of objective 4 of the Strategy. Online harassment can contribute to a culture in which violence is seen as normal and inevitable, and thus more easily perpetrated and tolerated, both online and offline (Fraser and Martineau-Searle 2018). Unchallenged, hate online can inspire violence offline, which feeds a slow undercurrent of misogyny that threatens to corrode decades of progress made on women’s rights and equality (The Glitch Team 2019). This violence is intersectional. Amnesty International’s research on abuse on Twitter found that women of colour, women from ethnic or religious minorities, lesbian, bisexual or transgender women – as well as non-binary individuals – and women with disabilities were more at risk (Amnesty International 2018).

67. Given the central role that digital platforms play in mediating all aspects of social, economic and political life, ensuring that women and girls are able to use digital tools safely is vital to the achievement of gender equality. However, because the ICT industry is still dominated by men at all levels, technologies are not designed with women’s online experiences in mind and women’s safety might not be a priority for regulators and those in charge of internet governance. Globally women constitute less than 35% of ICT and related professions. Women have a very low rate of leadership in ICT policymaking; worldwide, only 28 countries have a woman as ICT minister, and only 25 have a woman heading the telecom regulator. Women make up only 21.5% of the digital workforce in Europe (Sey and Hafkin 2019) and it is estimated that in the field of machine learning only 13.5% of the entire workforce is female (Weissman 2016). The Council of Europe’s research on artificial intelligence, and algorithmic decision-making warns how it can open the way for new types of unfair differentiation and risks reinforcing social inequality (Borgesius 2018). This lack of gender diversity in AI research and development creates the risk that AI systems perpetuate existing forms of structural inequality even when working as intended.

68. For the purposes of the present annual report for 2019, several countries have submitted comments and/or information on initiatives in the field of online GBV.<sup>22</sup> These mostly refer to a) recent or intended legal reforms to criminalise certain acts (e.g. revenge porn/the unlawful dissemination of images/the unlawful intrusion in one’s private life, online stalking, online harassment); b) measures to increase interaction and co-operation with the internet and social networks industry; and c) information and awareness-raising of the general public or dedicated groups (youth, women) on harassment and other forms of violence in the digital environment. The latter feature prominently among the recent initiatives reported.

**Germany – Project “Active Against Digital Violence”**

This project and the online platform associated to it focus on the protection of women and girls who are victims of cyberstalking (and spy-aps), violence based on sexual images, cybermobbing, theft of identity, doxing,<sup>23</sup> hate speech including its intersectional features. It is run by the Federal Association of Rape Crisis Centres and Women’s Counselling Centres and funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Various new actions are planned as regards the publication of information on various forms of violence, enhancing the professional skills of advisors and support staff, increasing the enforcement of legal provisions, strengthening networking efforts and increasing the skills of practitioners.

For further information: <https://www.aktiv-gegen-digitale-gewalt.de/de/>

**Definitions and prevalence**

69. Online GBV encompasses a wide range of negative experiences online, including offensive name-calling, purposeful embarrassment, physical threats, sustained harassment, stalking and sexual harassment and non-consensual sharing of intimate imagery (also known as revenge porn). Accounting for instances of online GBV is complicated, and no single measure adequately captures its complexity (Davidson *et al.* 2019). Yet despite the importance of this issue, and the threat that it poses to the achievement of gender equality, there is limited data on the prevalence of online GBV.

<sup>22</sup> The reader interested in further information may consult in particular the submissions of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

<sup>23</sup> Doxing (or doxxing) is the internet-based practice of researching and broadcasting private or identifying information (especially personally identifying information) about an individual or organisation.

70. The information submitted by France refers to the phenomenon of "cyber-raids" which involves the concerted action of several individuals seeking to harass a person, a phenomenon which would appear to be increasingly observed on social networks.

71. EIGE acknowledged that, to date, online GBV has not been fully conceptualised, defined or legislated against at EU level (EIGE 2017). It also carried out a study on the opportunities and risks of the digital environment for girls and boys. New opportunities in terms of social and political participation and the risks created by new types of online violence were the focus. The study was presented at an informal meeting of Ministers of Gender Equality of the EU, EFTA and the Western Balkans in October 2018 and published in the beginning of 2019. The results of the report show, among other things, that young women and girls are more commonly the victims of online harassment and cyberbullying than young men and boys.

72. Information was also made available at the EU level by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Its European Survey on Violence Against Women (VAW) included questions on cyberstalking and cyber harassment: this survey showed that 1 in 10 women will have already experienced some form of online GBV by the time they are 15 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). However, this survey was the first to collect this data across the EU, and there is no means by which to trace the evolution of the phenomena and trends in victim numbers over time. The report from the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on 'Gender equality and empowering women in the digital age' showed that 18% of women in Europe had suffered since adolescence some form of harassment from acquaintances on the internet, and warned of a lack of awareness of the issue leading to insufficient prevention, monitoring and assistance for victims. The report highlighted the fact that various forms of online violence are not yet fully reflected in criminal law, nor in some modes and procedures of prosecution in all member States (Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality 2016).

