



HANDBOOK FOR GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEURS



**GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER
MAINSTREAMING IN PRACTICE**

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
WARM UP: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON MAINSTREAMING A GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE.....	6
CHAPTER I: THE BASICS	7
1. GENDER AND SEX.....	8
2. GENDER EQUALITY	9
3. GENDER MAINSTREAMING	9
CHAPTER II: THE ROLE OF GENDER EQUALITY RAPORTEURS IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE	12
1. KNOW YOUR ROLE AS GENDER EQUALITY RAPORTEUR.....	12
2. HOW YOU CAN WORK AS A GENDER EQUALITY RAPORTEUR.....	13
3. STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO A GENDER MAINSTREAMING EXERCISE	14
4. PREREQUISITES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND HOW TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES	17
5. EXAMPLE OF A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS	17
6. DEALING WITH RESISTANCE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.....	19
7. GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION	21
CHAPTER III: USEFUL RESOURCES THAT CAN SUPPORT YOUR WORK.....	24
1. DATA AND INDICATORS	24
2. GENDER MAINSTREAMING MANUALS AND TOOLS.....	24
3. VISUAL TOOLS	24
ANSWERS TO THE TEST.....	26
CONTACT	27

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe launched its Transversal Programme on Gender Equality in 2012. The programme aims to increase the impact and visibility of gender equality standards and bring us closer to the goal of real equality between women and men.

Since the introduction of the concept of [gender mainstreaming](#) in the 1990's, this strategy, together with positive actions for the advancement of women, has been an important part of the work of the Council of Europe on gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is also one of the objectives of the Council of Europe [Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023](#).

To facilitate gender mainstreaming across the Organisation, the Council of Europe has put in place a solid institutional setting. This includes the [Gender Equality Commission](#), whose members are appointed by member states, and more than forty [Gender Equality Rapporteurs](#) appointed by steering committees and monitoring bodies. These rapporteurs serve as gender mainstreaming “ambassadors” in their respective entities. Coordination through specialised staff members, an internal staff Gender Mainstreaming Team and targeted training complement the gender mainstreaming architecture.

Using a variety of methods such as tests, definitions, concrete examples and good practices, this Handbook responds to the expressed need for guidance on how to apply a gender perspective in all areas of the work of the Council of Europe. The Handbook serves as a guide and an accessible tool for the GERs in their daily work and contributes to the achievement of the objective of the Council of Europe to make gender equality a reality.

The thematic work of the different entities of the Council of Europe in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming is showcased on a special [gender mainstreaming website](#).

WARM UP: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON MAINSTREAMING A GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE	Correct	Incorrect
1. Women represent 40% of members of parliaments in Europe.		
2. Women and men have equal access to resources (e.g. money, time, social networks).		
3. Public policies are neutral; they affect everybody - women and men, girls and boys - in the same way.		
4. Gender roles are socially constructed; they change over time and differ between and within cultures.		
5. Gender mainstreaming requires the equal participation of women and men in all programmes and activities.		
6. Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective entails new duties and practices for ministries and civil servants.		
7. Gender mainstreaming should replace specific policies for the advancement of women and positive actions.		
8. All ministries have duties in relation to the integration of a gender equality perspective.		
9. Data and statistics on people should be broken down by sex only if sex-disaggregated information is readily available.		

FOR ANSWERS PLEASE GO TO PAGES 26 & 27

CHAPTER I: THE BASICS

Obtaining formal equal rights (or *de jure* equality) is not enough to eliminate all types of inequalities between women and men. Despite the improvement of women's legal status in Europe, effective gender equality is still far from being a reality (*de facto* equality).

Facts and figures:

- Women represent more than half of the European population.
- In Council of Europe member states, men still represent 74% of members of national parliaments and 77% of ministers.
- In most countries, women earn on average only 60% to 75% of men's wages.
- The average gender pension gap in the 28 European Union (EU) member states is as high as 39%.
- In 2015, women represented only 25% of news subjects and 17% of experts present in the media in Europe.
- Although conviction rates for rape cases vary significantly between member states, in several countries they are as low as 5%.
- One out of three women in the EU has experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15.

Gender inequality is not about biological differences but about the unequal position of women and men in society that is a result of centuries of inequalities. These inequalities exist in all areas of life, including decision-making, work, income, property, education, health, norms, habits, culture or roles attributed to women and men in society. These differences are disproportionately to the detriment of women.

When looking at gender inequalities, it is necessary to look at both the private and the public sphere. Indeed, inequalities in relation to the private sphere (unpaid care work), and the different roles that women and men have impact on their involvement in the public sphere, including employment and participation in decision-making.

Inequalities are also reflected in the visibility of women and men in society, both quantitatively (for example, less presence of women in the media, fewer cultural productions by women, marginal presence of women in history books and manuals, etc.) and qualitatively (for example, women and men described in stereotypical ways in popular culture, educational material, advertisements, etc.)

The historical imbalances between women and men pervade all types of human activities and institutions, including public policies. Even today, men are still seen (consciously or not) as being the norm, the "standard human being" in policy-making. To reach the goal of gender equality, strategies are needed which question gender norms and take into account relevant gender differences at all stages of the policy-making process. Gender mainstreaming is such a strategy.

This Handbook aims to present key definitions and principles and to give you some guidance on how to implement gender mainstreaming in your daily work.

1. GENDER AND SEX

What is gender?

