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**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
(CDDG)**

**GUIDELINES ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING
IN THE WORK OF THE CDDG**

Approved by the CDDG by written procedure following its 13th meeting
(15-16 April 2021)

Guidelines

Considering that gender mainstreaming across all activities of the Council of Europe is a key objective of the Organisation's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023) and that taking steps to promote gender mainstreaming will contribute to pursuing the CDDG's own tasks and objectives, the CDDG resolves to be guided by the following considerations, with the input, support and guidance from the gender equality rapporteurs:

- 1) to ensure that the activities of the CDDG take into account gender mainstreaming and that they ensure the prominence and visibility of gender equality issues. This will include but not be limited to the following examples:
 - including references to the different impact of measures, policies and practices on women and men;
 - looking at measures which can promote awareness of gender equality and/or promote the balanced participation and representation of women and men in public decision making;
 - following gender-sensitive working and policy-making methods, including gender-sensitive impact assessments, gender-based budgeting;
- 2) to reflect upon the way gender equality - including gender balance in decision-making and staffing of public institutions - can contribute to achieving the objectives of texts drafted by the CDDG;
- 3) to actively consider the language that is being used in the work of the CDDG. Particular attention will be paid to ensure that the texts drafted by the CDDG use gender inclusive language and avoid gender stereotypes or bias;
- 4) to ensure that, in its own work, the CDDG encourages gender balance in its membership, the composition of its subordinate bodies (Bureau, working groups, Rapporteurs), the choice of expert consultants, external speakers etc.
- 5) Members of the CDDG will endeavour to apply this approach when they are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe, such as those managed by the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance.

Background

At its 12th plenary meeting on 25-27 November 2020, the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) took note of a memorandum by its Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GER), and agreed to consider, at one of its next meetings, internal guidelines on how to ensure gender mainstreaming in its work.

This document, drafted by the Secretariat and the GER, contains guidelines on how to ensure this work. It explains the concepts of gender equality and gender mainstreaming and provides basic information on the work of the Council of Europe in this field.

1. Gender equality and mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns. The concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women. It was established as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, and subsequently adopted as a tool to promote gender equality at all levels. In 1998, the *Council of Europe* **defined** gender mainstreaming as:

“The (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”.

Gender mainstreaming means integrating a gender equality perspective at all stages and levels of policies, programmes and projects. Women and men have different needs and living conditions and circumstances, including unequal access to and control over power, resources, human rights and institutions, including the justice system. The situations of women and men also differ according to country, region, age, ethnic or social origin, or other factors. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to take into account these differences when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, programmes and projects, so that they benefit both women and men and do not increase inequality but enhance gender equality. Gender mainstreaming aims to solve –sometimes hidden- gender inequalities. It is therefore a tool for achieving gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming is not about:

- “Adding women and stirring”: ensuring the equal participation of women and men in decision making or in different activities is a necessary first step and an objective on its own. However, the presence of women does not mean that a gender mainstreaming exercise was undertaken and it does not automatically lead to qualitative change towards gender equality in a specific policy, programme or activity;
- Including an introductory paragraph in a document stating that a gender equality perspective will be integrated or simply mentioning “women and men” without also taking into account their different situations is not sufficient. The aim is to include

a gender equality perspective throughout the policy measures, documents or programmes. Moreover, women and men are not homogeneous groups with single aims and needs: gender relations intersect with many characteristics which define social identities, such as ethnicity, religious beliefs, political or other opinions, social status, age, sexual orientation.

Why? Several studies have shown that gender inequalities as such have direct costs. In many cases, public policies have been based on the needs of the dominant group in society or on the needs of those who have traditionally been the decision-makers, mostly men. The women's rights movement, an increased presence of women in decision-making, strong commitments to women's human rights at all levels, and the development of gender studies and sex-disaggregated data, have all helped unveiling the fact that public policies often did not take into account women's differing needs and situations.

How? Gender equality issues need to be mainstreamed at all stages of policy making or project programming, but it is especially important to take it into account at the planning stage, when the problems, concerns and needs of the beneficiaries are identified and the ways to address them are defined. Therefore gender analysis and gender impact assessments are crucial tools for gender mainstreaming. These tools support the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming. Other factors are equally important to ensure proper gender mainstreaming, such as political will, commitment to and awareness of gender equality issues, knowledge, resources (including expertise) and availability of information. Gender mainstreaming is a responsibility of all actors and is relevant for all policy areas that deal with the needs of people and at all levels. Policy areas which at first sight do not seem relevant, might contain (hidden) aspects of gender inequality.

2. Instruments adopted under the aegis of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has been and is very active in the field of [gender equality and mainstreaming](#). Gender equality-related texts which are particularly relevant for the CDDG and activities in the field of democratic governance include:

- The [European Convention on Human Rights](#), which is Europe's core human rights treaty. It guarantees the enjoyment of fundamental rights without discrimination on any ground, including sex (Article 1);
- The [Gender Equality Strategy](#) of the Council of Europe, which is the overarching text that provides for gender mainstreaming across all activities conducted under the aegis of the Organisation
- **Recommendation No. R(98)14 on gender mainstreaming** calls on member states to create an enabling environment and facilitate conditions for the implementation of gender mainstreaming on the basis of the Report of the Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Gender Mainstreaming (1998). The report sets out the conceptual framework for gender mainstreaming, its definition and a methodology for its implementation, accompanied by examples of good practices;
- **Recommendation (2001)19 on participation of citizens in local public life** – this mentions fair representation of women in local politics, collecting information on the participation of women alongside other underrepresented groups, the consideration of quotas in decision making bodies etc.

- **Recommendation CM/Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**, adopted on 12 March 2003, and its explanatory memorandum;
- **Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms**, adopted on 21 November 2007 and explanatory memorandum: it provides *inter alia* that "Commitment and transparency in the adoption, implementation and evaluation of their gender equality policies are requirements that governments must follow; they must also be accountable in regard to the results of these policies";
- **Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism**, which comprises various chapters concerning action to be taken in the public sector specifically as well as other areas: language and communication, internet and the media, workplace, education institutions, justice, culture and sport, etc.

3. The role of the gender equality rapporteurs

Gender equality rapporteurs (GERs) are expected to ensure that a gender perspective is properly integrated during the programming process of their respective committees (i.e. the process of identifying priorities, preparing activity proposals, setting up and implementing the activities, and evaluating the results). In the long term, the person appointed as the committee's GER should not be expected to do this alone; it should become the responsibility of the committee as a whole. But gender equality rapporteurs are expected to remind the committee of any relevant matter whenever the need arises and they will be invited at regular intervals to report back on activities attended and experience from other Council of Europe fora which could provide useful inspiration for the CDDG's activities

The persons appointed as GER, along with the committee secretary, liaise with the Gender Equality Commission (the intergovernmental committee responsible in this area) and are in contact with GERs from other committees. This role is therefore essential in ensuring that everyone understands the gender mainstreaming strategy in the same way and in providing the impetus needed for its appropriate and effective application.

Since 2013, training sessions have been organised at regular intervals for GERs.