73. The Council of Europe's T-CY *Working Group on Cyberbullying and other forms of online violence, especially against women and children*,<sup>24</sup> used the following working definition (based on the definition of "violence against women" in Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention): *Cyber violence is the use of computer systems to cause, facilitate, or threaten violence against individuals that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering and may include the exploitation of the individual's circumstances, characteristics or vulnerabilities.*

74. The working group had identified in a mapping study of July 2018, available *inter alia* on the newly created resource portal on cyber violence,<sup>25</sup> the following forms of cyber violence and acts involving information and communication tools (ICT):

- **ICT-related violations of privacy:** computer intrusions, taking, sharing, manipulation of data or images including intimate data, revenge porn, stalking, doxing, identity theft, impersonation, etc.
- **ICT-related hate crime** against groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, etc.
- **ICT-related direct threats of or actual violence:** murder, kidnapping, sexual violence, rape, torture, extortion, blackmail, swatting, incitement to violence, transmissions that themselves cause injuries, attacks on critical infrastructure, cars or medical devices, etc.
- **Cybercrime:** illegal access, illegal interception, data interference, system interference, computer-related forgery, computer-related fraud, child pornography.
- **Cyberharassment:** defamation and other damage to reputation, cyberbullying, threats of violence, including sexual violence, coercion, insults or threats, incitement to violence, sextortion, Incitement to suicide or self-harm, etc.
- **Online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children:** sexual abuse, child prostitution, child pornography, corruption of children, solicitation of children for sexual purposes, sexual abuse via livestreaming, etc.

<sup>24</sup> See also the presentation of Gareth Samson (Department of Justice, Canada) during the conference on "Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism" (Helsinki, March 2019) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/helsinki-conference-march-2019> and paragraph 9 above.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cybercrime/cyberviolence>

75. Referring to recent research (Woodlock, 2017), the T-CY report points out that contrary to popular misconceptions, research shows that the majority of cyberstalking is perpetrated not by strangers but by intimate partners or ex-partners, and mostly by men. Cyberstalking aims at a coercive control of daily behaviours via persistent texting, email, tracking partners' location via electronic devices and the control of a partner's computer (for surveillance of communication). A national US survey also found that cases involving intimate partners lasted 2.2 years on average, compared with 1.1 years for stalking by others and that intimate partner stalking is more likely to be associated with homicides and attempted homicides than is stalking by strangers.

76. Smart phones, social media, blogs, "selfies", video games, virtual reality and self-generated content have led to a transformation of contemporary life and of the social construction. Individuals document and share their everyday behaviour including intimate behaviour as these new technologies can permit the exploration of a range of identities, including gendered identities. Some of the campaigns organised in member States against cyber violence are therefore particularly aimed at young people, encouraging them and their parents to adopt a more cautious approach to certain practices (see below "School and young people").

77. As highlighted during the conference on "Tackling gender stereotypes and sexism" (March 2019),<sup>26</sup> the online pornography presents problematic trends, in particular its successful lobbying to circumvent existing prohibitions of the depiction of juveniles/performers posing as juveniles. More than 88% of the most highly rated scenes on the websites studied include violent acts, where 94% of victim performers are women and around 20% of pornographic content is sexual abuse perpetrated against children. Further, the porn industry has increasingly targeted boys as young as ages 9 to 11 via the internet and mobile phones (e.g. pop-ups offering free porn), leading to a de-stigmatisation of pornographic material and gender-biased sexual violence among new or future consumers.

78. In the United Kingdom, the 2019 UK Online Harms White Paper showed that in 2017 one in five children aged 11 to 19 reported having experienced cyberbullying in the previous year, 21% of women were subjected to misogynistic abuse online, and around 50% of girls aware of sexist abuse on social media state that this has in some way restricted what they do or aspire to do (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Home Office 2019). Nevertheless, a Report of recommendations to tackle online abuse by the United Kingdom's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence warned that online abuse was often downplayed and dismissed as a less serious crime than 'real life' abuse (Hadley 2017).

79. A dynamic technological environment and the diverse platforms used as a medium for online violence against women – from social media to emerging threats from connected devices and the 'internet of things' – make it challenging to categorise approaches (Vella 2018). For example, in the past year there has been a significant increase in the use of "stalkerware" by abusive partners, whereby people install surveillance software on their victims phones to monitor their communications (Tidy 2019).

80. Non-consensual intimate images (NCII) are sexually-explicit images and videos that are captured, published or circulated without the consent of one or more persons in the frame. (Burris 2014). The ease of distribution of this imagery reflects the possibilities offered by digital platforms; there is little or no cost in duplicating imagery so that it can be shared on multiple platforms without the subjects' consent or knowledge. The first academic study of the subject, in Australia, based on information provided by more than 4,000 respondents, revealed that one in five people had been victims of revenge porn (Henry, Powell and Flynn 2017). In South Korea, almost 5,200 sexual harassment cases involving spy-cam footage were reported in 2016 (Sey and Hafkin 2019). In December 2015, revenge porn became illegal in England and Wales. Revenge porn is now punishable by up to two years' imprisonment and over 200 cases of revenge porn have now been prosecuted in the United Kingdom (Davidson *et al.* 2019). Several other countries have reported that similar repressive measures have been introduced or are being considered to prevent and/or facilitate the prosecution of acts in connection with the non-consensual sharing of intimate material.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid; presentation of Sári Halász, Hungarian Women's Lobby

### **Denmark – awareness raising campaign**

The Minister for Equal Opportunities is currently co-operating with the Ministry of Justice to prepare an awareness raising campaign about online harassment including the penalties for non-consensual sharing of sexual images. The campaign will be launched in the beginning of 2020 and will target young people in secondary education and focus on what is illegal online, including image sharing, online threats, hacking, pornographic image manipulation, fake dating profiles and digital nudity. In recent years, there has been increasing awareness of digital violations among young people. Surveys show that 30% of young people have experienced others having taken sexual pictures of someone and shared them online. Young women especially are victims of digital harassment.