Since 1985, the concept of gender has appeared in international fora and since the 1990s it has been included in international policy documents. Gender, as defined by the Council of Europe (article 3 of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – Istanbul Convention), shall mean:

“The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men” (Istanbul Convention).

Gender relationships vary from place to place and over time; they change in response to altering circumstances. Sex, by contrast, identifies the biological differences between women and men.

For the Council of Europe, the concept of gender is a social construction that shapes people’s identities. In most cases the social construction of gender roles is to the detriment of women. Constructed gender roles impact on the situation and opportunities of women and men in society. In particular, the strong stereotypes and beliefs related to the duties of women as caring persons and as the main carers for children and other dependants¹ impact on many other social characteristics and opportunities. This includes notably women’s ability to engage in paid employment and to take up decision-making positions. Prevailing gender roles also impact on society’s views about who is considered to be a legitimate bearer of rights, knowledge and authority, which has consequences on diverse issues such as professional choices, media presence, access to politics or to justice. Gender stereotypes prevent both women and men from fully enjoying their rights and they limit women and men’s opportunities and wellbeing.

Gender is:

- ✓ a social, ideological and cultural construction;
- ✓ learned and internalised by both women and men through socialisation;
- ✓ not constant: it varies within and across cultures and over time;
- ✓ a power system with an unequal power structure between women and men (in the distribution of resources, wealth, paid and unpaid work, time, decision-making, political power, enjoyment of rights and entitlements within the family and in all aspects of social and public life).

Gender and other identities

Gender and sex interact with other factors in a person’s identity to create multiple layers of opportunities but also of potential inequalities, violence and discrimination. These factors can be related to age, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, religion, ethnic background, family status, place of residence, national or social origin, etc. In the field of gender equality policies, an analysis based on “intersectionality” aims at looking at how these different factors are combined and compound inequalities.

¹ For example, in the EU, in couples with the youngest child under 7, women spend on average 32 hours per week on paid work but 39 hours on unpaid work (71 hours in total), compared to men who do 41 hours paid and 19 hours unpaid work per week (60 hours in total). Source: Eurofound (2016), Sixth European Working Conditions Survey, available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys/sixth-european-working-conditions-survey-2015>

2. GENDER EQUALITY

The notion of gender equality most often refers to equality between women and men. It refers to a situation in which women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities not only in terms of equal rights, but also in real life. It requires that the behaviour, aspirations, wishes and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured. It also means an equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men. But gender equality can also refer to broader notions of equality in relation to gender identity (social expectations and norms attached to the feminine and the masculine) and sexual orientation.

The standards of the Council of Europe address “gender equality” as equality between women and men. Issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation are dealt with separately by the Council of Europe through the work of Unit on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)² and through specific standards.³

For the **Council of Europe**, “gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life. It also implies equal access to, and distribution of resources between women and men.”⁴

3. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming was introduced as a new approach to policy-making which takes into account both women’s and men’s situations and concerns. It was introduced as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action which was adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. The Council of Europe subsequently played a pioneering role in developing and implementing the concept of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is also an objective of the EU, as provided by Article 8 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU.

In 1998, the **Council of Europe** defined gender mainstreaming as:

“The (re)organisation, 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.”³

Gender mainstreaming is based on the recognition that women and men have different needs and living conditions, including unequal access to and control over power, money, human rights, justice, resources and decision-making. Gender mainstreaming therefore implies looking at the human implication of any activity, highlight the inequalities and differences between women and men and thus the potential differential impact of policies on both women and men. This leads to designing policies that benefit girls and boys, women and men equally.

Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but an instrument towards the ultimate goal of achieving equality between women and men. There is a wide consensus among member states and international organisations that a **dual approach** is necessary to effectively promote gender equality including:

- specific policies and actions for the advancement of women;

² More information: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi>

³ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity](#)

⁴ Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.

- the promotion, monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation of a gender mainstreaming strategy in all policy and programmes.

Gender mainstreaming is **not** about:

- “Adding women and stirring”: ensuring the equal participation of women and men in decision-making or in different activities or projects is a necessary first step and an objective on its own. However, having more women on board does not mean that a gender mainstreaming exercise was undertaken and it does not automatically lead to qualitative change towards gender equality in a policy or programme.
- Including an introductory paragraph in a document stating that a gender equality perspective will be integrated or simply mentioning “women and men” in the text: the aim is rather to include a gender equality perspective throughout the policy measures, document or project at stake; not to make a statement of principle.
- “The woman” or “the man” do not exist: it is necessary to take into account women’s and men’s multiple identities, for example in terms of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation/identity, social status or (dis)ability.

Gender mainstreaming as an instrument for better policy-making

- Gender mainstreaming implies grounding policies on the concrete situation and needs of people. It will introduce among policy makers and the public a learning process of paying attention to the broad effects of policies on citizens’ lives, aiming at the well-being of both women and men.
- Gender mainstreaming should lead to better informed policy-making and therefore better government. It challenges the assumption that policies are gender neutral – which they never are – and reveals the hidden assumptions about reality and values. It will lead to a fairer allocation of resources and greater transparency in the policy process.
- By making all policy-makers responsible for the inclusion of a gender equality perspective, gender mainstreaming makes full use of human resources.
- Gender mainstreaming brings gender equality into mainstream society. It makes it visible and is expected to change negative attitudes.

