

AS/Ega (2025) CB 02

19 March 2025

To the members of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Synopsis

of the meetings held in Strasbourg on 18 March 2025

The Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, meeting in Strasbourg on 18 March 2025, with Ms Catia Polidori (Italy, EPP/CD), Chairperson, in the Chair, as regards:

- **Election of the Bureau of the Committee:** elected Ms Sevilay Çelenk Özen (Türkiye, UEL) as the Third Vice-Chairperson;
- **Violent pornography** (*Rapporteur: Ms Laura Castel, Spain, UEL; Rapporteur for opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development: Mr Joseph O'Reilly, Ireland, EPP/CD*): considered an information memorandum;
- **Preventing and combating gender discrimination in health** (*Rapporteur: Ms Camilla Fabricius, Denmark, SOC*): considered an information memorandum;
- **Sexual violence against men and boys** (*Rapporteur: Mr Edmunds Cepurītis, Latvia, SOC*): considered an information memorandum and held a hearing with the participation of:
 - Mr Matthew McVarish, Co-Founder, Brave Movement;
 - Ms Taina Laajasalo, Research Professor, Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare and Mr Tom Pakkanen, clinical forensic psychologist (PhD), Forensic Psychology Centre for Children and Adolescents of Helsinki University Hospital, Finland (*online*);
 - Ms Marie Derain de Vaucresson, President of the Independent National Authority for Recognition and Reparation (INIRR), which supports persons who were victims of sexual violence in the Catholic Church in France during their childhood;
- **Work programme:** took note of the work programme;
- **Request for extension of reference:** decided to ask the Bureau to grant an extension for a period of one year of the reference for the report on *Countering discrimination based on religion and protecting freedom of religion and belief in Europe* (Rapporteur: Mr Francesco Verducci, Italy, SOC);
- **Fact-finding visit:** authorised Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk (Ukraine, ALDE), rapporteur on *Eliminating gender stereotypes in the media*, to carry out a fact-finding visit to Ireland in May 2025;
- **International Women's Day 2025 (8 March):** took note of parliamentary action undertaken in the framework of the International Women's Day 2025, and held an exchange of views;
- **Activities of the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence, the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance and the Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe:** heard a communication by Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo (Monaco, ALDE), General Rapporteur on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons;
- **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) (New York, United States, 10-12 March 2025):** heard reports from several participants, took note of a draft [press release](#) by the Chairperson and held an exchange of views;

- **Appointment of representatives:**
 - appointed Mr Georgios Stamatis (Greece, EPP/CD) as representative to participate in the 19th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society (Strasbourg, 2-3 April 2025) (*subject to the availability of funds*);
 - appointed Ms Etilda Gjonaj (Albania, SOC), General Rapporteur on violence against women, to participate in the 3rd meeting of the Committee of Experts on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (GEC/PC-eVIO) (Strasbourg, 3-4 April 2025) (*subject to the availability of funds*);
 - took note that no additional member of the committee had come forward to take part in the ad hoc committee of the Bureau of the Assembly to participate in the parliamentary conference on “Envisioning effective public policy to prevent & address cases of missing migrants” organised as a follow-up to Resolution 2569 (2024) Missing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers – A call to clarify their fate (Strasbourg, 23-24 April 2025) and appointment of Committee representatives (*at no cost to the Assembly*);
 - appointed Ms Catia Polidori (Italy, EPP/CD) as committee representative to participate in the Ad hoc committee of the Bureau to take part in the sixth European Conference on Democracy and Human Rights organised by Nordic Council and the Parliamentary Assembly (Kristiansand, Norway, 5 May 2025) (*at no cost to the Assembly*);
 - appointed Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo (Monaco, ALDE), General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons, to participate in the European IDAHOT+ Forum 2025 (Valletta, 20 May 2025) (*subject to the availability of funds*);
 - appointed Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo (Monaco, ALDE), General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons, to take part in ILGA-Europe’s 27th Annual Conference (Vilnius, 22-25 October 2025) (*subject to the availability of funds*);
- **Reporting back:** heard reports from:
 - Mr Edmunds Cepurītis (Latvia, SOC) for his participation in the Seminar on “Inclusion of men and boys in gender equality efforts” (Strasbourg, 18 November 2024) and in the 26th meeting of the Gender Equality Commission (Strasbourg, 19 November 2024);
 - Ms Laura Castel (Spain, UEL) for her participation in the Conference “The Protection of children against online violence” (Rome, 9 December 2024);
- **Composition of the Sub-Committees:** noted that there were no modifications in the composition of the Sub-Committees;
- **Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment:** recalled the procedure and the deadline of 28 March 2025 for the submission of nominations as well as the relevant information available on the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment website;
- **Václav Havel Human Rights Prize 2025:** recalled the procedure and the deadline of 30 April 2025 for the submission of nominations as well as the relevant information available on the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize website;
- **Increasing members’ active participation in and contribution to the work of the Parliamentary Assembly and its committees** (*Rapporteur of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs: Ms Petra Bayr, Austria, SOC*): heard a statement by the rapporteur;
- **Other business:** recalled that the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament will take place in Strasbourg on 20-21 March 2025;
- **Next meetings:** confirmed its next meetings as follows:
 - Strasbourg, during the second part-session 2025 of the Assembly (7-11 April 2025);
 - Paris, Monday, 12 May 2025;
 - Strasbourg, during the third part-session 2025 of the Assembly (23-27 June 2025);
 - Paris, Friday, 12 September 2025 (*place and date to be confirmed*);
 - Strasbourg, during the fourth part-session 2025 of the Assembly (29 September – 3 October 2025);
 - Paris, Friday, 5 December 2025 (*place and date to be confirmed*).

The Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe, meeting jointly with Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination in Strasbourg, on 18 March 2025, from 3.30 to 5.30pm, with Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo (Monaco, ALDE), Co-ordinator of the Platform, in the Chair, as regards:

- **Global landscape of the rights of LGBTI persons and current challenges in 2025**: held an exchange of views with Mr Graeme Reid, UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (*online*);
- **Addressing discrimination against LGBTI persons in healthcare services**: held a hearing with the participation of:
 - Mr Graeme Reid, UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (*online*);
 - Ms Evgenia Giakoumopoulou, Head of the SOGIESC Unit, Council of Europe;
 - Dr Eszter Mihály, LGBTQI+ Rights Officer, Amnesty International Hungary;
 - Dr Serge Covaci, Leader of the University Clinic, Faculty of Medicine of Strasbourg, general practitioner.

The Ad Hoc Sub-Committee to participate in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), meeting in New York, United States, from 10 to 12 March 2025, with Ms Zita Gurmai (Hungary, SOC), Chairperson, in the Chair, as regards:

- **Election of the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee**: elected by acclamation Ms Zita Gurmai (Hungary, SOC) as Chairperson;
- participated in the plenary session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) and in the side events taking place on 10-12 March 2025;
- congratulated UN Women for bringing together world leaders to take stock of progress and challenges since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995;
- paid tribute to UN agencies such as the UNFPA, stressing the need to continue financing sexual and reproductive health and rights and maintain development cooperation despite increased financing needs for defence;
- deplored the violence still endured by women and expressed its solidarity with the women of Ukraine, of whom at least 109 000 are affected by the cuts in US foreign assistance to women's organisations, while expressing solidarity with oppressed women everywhere, in particular in Afghanistan;
- welcomed the fact that men who are parliamentarians are joining efforts towards equal rights and called on them to bring fellow legislators to greater awareness that equal rights benefit all society, foster democracy and improve economic performance;
- recognising that it was now essential for world leaders to unite and harness their potential to defend women's rights and build collective resistance to the backsliding and obscurantism that threaten these rights:
 - asked parliaments to place the rights of women in all their diversity at the forefront of legislative and policy priorities, in particular disadvantaged women and victims of violence;
 - called for diversity, as a vector of social, democratic and cultural progress, to be celebrated rather than restrained;
 - called on member, Observer and Partner for Democracy States to safeguard the right to abortion and to provide an enabling environment for women human rights defenders;
 - insisted that lifelong education helps eliminate stereotypes that perpetuate inequalities between women and men, and calls on leaders at all levels of authority to champion equal rights;
- recognising the necessity to promote multilateralism among Council of Europe member States, proposed an annual debate on women's rights in the Parliamentary Assembly, and an annual debate in member, Observer and Partner for Democracy parliaments on the related work of the Council of Europe.

Penelope Denu, Carolina Lasén Diaz, Giorgio Loddo, Elodie Fischer, Louise Morlon

Copy to:

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