### **Sweden – new offence of “unlawful violation of privacy”**

In 2018, a new crime – unlawful violation of privacy – was introduced. It criminalises the intrusion into someone’s private life by disseminating sensitive images or other information including on the internet. This may involve, for example in relation to revenge porn, the dissemination of material such as images of a person’s wholly or partially naked body as well as images or other information about a person who is the target of the offence and which affects that person’s peace or liberty. The act is punishable with a fine or up to four years’ imprisonment.

## **Populism, misogyny and sexist hate speech**

81. As mentioned above, the digital harassment of women who are political leaders is widespread. Beyond the psychological and physical harm experienced by victims, it silences women’s voices and agency in the public sphere and undermines democratic culture (Stevens and Fraser 2018). This has racist underpinnings. Amnesty International’s analysis of Tweets sent prior to the United Kingdom’s general election in 2017 showed that Diane Abbott, an MP of colour, received almost half (45.14%) of all abusive tweets in the run-up to the election. Diane Abbott aside, black and Asian women received 35% more abusive tweets than their fellow white female MPs (Amnesty International 2018).

82. There are also links between the growth in authoritarian populism and online misogyny. The far-right exploits young men’s rebellion and dislike of ‘political correctness’ to spread white supremacist thought, Islamophobia, and misogyny through irony and knowledge of internet culture (Marwick and Lewis 2017). Global right-wing agendas rely on social media and misogynistic populist movements to pursue antifeminist, xenophobic gender politics. Feminists, LGBTQ activists, and human rights NGOs that support them are positioned as enemies of ‘the people’ (who are imagined as naturally and authentically gender conservative) (Graff, Kapur and Walters 2019).

### **Ireland – HateTrack Project**

The HateTrack Project is an experimental, exploratory research project that combines social, scientific and computational methods to understand online racist speech in the Irish context. The project used insights from civil society and experts in the field of race, racism and hate speech to build a computational tool that harvests and classifies Facebook and Twitter posts in terms of their probability to contain racially-loaded toxic material. The tool is designed as a monitoring and diagnostic tool of the state of the Irish digital public sphere. While it is currently focused on racially-toxic contents, it can be scaled to other forms of hate and toxicity, such as misogyny and homophobia.

83. Certain internet networks and platforms also pursue the goal of sharing and disseminating an ideology of misogyny between men who, for instance, call themselves “incels” (“involuntary celibate”), Men’s Rights Activists, Men Going Their Own Way, etc. and who are reportedly gathering on websites and messaging platforms such as Incels.me (not open to women and counting about 5,000 men according to certain estimates), Discord, 4chan among others. The suspect responsible for the mass killings which took place in Canada on 23 April 2018, sometimes referred to as the *Toronto van attack*,<sup>27</sup> claimed affiliation with the above ideas and social group(s). In a post published shortly before the attack, he referred to his act as a form of rebellion against the “Chads” and “Stacys”, expressions which are used within the community to designate popular, attractive, sexually active men and women, respectively. This case is often cited as proof for the extreme level of violence that the above forms of misogyny can vehiculate and/or inspire but

<sup>27</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto\\_van\\_attack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto_van_attack)

there were others, such as the mass killing known as the *Isla Vista killings* which took place in the United States in 2014.<sup>28</sup>

84. The above groups, and the broader community they represent – which is sometimes referred to as the “manosphere” – have become a subject of research,<sup>29</sup> including at the initiative of public authorities: during the 16<sup>th</sup> GEC meeting (Strasbourg, 13-15 November), the Danish delegation presented a research project which was recently commissioned by one of the country’s ministries:

**Denmark – analysing and understanding online sexist hate speech**

The Ministry of Environment and Food has commissioned a research project entitled “Mapping the manosphere” to external specialists. The objectives are to draw a picture – with a Nordic focus – of the tendencies of counter-reactions to gender equality on online fora including links between extreme communities and the mainstream online culture, and to issue recommendations to support the prevention of such forms of radicalisation and hostility to gender equality. The results are expected to become available in the course of 2020.

**Schools and young people**

85. In order to tackle online GBV effectively, it is vital to work with schools and young people in ways which acknowledge and address socio-cultural norms. This reflects the fact that young people can suffer extreme online abuse, from unacceptable comments about their appearance and views, to intimate pictures shared without their consent, and even rape or death threats. In the United Kingdom in 2019, 25% of girls aged 13-21 have had threatening things said about them on social media and 8% had photos of a sexual nature sent to other people (Girlguiding 2019). This violence persists in online gaming environments: 40% of young people aged 12 to 25 reported having received unwanted sexual contact whilst playing online games (Ditch the Label 2017).

86. Offline education programmes delivered in schools can help young people learn about boundaries and their rights in online spaces, with a focus on issues such as consent and confidentiality in the context of email exchanges, online forums and social networks. It is vital that young people be taught about how little control they have over information and images they share online. One-off training sessions with teachers and parents are also very useful to help them support the children in their care (Giugni, De Santis, Davis-Walker and Di Nuzzo 2018). Amnesty International has recommended that governments ensure that sex and gender stereotyping online is included in comprehensive sexuality/sex and relationships education and that teachers are trained to deliver this education (Amnesty International 2018).