Clarifying concepts:

GENDER BLIND	Ignoring/failing to address the gender dimension (as opposed to gender sensitive). ⁵
GENDER NEUTRAL	Having no differential positive or negative impact for gender relations or equality between women and men. ⁶ There is a risk, however, that policies which are gender neutral are actually gender blind.
GENDER SENSITIVE	Addressing and taking into account the gender dimension. ⁷
GENDER POSITIVE/ GENDER TRASFORMATIVE	Challenging gender inequalities, stereotypes and harmful gender norms

Example: A gender equality perspective on the regulation of occupational safety in Finland

A good example of the importance of a gender equality perspective in preparatory work was the reform of the Finnish legislation on occupational safety and health at the beginning of the 21st century. In Finland, as in most countries, the labour market is strongly segregated by sex, and work and working conditions differ between women and men. The committee on occupational safety and health legislation analysed these facts and figures and discovered that changes regarding the content of workplace legislation inevitably had different consequences for women and men.

While preparing a legislative proposal, the committee therefore modified its approach, from one that focused on accidents in the workplace, towards one that focused more broadly on investigating hazards in the workplace. In this way, the act better responded to the typical risks found in women-dominated sectors (for example, harassment, workload and fatigue). As a result of the gender-sensitive preparatory work, the concept of occupational safety was broadened and the act now better serves the occupational safety needs of both women and men.

⁵ Council of Europe Manual Supporting Gender Equality Rapporteurs in their role, 2014. Source for this term: European Commission, 100 words for equality - A glossary of terms on equality between women and men, (1998).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER II: THE ROLE OF GENDER EQUALITY RAPORTEURS IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) were first introduced in the Council of Europe through the launching of the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality (2012). GERs are important actors for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, which is one of the objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 (and of the previous strategy for 2014-2017). As of August 2018, 45 GERs have been appointed in the Organisation's intergovernmental committees and monitoring mechanisms. This has led to sustained efforts to introduce a gender equality perspective in a growing number of policies of the Council of Europe.

1. KNOW YOUR ROLE AS GENDER EQUALITY RAPORTEUR

Gender Equality Rapporteurs in the Council of Europe play the role of ambassadors of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in their respective institutional setting.

The three roles of a Gender Equality Rapporteur:

a) Put on "gender glasses"

GERs contribute to ensuring that a gender equality perspective is introduced into the activities and policies of their committee or monitoring body. It is, most of all, about promoting a change in approach, which does not imply a requirement to embark on new activities or to draft additional reports.

A number of GERs and their committees have initiated innovative gender equality activities, which have attracted attention and have had a positive impact on the work and visibility of the committee. Examples of successful gender mainstreaming activities include work in the areas of audio-visual, sport, media, fight against drug abuse, combating corruption or justice.

Example: A gender equality perspective in audio-visual policy: EURIMAGES, the European cinema support fund

Cinema plays a major role in shaping perceptions and attitudes. The Council of Europe cinema support fund (Eurimages) has addressed gender inequality in the European film industry since 2012. A Gender Study Group was set up to address the presence of women in the cinema sector at national and European levels and to analyse the under-representation of women as directors among eligible projects for Eurimages funding.

Eurimages adopted a first Strategy for Gender Equality in the European Film Industry 2014-2017, and in 2017 a new Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2018-2020 entitled "Aiming for 50/50 by 2020" was launched. The strategy's overall goal is to provide equal support for projects by women and by men film directors and to work to increase gender equality in the film industry. As a result, the proportion of projects submitted by women was 21% in 2016 compared to 17% in 2012, and the proportion of women producers rose from 28% to 32%

In September 2017, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on gender equality in the audio-visual sector. In 2016, an annual prize for Best Women Director, the Audentia Award was launched at the Istanbul Film Festival and it continues to be awarded at a different festival each year.

b) Multiply knowledge and inspire others

GERs can improve the gender-sensitivity of the committee's work, as well as raising colleagues' awareness on gender equality issues. However, while the GER may be the initiator, she/he is not expected to work alone. Integrating a gender equality perspective in the work of the committee is the responsibility of the committee as a whole, including its leadership (president and bureau) and secretariat.

c) Be well-connected, maintain and develop interesting networks

- ✓ **Liaise with other GERs** to learn from one another and exchange good ideas and experiences. This can be done through informal and formal meetings (e.g. training).
- ✓ **Liaise with the Gender Equality Division (GED)** of the Council of Europe with regard to assistance, advice, expertise and information needed and give feedback on the experience of being appointed and functioning as a GER. Appointing GERs is a unique and relatively new initiative, this will therefore help the GED support you better and refine working methods in view of your experience.
- ✓ **Connect** with experts, other international organisations and non-governmental organisations working on gender equality issues within their field of work.
- ✓ **Engage in regular exchanges of views with the Council of Europe [Gender Equality Commission \(GEC\)](#)**, which is required to maintain close links with the other elements of the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality. These are organised on either a collective or thematic basis.