**Slovenia – “Click-off” Project**

In 2018 and 2019 a media campaign has been running within the “Click-off” (Odklikni) project, focusing on raising awareness about various forms of cyber violence, in particular violence that more frequently affects women and girls – cyber-stalking and harassment, i.e. revenge pornography, (sexual) abuse through the use of false identities. This topic is presented in TV ads and promotional spots, leaflets, on posters, e-posters on city buses, a website (<http://odklikni.enakostspolov.si/>) and a mobile application Odklikni. This free application was developed primarily for young people to raise awareness about cyber violence and harassment, internet ethics and netiquette, measures for improved online security and safety, and steps for dealing with cyber violence and abuse. As part of the project entitled ‘Click-off! Stop cyber violence against women and girls’, training for teachers, head teachers, school counsellors, social workers, and representatives of NGOs dealing with young people was organised in 2019. The aim of the training was to increase sensitivity and strengthen knowledge for successful prevention and protection against cyber violence and harassment against women and girls, and present practical activities for work with young people.

<sup>28</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014\\_Isla\\_Vista\\_killings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Isla_Vista_killings)

<sup>29</sup> See for instance “Exploring Misogyny across the Manosphere in Reddit”, Farrell, Tracie; Fernandez, Miriam; Novotny, Jakub and Alani, Harith (2019), <http://oro.open.ac.uk/61128/>



### United Kingdom – Council for Internet Safety

The United Kingdom Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) is a new collaborative forum through which government, the tech community and civil society work together to ensure that the United Kingdom is a safe place to be online. Expanding the scope of the former United Kingdom Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), UKCCIS works to tackle online harms such as hate crime, extremism and violence against women and girls, in addition to maintaining a focus on the needs of children.

### Social media companies

87. Social media platforms are the most significant space for online GBV. Even when guidelines exist for social media companies to address online GBV, no effective system is in place to ensure that these guidelines are followed. Twitter’s “Hateful Conduct” policy provides an overview of the types of behaviour that are not allowed on the platform and encourages users to report content on the platform that they believe is in breach of Twitter’s community standards. Yet the company does not state who is responsible for the oversight and implementation of this policy (Amnesty International 2018).

88. The matter is further complicated by jurisdictional issues and access to evidence (on the real identity of offenders, for instance). The fact that a website may be hosted in one country, operated by staff in another, with harmful comments left by readers in a third, makes tackling abuse on platforms particularly challenging. There is no international agreement on States exercising their jurisdiction, or on whether internet companies should be responsible for their users’ content at all (Solmone 2018). The need to better recognise the potentially transborder nature of the abuse and violence on the internet is something that has been emphasised at the EU level (Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality 2016). The Council of Europe’s 2001 Convention on Cybercrime which, to date, has been ratified by 64 countries from all the continents, deals with jurisdictional matters only in respect of acts covered by the Convention (illegal access to, and alteration of data and systems, child pornography) and by its Protocol concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

89. The report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women reflects on the fact that international human rights instruments can provide a framework for tackling online GBV (Human Rights Council 2018):

*“Even though the core international human rights instruments, including those on women’s rights, were drafted before the advent of ICT, they provide a global and dynamic set of rights and obligations with transformative potential, and have a key role to play in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, including a woman’s rights to live a life free from violence, to freedom of expression, to privacy, to have access to information shared through ICT, and other rights.”*

90. The UN Guiding principles provide a useful framework to indicate how States might develop laws and regulatory processes to make Internet businesses accountable for addressing online GBV (Human Rights Council 2011). Three themes from the Guiding Principles are particularly relevant. First, companies should exercise due diligence to identify their impact on human rights; secondly, they should create policies and design platforms that prevent and mitigate negative impact; and finally, they should develop effective remedies when human rights violations take place.

91. Overall there appears to be consensus in both the academic literature and civil society that action is required both as regards the education and information of users and social media companies, for instance when it comes to transparency, the impact on human rights, internal governance processes, etc. (Suzor et al. 2019). Amnesty’s “Toxic Twitter” report went on to recommend (Amnesty International 2018) that Twitter should:

- *“publicly share comprehensive and meaningful information about the nature and levels of violence and abuse against women, as well as other groups, on the platform, and how they respond to it;*
- *improve its reporting mechanisms to ensure consistent application and better response to complaints of violence and abuse;*
- *provide more clarity about how it interprets and identifies violence and abuse on the platform and how it handles reports of such abuse;*
- *undertake far more proactive measures in educating users and raising awareness about security and privacy features on the platform that will help women create a safer, and less toxic Twitter experience.”*

92. Initiatives in the field of interaction with the industry can take several forms. These concern transparency and general accountability requirements as well as care and diligence requirements for those operating websites and platforms (as mentioned above). But also new legal and complaint mechanisms allowing for the effective and rapid removal of internet content which constitutes an incitement to hate and violence – including on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation, race, religion, etc. A variety of online conduct and content can be harmful without necessarily being illegal. Efforts in the field of (criminal) legislation and enforcement therefore need to be complemented with measures to prevent harmful albeit legal situations (policy guidelines, rules on good practices within the industry, etc.).

#### **United Kingdom – Dialogue and interaction with the industry**

In response to the Internet Safety Strategy consultation in May 2018, the United Kingdom Government announced plans to introduce a) a social media code of practice, which will provide guidance to social media companies on appropriate reporting mechanisms and moderation processes to tackle harmful content, and b) transparency reporting, which will provide data on the amount of harmful content being reported to platforms in the United Kingdom, and how these reports are dealt with, including what mechanisms are in place to protect users.

In April 2019, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published an Online Harms White Paper, which aims to gather views on plans for regulation and tackling online harms. This comprises both legislative and non-legislative measures, and will make companies more responsible for the safety of users online. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

The White Paper proposes establishing in law a new duty of care towards users, which will be overseen by an independent regulator. Companies will be held to account for tackling a comprehensive set of online harms, ranging from illegal activity and content, to behaviours which are harmful but not necessarily illegal.

93. At the level of the European Union, to prevent and counter the spread of illegal hate speech online, in May 2016, the Commission agreed with Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube a “Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online”.<sup>30</sup> In the course of 2018, Instagram, Google+, Snapchat and Dailymotion joined the code of conduct. Jeuxvideo.com joined in January 2019. The implementation of the code of conduct is evaluated through a regular monitoring exercise set up in collaboration with a network of organisations located in the different EU countries (which test in particular how IT companies are implementing the commitments in the code).

94. According to the code, when they receive a request to remove content from their online platform, the IT companies are to assess the request against their rules and community guidelines and, where applicable, national laws on combating racism and xenophobia. They then decide if the content can be considered as illegal online hate speech and if it needs to be removed. According to the code, requests to remove content must be dealt with speedily and the companies have committed to reviewing the majority of these requests in less than 24 hours.

95. The code defines illegal hate speech as the public incitement to violence or hatred on the basis of certain characteristics, including race, colour, religion, descent and national or ethnic origin. In the absence of an explicit reference to “sex” (or “gender”) the code is hardly applicable to online GBV for the time being.

#### **Fixing the problem: general suggestions**

96. So far, there is limited evidence available on what works to prevent online GBV, and even less when it comes to communities that are particularly vulnerable, such as adolescent girls, women who experience violence offline, racial and ethnic minorities, people of diverse sexualities and gender identities, human rights defenders and other women in the public sphere for example journalists and politicians (Faith and Fraser 2018). One key challenge is the diversity of dangers posed by the wide range of abuse and harassment included in the framing of online GBV, each of which need specifically tailored responses and policy actions from a wide range of stakeholders.

<sup>30</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en)

### **Iceland – drawing all the lessons from #MeToo**

In early 2018, the Prime Minister of Iceland appointed a Steering Committee for Comprehensive Reforms concerning Sexual Violence. In Autumn 2018, the group presented a proposal for a co-ordinated response to the #MeToo revolution in government offices and their institutions, as an employer, and will also make proposals for a community-wide response. In addition, the steering committee is developing a policy for action against digital/online sexual violence.

### **France – Improving the legal arsenal against online violence and rapid reaction capacity**

In July 2019, the National Assembly adopted in the first reading a legislative proposal to better fight online hate. The proposal will be presented to the Senate with a view to a speedy final adoption. The project's flagship measure, based on the German model, is to oblige search engines and platforms to remove "obviously" illegal content within 24 hours. Ignoring such an injunction is liable to a fine up to 1.25 million euros. It concerns incitement to hatred and violence (including on the ground of gender or sexual preference), racist or religious insults.

97. It is vital to include and learn from the many civil society groups working on this issue as well. The long running campaign of "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence" (25 November-10 December) combines creative and strategic use of digital tools with the issue of violence against women and girls including workshops on online safety, media monitoring on rape reporting, and solidarity actions on the streets. Initiatives such as Take Back the Tech! enable campaigners to respond to local priorities as opposed to a top-down, centralised approach ('Take Back The Tech' 2014). The campaign group Fix the Glitch suggests that all users of digital spaces need to be engaged:

*"To improve parity between the treatment of online abuse and offline abuse, more investment will be needed to support frontline services with expertise on tech-related violence, and to improve the co-ordination of law enforcement, civil society groups and tech companies to work on the unique intersections of domestic abuse and technology" (The Glitch Team 2019).*

98. In order to fund this work, Glitch is calling for 1% of revenues from the tax on tech companies to be ring-fenced for funding initiatives to make the internet safer (Glitch!UK 2019).

99. Amnesty International reiterates these calls and has recommended that States prioritise and invest in capacity building and training of law enforcement bodies on relevant legislation, gender equality, the harms of online violence and abuse, and best practices to support those who have experienced online violence and abuse. The organisation also advocates for public awareness-raising campaigns about violence and abuse online and public campaigns to promote gender equality and combat sex- and gender-based stereotypes (Amnesty International 2018).

100. A Report on Online Abuse by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence made the following recommendations (Hadley 2017):

- online abuse must be recognised by the government, judiciary and all relevant agencies as a harmful form of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls;
- the legal framework on online abuse must be reviewed to ensure that it provides equal protection as compared to the offline world;
- the use of online technology in order to abuse must be barred through criminal and civil proceedings (in the same way as these behaviours are prohibited in the 'offline' world);
- improvements must be made in the consistency of how online providers prevent, prohibit, and respond to online abuse;
- police must be given relevant tools, training and expertise to deliver an effective response to online abuse;
- a long-term funding model must be secured in order to guarantee the future of specialist services in support of survivors of online abuse;
- prevention must be the cornerstone of the response: statutory sex and relationships education, covering online abuse and healthy relationships, must be introduced.