2. HOW YOU CAN WORK AS A GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEUR

a) Use the programming process of the committee as an outline

- ✓ **Keep in mind the terms of reference of your committee** in relation to the gender mainstreaming obligation, as well as other commitments in this respect (Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, Committee of Ministers' recommendations, etc.).
- ✓ **Look at the long term planning of the committee** to identify priorities and make a plan of what you want to achieve. Prepare activity proposals with the help of supportive colleagues before discussing them among a larger group/within the committee.
- ✓ When there are elections in the committee, raise the issue of the **need to achieve a balanced representation of women and men** (a minimum of 40% of each sex according to Council of Europe standards; while parity 50/50 would be ideal).
- ✓ We all hold assumptions and stereotypes based on gender that can impact our work; the first step is to acknowledge them in order to combat them. **Check your own gender stereotypes and assumptions on the issues dealt with by your committee.**

b) Prepare the meetings of the committee

- ✓ Before each meeting of the committee, look at the agenda and **ask yourself on which topics and activities might it be relevant to raise issues related to gender equality.**
- ✓ **Look for allies and involve other members of the committee**, find colleagues interested in the issue and who could provide suggestions. Encourage questions; formulating a good question is the beginning of finding a good solution.
- ✓ **Look for an evidence-based approach in the work of the committee:** research and disseminate data and information on the gender equality perspective in relation to the topic at stake. Be aware of the potential existence of good-quality research that you could build on.

c) Invest in terminology and common language

- ✓ Help colleagues in the committee know what they are talking about and uses the **same terminology** (for example, the difference between “sex” and “gender”). The Council of Europe [Gender Equality Glossary](#) can be of help in this regard.
- ✓ Be aware of possible **linguistic challenges** with regard to the term gender and its translation in different languages. Be aware of the fact that a translation can contain sexist language that was not present in the original text.

d) Compile information, good examples and best practices

- ✓ **Check the gender equality website** (www.coe.int/equality) of the Council of Europe to get acquainted with existing standards, publications and links.
- ✓ **Check the resource section of this Handbook.**
- ✓ **Check previous gender mainstreaming activities of your committee.**
- ✓ **Get specialised information from committees working on similar issues**, such as those with a strong legal content who might want to join forces in gathering and obtaining specialised background training and /or information.

e) Organise a training session, conference or other event

- ✓ **Propose the inclusion of a session on gender equality or gender mainstreaming** during a future committee meeting.
- ✓ **Ask** the Secretariat and/or Gender Equality Division to recommend **potential experts or other relevant** international organisations who could help to improve knowledge, support and ownership within the committee.
- ✓ **Ask** other committee members **to present good examples from their country.**

f) Your committee, gender equality, visibility and the media

- ✓ Do not underestimate the possible interest of other stakeholders in the committee’s activities with regard to gender mainstreaming. If you are working in an area where gender mainstreaming is new, **you may attract interest and build new links with other organisations**, such as United Nations agencies or universities.
- ✓ Some committees also attract media attention thanks to their work on gender mainstreaming. Keep this in mind when planning your activities, including an adequate communication plan. Be aware of the political and societal trends around your topic and gender equality. **Use potential external and media interest to the advantage of the committee.**
- ✓ **Activities of your committee** related to gender equality can also feature as **news on the gender equality website**, which will increase the visibility and recognition of your committee to a different public.

3. STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO A GENDER MAINSTREAMING EXERCISE

New activity proposal? Identifying priorities? Preparing a legislative text? Giving advice on legislation? Monitoring a convention? Assisting member states in promotion, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of national measures? Hereunder you will find practical support to lead a step-by-step gender impact assessment.

a) Put on your gender glasses

To find out if gender matters in your project/programmes out, please answer the four following questions to undertake a gender impact assessment.⁸

Question 1

Do you see a possible correlation between the impact (goal) of the policy/project and gender inequality patterns in society?

To be able to answer this question, you will have to establish which gender inequality and discrimination patterns exist regarding the issue or the country/region/municipality where the policy/project will take place. Make an inventory of possible social, cultural and material differences between women and men/girls and boys for the issue you are seeking to address. Find out about the situation of women and men/girls and boys in the given area (e.g. in terms of participation, access to resources and to institutions). Collect and analyse facts and figures: which sex-disaggregated statistics, research results, qualitative surveys are available on the topic? Consider also differences in relation to ethnicity, age, level of education, etc. Look at the work of other institutions and gender equality experts, including non-governmental (women's) organisations and whether good practices and experiences are available from other countries.

The most common gender inequalities that we see in societies are:

- Inequalities in power (access to political, economic and social decision-making, representation)
- Differences in access to resources (material and financial means, but also time, information and knowledge)
- Differences in legal/social/financial and employment status (e.g. do women have the same rights as men regarding ownership of properties, inheritance, networks etc.).

There are two possible answers to this question

YES - Your gender analysis shows that there are gender inequality patterns in the area you want to act upon. If that's the case, then these inequalities will ALWAYS affect the desired impact of your policy/project and there is a correlation. **GO TO QUESTION 2**

NO - No gender specific actions are needed in this instance; but monitoring is essential. If possible correlation appears at a later stage, undertake a new gender analysis and take remedial actions if needed.

Question 2

Will reaching your policy/project objective(s) affect women and men in a different way?

YES - Your gender analysis has shown the gender inequalities in society. Make an inventory of possible different (intended or unintended) effects of the policy/project on women and men/girls and boys. Look at the policy/project activities and see how they will probably affect women and men/girls and boys. It is always helpful to look at earlier projects/programmes on the same topic, to organise hearings or to discuss the issue with colleagues, gender equality experts (for example the Council of Europe Gender Equality Division) or women's NGOs. **GO TO QUESTION 3**

NO - No gender specific actions are needed in this instance; but monitoring is essential. If possible correlation appears at a later stage, undertake a new gender analysis and take remedial actions if needed.

Question 3

Will this cause inequality in society?

⁸ Source: <https://www.agentschapszw.nl/subsidies-en-regelingen/a/actieve-inclusie-esf-2014-2020/gelijke-kansen-en-non-discriminatie>

YES - If it is clear that your policy/project's activities will cause or deepen existing gender inequalities in society, **GO TO QUESTION 4)**

NO - No gender specific actions are needed in this instance; but monitoring is essential. If possible correlation appears at a later stage, undertake a new gender analysis and take remedial actions if needed.

There are occasions where activities that you undertake will lead to inequalities between women and men **in the policy/project itself**. This is the case when the policy/project aims at improving the situation of the under-represented sex in this particular domain in society. However, the end result of the policy/project should be to contribute to the elimination of existing gender inequalities in that particular domain (see example hereunder).

Question 4

How to solve these inequalities?

1. What?
2. Who?
3. How?

In this phase you look at which mitigation measures should be taken (=what?). Which actors are relevant to bring about the mitigation measures and you probably need to involve other stakeholders (=who?). What will you change in the intended policies measures or activities (How?).

Example

In a country, despite years of specific measures and positive action by the national government, the percentage of women professors is still very low: around 19%. Universities simply continue to select much more men professors. The old boys' networks seem difficult to break. The government decides to take more rigorous action and introduces a subsidy scheme that supports universities in appointing more women professors. The money can only be spent on projects targeting women candidates. There is a great deal of protest by men in the media. They feel discriminated against because they have less chances to be selected.

Let's do a gender impact assessment of this measure:

1. Is there a correlation between the goal of the measure (subsidy scheme) and gender inequalities in society? Answer: yes. The percentage of women in decision-making positions in academia is strikingly lower than that of men. Especially the fact that there are more women than men as students make it difficult to believe that there are not enough qualified women to become professors.
2. Will the effects of the subsidy scheme affect women and men in a different way? Answer: yes. Women will have more chances and opportunities to be selected. Men less so.
3. Does this lead to inequalities? Answer: in the project itself: yes. But in society: no. Women are clearly underrepresented in the senior positions in universities. Diverse European and international policy instruments as well as Article 157 of the EU Lisbon Treaty and Article 4 of the UN Convention on Combating Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) encourage or permit Member states to take temporary measures to support the underrepresented sex⁹. So: No needs to act differently, no changes need to be made to the subsidy scheme. The intention of the subsidy scheme is to correct existing and lasting inequalities between women and men in this area.

⁹ See Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12008E157> and Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, article 4, on temporary special measures: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article4>

4. PREREQUISITES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND HOW TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

The prerequisites of gender mainstreaming describe the ideal situation, which is often not the real situation. The table below gives examples and ways to address challenges.

Prerequisites	What you can do in case of difficulties
1. Political will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Seek support among other committee members, including within the Bureau. ✓ Remind colleagues of official commitments towards gender equality and gender mainstreaming. ✓ Give examples of successful gender mainstreaming exercises in other committees. ✓ Establish links with the Council of Europe GEC and/or with other GERs.
2. Gender-sensitive/sex-disaggregated data and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use Chapter IV of this Handbook to find such data and ensure relevant persons are aware of sources of gender-disaggregated data. ✓ Consult gender equality experts/services in charge of gender equality.
3. Some gender equality expertise and knowledge of the area where gender mainstreaming is being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consult gender equality experts and/or relevant services or non-governmental organisations. ✓ Organise a hearing about the topic in the committee, including when data are not available to start addressing this issue. ✓ Participate in available training and encourage the participation of others in such training.
4. Necessary funds and human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise the issue with the Bureau. ✓ Train relevant committee members, experts or staff members in gender equality issues.
5. Knowledge of the functioning/procedures of the administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use existing commitments within the organisation to integrate a gender equality perspective. ✓ Check the terms of reference of your committee. ✓ Get advice from the Gender Equality Division and/or from other GERs.
6. Equal presence and contribution of women and men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remind colleagues of policy commitments in this area (40% of each sex as a minimum standard in the Council of Europe, 50/50 would be ideal). ✓ Suggest an informal agreement for a gender rotation of the chair and vice-chair(s) of the committee. ✓ Critically review information/recruitment channels to ensure that both sexes are informed and encouraged to participate in the meetings/activities.

5. EXAMPLE OF A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

A gender analysis is based on the following three components:

Sex-disaggregated data + Analysis + Gender equality perspective = Gender analysis = Improved policy-making
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Step 1: Collect facts and figures

Data not disaggregated by sex	Data disaggregated by sex
156 residents of an apartment block complex attended a meeting on new waste and water management systems for their community. A total of 750 adults live in this complex.	156 residents of an apartment block complex attended a meeting on new waste and water management systems for their community. 133 participants were men and 23 were women (17%). A total of 750 adults live in this complex, with an approximately even split between women and men.

Step 2: Analyse the facts and figures

The analysis refers to the interpretation of existing data. It is done by asking, “What does this information mean?” The following provides a basic interpretation of the above data:

Analysis

Approximately one in five residents attended the meeting, which is viewed as reasonably good participation. Nearly six times as many men attended as did women.

While the above analysis notes the difference between men and women, it does not analyse the causes or consequences of this difference. Adding a gender equality perspective implies using existing knowledge about the social situation and roles of women and men, as well as established sociological (or other) theories about relations between women and men. Providing this perspective is crucial so that the analysis can lead to better policy formulation and decision-making.