101. Similarly, the recommendations of the G7 Ministers provide recommendations for platforms and other stakeholders going forward:

*“Building on the G7 Roadmap for a Gender-responsive Economic Environment, we recognize the importance of partnership and increased dialogue with Internet companies and relevant stakeholders to develop joint initiatives that address this issue while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, and the dignity of women and girls. These initiatives should aim, inter alia, at encouraging the following:*

- *improving clarity with regard to the type of content which is considered illegal under national law or otherwise abusive or harassing against women and girls;*
- *increasing visibility and understanding of reporting procedures for content that is considered violent or abusive against women and girls, including appropriate follow-up mechanisms;*
- *promoting effective steps for companies to keep their users safe, including measures that ensure transparency and effective reporting of content that is considered violent or abusive against women and girls, by means of easy to access, and user-friendly mechanisms;*
- *encouraging working partnerships between social media platforms and specialised civil society organisations to collaborate on solutions including flagging illegal or otherwise abusive or harassing content under national law, including fast procedures for assessing requests and reducing periods of exposure to such content, in a manner that respects freedom of expression. We therefore urge the platforms to remove illegal content from public display in an expedient timeframe;*
- *requiring social media platforms to co-operate with law enforcement in criminal investigations and proceedings in full compliance with due process;*
- *ensuring that individuals’ rights and in particular their freedom of expression and information are respected online. Due diligence measures include, among others: ensuring that removal decisions are well founded, informing the content provider of the removal of their content, making available procedures for the content provider to contest the removal decision, taking appropriate measures against bad faith reports.”*

102. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism provides for the following measures to be taken concerning specifically the Internet, social media and online sexist hate speech (chapter II.B):

*“II.B.1. Implement legislative measures that define and criminalise incidents of sexist hate speech and are applicable to all media, as well as reporting procedures and appropriate sanctions. More proactive detecting and reporting procedures for sexist hate speech should also be encouraged in respect of all media, including the internet and new media.*

*II.B.2. Establish and promote programmes (including software) for children, young people, parents and educators to assist in advising children on media literacy for a safe and critical use of digital media and appropriate digital behaviour. This should be done through school curricula and through the production of handbooks and factsheets on what constitutes sexist behaviour, unwanted sharing of material on the internet, and appropriate responses, including gender-sensitive information about online safety. Ensure the wide dissemination of such materials.*

*II.B.3. Develop information and campaigns to raise awareness about sexist misuse of social media, threats in the internet environment and the situations children and young people face (for example blackmail, requests for money or unwanted posting of intimate pictures) with practical assistance about how to prevent and respond to such situations.*

*II.B.4. Undertake campaigns directed at the wider public on the dangers, opportunities, rights and responsibilities related to the use of new media.*

*II.B.5. Establish online resources providing expert advice on how to deal with online sexism, including procedures for swiftly reporting/removing harmful or unwanted material.*

*II.B.6. Undertake regular studies and gather sex- and age-disaggregated data on cybersexism and cyber violence and share outcomes as appropriate.*

*II.B.7. Integrate a gender equality perspective in all policies, programmes and research in relation to artificial intelligence to avoid the potential risks of technology perpetuating sexism and gender stereotypes and examine how artificial intelligence could help to close gender gaps and eliminate sexism. This includes measures to increase the participation of women and girls in the information and technology area as students, professionals and decision makers. Design of data-driven instruments and algorithms should factor in gender-based dynamics. Transparency around these issues should be improved and awareness raised about the potential gender bias in big data; solutions to improve accountability should be offered.”*

103. Moreover, on 12 December 2019, the Committee of Ministers held an informal exchange of views on “Cyber violence against women and girls”, with the participation of guest speakers and representatives of various Council of Europe sectors of activity. It allowed to discuss *inter alia* the extent of the problems involved, the variety of forms of online violence and their consequences, the importance of prevention (the Slovenian “Click-off” campaign mentioned earlier was presented), as well as the respective benefits of dedicated criminal law provisions and of broadly defined catch-all offences to deal with certain forms of illegal conduct online. From the perspective of the continuum between GBV in daily life and online, the use of the expression “IT-facilitated offences” can better convey the idea that existing legal tools can already be applied in many cases of harassment, defamation, intrusion into someone’s private life etc. At the same time, the benefits of specific, explicit provisions should not be neglected because of the dissuasive effect of criminal legislation and to avoid any misbelief that online violence in the cyber-space is a virtual (and thus harmless and unpunishable) conduct. Some also praised the undeniable added value of certain international provisions such as those of the above-mentioned Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 concerning the prevention and combating of sexism and the criminalisation of sexist hate speech including online (see above, paragraph II.B.1 of the recommendation).

### **Concluding remarks**

104. Online GBV has become an area of particular attention both for researchers and policy makers. An inventory of the situation shows the extent of the challenges that need to be addressed or at least considered. It also gives an idea of the kinds of measures that should be dealt with. In the field of prevention, education and awareness raising plays an important role in respect of those most exposed and possibly those who accompany young women and boys in daily life (teachers, parents). Dialogue and interaction with the online industry is crucial to develop transparency and accountability, and to increase responsiveness, especially if immediate action is required in order to stop or prevent harm and/or to protect the interests of a victim or group of persons.

105. The extent of certain forms of harassment and violence may warrant the review of criminal legislation. But ways also need to be found to tackle harmful behaviour that does not warrant a criminal law response.

106. Online GBV requires a multidisciplinary response involving gender equality policy makers, support service representatives and NGOs, cybercrime specialists, IT specialists and researchers. Only a multidisciplinary approach will allow for a deeper understanding of the nature of online GBV and for the best responses to be identified.

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**Appendix 1 - Activities and measures in member States towards the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023**

Because of the length of this appendix compiling the contributions from member States, it cannot be appended to this report. It can nevertheless be found on the following page of the Gender Equality Commission website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-strategy>.

## Appendix 2 - List of standards, publications and other practical tools produced in 2019<sup>31</sup>

### ***Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism***

- Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism
- Report of the conference "Tackling gender stereotypes and sexism"
- Council of Europe video and action page to help the wider public identify acts of sexism and take a stand against them

### ***Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence***

- Methodology and tools on *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention standards*
- Information brochure *Projects on combating violence against women – the Council of Europe's approach*
- Study on co-operation projects on gender equality: *Technical co-operation programmes/projects implemented in 2016-2019: analysis and lessons learned*
- General brochure *Making European standards on gender equality a reality for all women: call to support Council of Europe co-operation projects on gender equality and violence against women*
- Administrative data collection on violence against women and domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in line with Istanbul Convention standards
- Study on Article 60 & 61 of the Istanbul Convention – Gender-based asylum claims and *non-refoulement*

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<sup>31</sup> All these documents can be found on the Gender Equality website at: <http://www.coe.int/equality>.

### Appendix 3 - Overview of activities in 2019

<b>Strategic objective 1: Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1. Finalise the preparation of a draft recommendation on preventing and combating sexism and transmit it for consideration by the Committee of Ministers	GED + GEC	2018-2019	Completed
2. Follow-up the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media in member States	GED + GEC + CDMSI	2018-2019	Completed
3. Preparation and adoption of a report on "Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment"	PACE	2019	Completed. Report, resolution and recommendation adopted in April 2019
4. Prepare a factsheet on PACE action to tackle sexism and sexual harassment	PACE	2019-2020	Ongoing
5. Contribute to the work of the Council of Europe in relation to internet governance and artificial intelligence from a gender equality perspective	GED + relevant sectors	2018-2023	Ongoing
6. Preparing 2nd edition of "Gender Matters"- manual on gender-based violence affecting young people	Youth	2019	Ongoing
7. Preparing a revised edition of Compasito – manual for human rights education with children	Youth	2018-2019	Ongoing
8. Report on "Fighting sexism against women in politics at the local and regional level (to be followed by a practical tool for women candidates in elections)"	Congress	2019 - 2020	Ongoing
9. Workshop on designing gender and diversity sensitive minority language education in Ukraine	Anti-discrimination	2019-2020	Ongoing
10. Preparation of a Tool Kit on promoting Gender Equality in Youth Work	Youth	2019-2020	Under preparation
11. Study session - <i>SexEd IQ - Inclusive and quality sex education - what can school students do?</i> - in co-operation with the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions	Youth	April 2019	Completed
12. Study session - <i>ESNgender check-up</i> - in co-operation with the Erasmus Student Network	Youth	October 2019	Completed

<b>Strategic objective 2: Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1. Events/activities to promote the signature, ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention, as well as awareness raising about the Convention in member and non-member states, regional and international partner organisations	GED + GEC + VaW	2018-2023	Ongoing

2. Preparation and adoption of Assembly Report on “ <u>The Istanbul Convention on violence against women: achievements and challenges</u> ”	PACE	2018-2020	Completed. Report and resolution adopted in June 2019
3. Revision and publication of the Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Istanbul Convention	PACE	2019-2020	Ongoing

<b>Strategic objective 3: Ensure the equal access of women to justice</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1. Ensure the updating of the compilation of case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on gender equal	GED	2018-2023	Ongoing
2. Undertake activities to address multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination affecting women as regards their access to justice	GED + other sectors	2018-2023	Ongoing
3. Implementation of JUSTROM2 joint Council of Europe/EC programme on Roma women’s access to justice in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania	Roma and Travellers Team	April 2018- March 2019	Completed
4. Implementation of JUSTROM2 joint Council of Europe/EC programme on Roma women’s access to justice in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania	Roma and Travellers Team	September 2019- August 2021	Ongoing
5. 7th International Roman Women’s Conference “Roma and Travellers Women’s Access to Justice and Rights”, Espoo, Finland, 25-27 March 2019 under the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers	Roma and Travellers Team	March 2019	Completed

<b>Strategic objective 4: Achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1. Continue co-operation with relevant departments to integrate gender equality in electoral processes	GED + GEC + relevant sectors	2018-2023	Ongoing
2. Conduct a study on gender equality in constitutions	VC	2018-2023	Ongoing
3. Gender impact assessment of the Youth for Democracy programme – with a focus on equal participation of women and men in youth organisations and structures	Youth	2019	Completed
4. Follow-up to the implementation of the 30% quota for the underrepresented gender by Congress delegations	Congress	2018-2023	Ongoing
5. Specific provisions on the participation of women and balanced participation in general in guidelines on public ethics and guidelines on e-democracy as a toolkit	CDDG	December 2019	Completed
6. Inclusion of participation of women in policy and governance processes at local level, in Lithuania and the Slovak Republic, in relevant policy advice, revision of legislation and capacity building related to good governance	Centre of Expertise for Good Governance	2019-2020	Ongoing

7. Inclusion of gender indicators in “Civil Participation in Decision-Making” and “Social Vulnerability Self-Assessment” programmes in the framework of an EU-Council of Europe Joint Project in Greece	Centre of Expertise for Good Governance	2019-2020	Ongoing
8. Strengthening opportunities for participation of women in policy and governance processes in Armenia and an inclusive approach to youth, marginalised or disadvantaged groups (also with a view to attaining SDG Goal 5 and objective 17 of EU GAP II)	Centre of Expertise for Good Governance	2019-2020	Ongoing

<b>Strategic objective 5: Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1. Prepare a factsheet on existing Council of Europe standards aimed at preventing migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls	GED + GEC	2018-2019	Completed
2. Promote the integration of a gender equality and women’s rights perspective in relevant Council of Europe policies and activities related to migration, integration and asylum	GED + relevant sectors	2018-2023	Ongoing
3. Project “Social Inclusion of Young Refugees”	Youth	November 2018 December 2020	Ongoing
4. Guidelines for supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood	Youth SRSG Refugees	2018-2019	Completed
5. Report on the protection of internally displaced persons by local and regional authorities (section on the situation of women)	Congress	2018-2019	Adoption at session in October 2019