Step 3: Add a gender equality perspective to the analysis

Consider the difference between the following two possible interpretations of the above data:

Analysis of gender differences that <u>does not consider existing knowledge</u> about the situation of women and men and established knowledge about gender	Analysis of gender differences <u>that includes a gender equality perspective</u> based on existing knowledge about the situation of women and men and established knowledge about gender
<p>Women were in low attendance at the meeting because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women are not interested in waste and water management.• Women have no knowledge about waste and water management.• Men are better decision-makers and leaders than women on issues of waste and water management. <p>Women’s low participation in the meeting will not have any (negative) consequences, since they will benefit from the new solutions anyway.</p>	<p>It is known that it women take charge of many tasks involving waste and water management. Their low attendance must be due to other factors than lack of interest or knowledge. The following questions therefore need to be asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the meeting take place at a time when women could attend (including in view of care issues)?• Were women informed about the meeting?• Are women systemically shut out of or proactively involved in community decision-making processes? <p>Because women are still the primary managers of waste and water in the home, their low participation at the meeting is likely to result in less effective and less sustainable solutions and in low ownership of the decisions made by the primary users (women).</p>

Step 4: Use a gender equality analysis to improve policy-making

Taking into account the needs and views of all people and all users of public services helps to make better decisions. In the example about waste and water management, it would be crucial to make sure that women are properly consulted for the policy adopted to be accepted and adapted to the needs of primary users. The following are some solutions to improve information gathering and subsequent policy-making:

- ✓ Make sure that women are aware of the meeting and actively encourage them to participate. If necessary, adapt and improve existing information channels (posters in schools, etc.) and the way the information is presented.
- ✓ Specifically indicate in all communication and invitations that both women’s and men’s participation in the consultation is desired.
- ✓ Provide child-care solutions during the meeting or accept children.

- ✓ Consult people through other means than a public meeting, for example, individual interviews or questionnaires.
- ✓ Inform women's groups or groups where women are involved about the ongoing consultation (e.g. school parents' groups).

Longer-term measures:

- ✓ Systematically adapt and improve information and communication channels to the needs of women locally, based on a needs assessment involving women themselves.
- ✓ Implement measures to encourage the participation of women in decision-making at local level and within local organisations.

6. DEALING WITH RESISTANCE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

As a GER, you may meet with resistance. The following table provides answers to arguments that are often used when gender equality issues are at stake.

Argument	Answer
<i>There is no information available regarding the respective situation of women and men so I cannot do anything.</i>	Sex-disaggregated statistics are available in a wide range of areas and for most European countries. See Chapter II of this Manual for sources of data. If statistics are not available in the area you are looking at, it may be an issue as such that could be raised with relevant authorities/bodies, to encourage sex-disaggregated data gathering. Relevant (qualitative) information can also be found in the country reports to the United Nations CEDAW (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm) and in the concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW to the country. In many countries NGOs, UN agencies (such as UN Women) and other international organisations may have carried out useful studies.
<i>We have reached gender equality; this is not an issue in my country/commune/organisation.</i>	Figures about the situation of women and men show that structural inequalities exist in most areas and societies. Legal and policy documents acknowledge this situation at the national, European and international levels and governments must address it (e.g. <u>Council of Europe standards</u> , <u>UN CEDAW Convention</u> and <u>Beijing Platform for Action</u> , <u>EU legislation</u> , national constitutions).
<i>We have a woman mayor/president/director so there is no problem with gender equality.</i>	It is true that <i>some</i> women have reached some decision-making positions, but generally women are still underrepresented. This is a structural issue, not an individual question. You will find some facts and figures here and here . In addition, while the equal participation of both sexes in all fields of life is a condition for democracy and good governance, the sole presence of women as decision-makers or in a project does not guarantee that policies or activities will take into account a gender equality perspective or improve the situation. What is also needed is a change of approach and active efforts towards gender equality, which can be undertaken by both women and men.
<i>Our public policies, laws and projects are gender neutral and thus benefit all people in the same way. We don't discriminate against women.</i>	In most areas of life, regarding paid and unpaid work, access to resources and to power, women and men are in different situations and therefore have different needs. Public policies, laws and projects thus need to take these different situations and needs into account. For example, reducing the average length of a hospital stay in a country may be a legitimate aim, but it will have a differentiated and heavier impact on women: the care needs that are not covered by hospitals will have to be taken over by families, in practice, mostly by women in the families.

Argument	Answer
<p><i>Gender quotas/parity systems are not democratic; they limit the choice of the electorate and women will be chosen only because of their sex. No woman will want this.</i></p>	<p>1) Positive actions / gender quotas/parity systems in decision-making or in employment are considered as legal and promoted by different standards at European and at international level (e.g. Council of Europe Recommendations, Article 157 of the EU Treaty, Article 4 of CEDAW Convention).</p> <p>2) The idea of universality of democracy is based on abstract individualism, whereby voters and representatives are seen as deprived from all social attributes (e.g. gender, class and race). This view emerged in the French revolution and was originally based on the exclusion of women. Universal citizenship is therefore a partial concept that under the guise of neutrality has served the purposes of dominant social groups. True equality presupposes acknowledging and accepting difference and parity democracy/quotas allow for more diverse candidates who are more representative of society.</p> <p>3) A passive approach to “natural” progress in the field of gender equality will not be enough to change the historical relations of power between women and men and end the discrimination of women in the political and economic world. Women who aspire to political office/decision-making face numerous structural and cultural obstacles. In the event of such injustice, it is the State in the name of citizens which is best placed to implement measures in favour of a more just situation. In addition, the “freedom” of the electorate is circumscribed by other factors, such as electoral systems and choices made by political parties often based on opaque and gender blind procedures.</p> <p>4) The argument that politicians should be elected based on their qualifications and not on the basis of their gender, or that it is shameful for women to be elected because of their gender, shows how women’s qualifications are downgraded (as more women than men are university graduates in many countries, for example). Women face many obstacles which make their access to decision-making much more difficult even with equal merit. Other types of quotas/rules are used in other instances, where the capacities of the people elected/nominated are not questioned (e.g. nationality for international civil servants or to define the number of regional representatives in a national parliament).</p>
<p><i>It is not a question of discrimination; women do not want to be involved in politics/projects/media.</i></p>	<p>Women can only be expected to decide to participate in different fields and structures in society if they are given the opportunity to do so and if the atmosphere is not hostile towards their participation. Therefore transparent and clear communication through the right channels is an important starting point. In addition, it is difficult for newcomers to enter bodies where the same group of persons has been working together for decades, because newcomers challenge existing habits and are not always welcome. This applies to women entering male-dominated areas.</p> <p>In addition, even when they are qualified and have the necessary skills, women often have fewer resources to access decision-making positions, in terms of economic but also symbolic resources (networks, relationships) and less time life (including because women still bear most of the child care responsibilities in most countries). Women are also more subject to scrutiny and to sexism in the media, which makes it personally more difficult to enter the public arena. Regarding media work, as in many other areas, often journalists tend to contact the persons with whom they have been previously working and do not think outside the box.</p>

Argument	Answer
<i>This is our culture and gender equality is an idea imposed on us by foreign donors and international organisations. We cannot go against our traditional beliefs and values.</i>	Gender equality is a human right that is included in several international conventions and instruments to which each Council of Europe member state is committed (e.g. CEDAW, Council of Europe standards). An important part of these commitments (including for example the Istanbul Convention, but also different UN standards) provide that culture and traditions cannot be used to breach legal and policy commitments towards gender equality and human rights. In addition, fewer inequalities will improve the well-being of women and men.

7. GENDER-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION

What is gender-sensitive communication?

Communication takes many forms: campaigns, social media, websites, speeches, posters, leaflets, publications, photos and videos. All aspects of communication policies should be gender-sensitive. Without a conscious effort to include a gender equality perspective, communication is very likely to reinforce gender stereotypes, or simply to make gender equality issues or women invisible.

Gender-sensitive communication means using **inclusive language**, which promotes gender equality and the equal visibility of women and men. The Council of Europe has been committed to using inclusive language for over 20 years, since [Instruction No. 33 of 1 June 1994 concerning the use of non-sexist language at the Council of Europe](#). The Committee of Ministers [Recommendation No. R \(90\)4 on the elimination of sexism from language](#) also recommends that member states use language reflecting the principle of equality and take measures with a view to:

1. Encouraging the use, as far as possible, of non-sexist language to take account of the presence, status and role of women in society, as current linguistic practice does for men.
2. Bringing the terminology used in legal drafting, public administration and education into line with the principle of sex equality.
3. Encouraging the use of non-sexist language in the media.

The use of gender-sensitive language has different implications depending on the language. Many countries have their own guidelines and/or practices regarding this issue. The Council of Europe Gender Equality Division makes a conscious effort to consistently use gender-sensitive language and all Council of Europe services should strive to use gender-sensitive language. GERs can offer support to their committees in this regard.

Gender-sensitive communication also relates to carefully choosing **images** that are inclusive of both women and men, if possible that also reflect diversity among women and men, that promote a non-stereotypical image of both sexes and support gender equality.

Why is it important?

Communication forms an integral part of policy-making and project management, especially when it comes to how messages, objectives, results and impact are successfully communicated to citizens and other stakeholders. This part of policy and project work needs to fully reflect gender equality. This is particularly important given that efficient communication tools, including visual communication, can have a very powerful effect on the public.

Gender stereotypes manifest themselves in three different ways: 1) women can be underrepresented or not featured in communication tools; 2) women and men can be represented in stereotypical roles and situations, which *de facto* limit their opportunities; 3) a flagrant or subtle hierarchy of status or functions can be observed in communication tools to the detriment of women (e.g. images of men as speakers and women as listeners).

1. Use gender-sensitive language¹⁰

Avoid gender-specific pronouns when the sex of the person concerned is not known.

The following alternatives are suggested.

- ✓ **Use a plural form; this is often the simplest solution:** use “Children and their rights” instead of “The child and his rights”
- ✓ **Reword the sentence:** use “On arrival at the Council, staff members must ...” instead of “”
- ✓ **Replace the pronoun by "the", "a" or "an":** use “When submitting an application, a candidate should ...” instead of “When submitting his application, a candidate should ...”