<b>Strategic objective 6: Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1. Organise and carry out training of Gender Equality Rapporteurs	GED	2018 2019	Completed
2. Organise and carry out regular exchanges of views between Gender Equality Rapporteurs and the GEC	GED + GEC	2018-2023	Ongoing
3. Continue regular exchanges of views between sectors of the Council of Europe carrying out gender mainstreaming and the GEC	GED + GEC and relevant sectors, including Youth	2018-2023	Ongoing
4. Prepare thematic factsheets on children’s rights and gender equality	CRD/CAHENF	2019-2022	Under preparation
5. Preparation and adoption of a report, resolution and recommendation on “ <u>Towards an ambitious Council of Europe agenda for gender equality</u> ”	PACE	2019	Completed. Resolution and Recommendation adopted in June 2019
6. Preparation of a report on “Empowering women: promoting access to contraception in Europe”	PACE	2019-2020	Ongoing

7. Regularly update the dedicated website on gender mainstreaming to give visibility to activities and work on gender mainstreaming carried out by member States and relevant sectors of the Council of Europe	GED	2018-2023	Ongoing
8. Organise regular meetings of the Gender Mainstreaming Team	GED + GMT	2018-2023	Ongoing
9. Produce and disseminate tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming within and beyond the Organisation, such as videos, toolkits and manuals	GED + relevant sectors, including Youth	2018-2023	Ongoing
10. GRECO's 5th round evaluations include a gender dimension and, as appropriate, gender-based recommendations to member states.	GRECO	2018-2023	Ongoing
11. Organise and propose training sessions to staff members on gender equality and gender-mainstreaming	DHR	2018-2020	Ongoing
12. Gender impact assessment of the Youth for Democracy programme	Youth	2019	Completed
13. Update of a factsheet on the work of the Congress on women's rights and equality between men and women gender equality.	Congress	2018-2023	Ongoing
14. Gender mainstreaming toolkit "How to reach gender equality in sport". EU-Council of Europe joint project "ALL IN – Towards gender balance in sport"	EPAS	2018-2019	Completed
15. Online library of practices and resources on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in sport (leadership, coaching, participation, gender-based violence, and media/communication). EU-Council of Europe joint project "ALL IN – Towards gender balance in sport"	EPAS	2018-2019	Completed
16. Collection of data on gender equality in sport (leadership, coaching, participation, gender-based violence, and media/communication). EU-Council of Europe joint project "ALL IN – Towards gender balance in sport"	EPAS	2019	Completed
17. Regional training seminars on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in sport, evidence-based policies and strategies, and the collection of data. EU-COE joint project "ALL IN – Towards gender balance in sport"	EPAS	2018-2019	Completed
18. European Youth Foundation – support for activities – gender mainstreaming is a precondition for receiving grants	Youth	Permanent	Ongoing
19. Pompidou Group 2019 Executive Training on Drug Policy on: 'Incorporating gender dimensions in drug policy practice and service delivery	Pompidou Group	Module I: April 2019, Amsterdam Module II: June 2019, Israel	Completed

20. Revision/assessment of the gender and diversity sensitive disaggregated data collection systems on discrimination, hate crime and hate speech existing in the Eastern Partnership countries (in particular Armenia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia)	Anti-discrimination	2019-2021	Ongoing
21. Gender mainstreaming assessment of the new Horizontal Facility II Regional Project on antidiscrimination (Serbia)	Anti-discrimination	2019	Completed
22. Gender Mainstreaming in projects – Training for the No Hate Speech and Co-operation Unit’s Field Staff	Anti-discrimination	2019	Completed
23. Gender mainstreaming systematically included and to be considered in drafting guidelines and recommendations as well as in activities by the Centre of Expertise of Good Governance in member States	CDDG	2018-2020	Ongoing
24. Fostering inclusive participation and equal opportunities for women in political decision-making at the local level in Lithuania are components of training programmes	Centre of Expertise for Good Governance	2019-2020	Ongoing
25. Gender equality included in training for mayors and senior local officials in technical assistance projects in Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Greece, Serbia and Ukraine.	Centre of Expertise for Good Governance	2019-2020	Ongoing
26. Emphasis on gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment in relation to competences that are to be decentralised to amalgamated communities under the Decentralisation Roadmap in Armenia and elaboration of specific gender-based budgeting components in Local Finance Benchmarking.	Centre of Expertise for Good Governance	2019-2020	Ongoing

#### Abbreviations:

<b>Anti-Discrimination</b>	Department of anti-discrimination of the Council of Europe
<b>CAHENF</b>	<i>Ad hoc</i> Committee for the Rights of the Child
<b>CDDG</b>	European Committee on Democracy and Governance
<b>CDMSI</b>	Steering Committee on Media and Information Society
<b>Congress</b>	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
<b>Court</b>	European Court of Human Rights
<b>CRD</b>	Children’s Rights Division
<b>DHR</b>	Directorate of Human Resources
<b>EPAS</b>	Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport
<b>GEC</b>	Gender Equality Commission
<b>GED</b>	Gender Equality Division
<b>GER</b>	Gender Equality Rapporteur
<b>GMT</b>	Gender Mainstreaming Team
<b>GRECO</b>	Group of States against Corruption
<b>PACE</b>	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
<b>Pompidou Group</b>	Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs
<b>SRSR Refugees</b>	Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Migration and Refugees
<b>VaW</b>	Violence against Women Division
<b>VC</b>	Venice Commission
<b>Youth</b>	Department of Youth