Avoid “man” words:

Instead of:	Use:
Chairman, chairwoman	Chair, chairperson
Spokesman, spokeswoman	Spokesperson
Craftsman	Craft worker
Businessmen	The business community, industry, business managers, business people, executives, companies
Man, mankind	People, the human race, human beings, humanity
Manpower	Workforce, workers, personnel
Manmade	Artificial, synthetic, manufactured, constructed, of human origin

Avoid stereotypes:

Instead of:	Use:
Ambassadors and their wives	Ambassadors and their spouses or partners
A woman doctor, a male nurse	A doctor, a nurse

Recommendations that apply to the French language:

- ✓ Eliminate sexist expressions. This can be, for example, words that relate to men only or which give information about the marital status of women (e.g. “droits de l’homme” to be replaced by “droits humains”, “mademoiselle” to be avoided and replaced by “madame” for women of all ages).
- ✓ Use the feminine and masculine form in messages addressed to all both orally and in writing (e.g. “citoyennes et citoyens”).
- ✓ In French, use the terms “droits des femmes” and “journée internationale des droits des femmes” (plural and not the singular “droit de la femme”).

¹⁰ Examples from [Instruction No. 33 of 1 June 1994 concerning the use of non-sexist language at the Council of Europe](#).

2. Avoid gender stereotypes

- ✓ Always present women and men giving their full name and function (often women are presented by their given name only) unless the informality is consistently applied to all.
- ✓ Do not represent or quote women only in relation to social issues/family issues but aim to challenge gender stereotypes by quoting women in relation to topics that are usually addressed by men (e.g. criminal matters, defence, technology) and men in relation to social issues.
- ✓ In interviews, avoid asking women questions about their private life or do so only in cases where these questions are relevant to women.

3. Be gender-sensitive when using images

Ensure a diverse representation of women and men in order not to reinforce gender stereotypes:

- ✓ Try to portray women and men of different ages, ethnicities and backgrounds.
- ✓ Colours: avoid using pink/blue for women/men, and dark colours for men, light colours for women.
- ✓ Avoid the systematic representation of women in caring positions or situations and of men in decision-making positions or in science/technical roles.
- ✓ Clothing: avoid the representation of men in practical clothes and women in sexy clothing or in clothing not adapted to the communicated topic.
- ✓ Beware of the positioning behaviour of people: avoid systematically putting women in passive or submissive positions in relation to men and in the way they act (standing/sitting, position, etc.).
- ✓ Make sure that women are not always in the background/men in the foreground.

Ensure gender balance:

- ✓ In the people portrayed on images, publications, posters, websites, videos.
- ✓ Among speakers at events and in terms of speaking time in general (avoid men or women only line ups)
- ✓ If needed, use the databases of women experts that exist in different member states or contact women's organisations who could be sources of information to find women experts in different areas/roles.
- ✓ Try to give preference to women/men in non-traditional roles.

CHAPTER III: USEFUL RESOURCES THAT CAN SUPPORT YOUR WORK

1. DATA AND INDICATORS

Using sex-disaggregated data is one of the preconditions for the integration of a gender equality perspective in your work. Different sources can help you find relevant data for your work at national and European level.

The gender mainstreaming section of the Council of Europe’s website contains links to [different sources of data and indicators](#) on different topics related to gender equality including socio-economic and population issues, the participation of women and men in decision-making, gender equality in the justice system, and violence against women.

2. GENDER MAINSTREAMING MANUALS AND TOOLS

- ✓ [Council of Europe Gender Equality Glossary](#) containing mostly definitions emanating from Council of Europe standards or other reference documents on gender-equality related concepts (bilingual document French/English entries).
- ✓ [Gender mainstreaming platform of the European institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#)
- ✓ [EIGE Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit](#).
- ✓ [I Know Gender: An Introduction to Gender Equality for UN staff](#) - this UN Women Training Centre course aims to develop awareness of gender equality and women’s empowerment for the integration of a gender equality perspective into the work of all UN staff at headquarters, regional and country levels.
- ✓ [Gender mainstreaming in the work of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - “Guidance note for UNODC staff - Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC”](#).
- ✓ [Gender Mainstreaming in OSCE Events](#).

3. VISUAL TOOLS

- ✓ **Infographics on UN gender data** (issues covered: population & families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty): <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Infographics.html>
- ✓ **UN Women infographics** (issues covered: women’s human rights, women and the media, violence against women, women and armed conflicts, ageing, gender equality): http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia?resource_type=d8ef5611f21741188024baa46076e93f
- ✓ **OECD video** on gender equality: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j85fGU3PeeY>
- ✓ **Video on gender mainstreaming at local level** (Snowploughing - Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udSjBbGwJEg>
- ✓ **Video on the gender pay gap** (European Commission): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKylYlqgSbl&feature=youtu.be>
- ✓ **Video on violence against women** (Care Norway): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP7OXDWof30>
- ✓ **Videos on austerity measures and the gender pension gap** (European Women’s Lobby): <http://www.womenlobby.org/European-Women-s-Lobby-launches-video-clip-A-she-re-cession->

[What-does-austerity?lang=en](http://www.womenlobby.org/A-she-re-cession-What-does-austerity-mean-for-women-in-Europe?lang=en) and <http://www.womenlobby.org/A-she-re-cession-What-does-austerity-mean-for-women-in-Europe?lang=en>

- ✓ Web documentary on the **construction of gender stereotypes** (French): <http://www.ecoledugenre.com>
- ✓ **Video on subtle sexism**(Huffington Post): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/48-subtly-sexist-things-women-hear-in-a-lifetime_us_566595d2e4b08e945feff668
- ✓ **Video “Women, not objects!”**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J31AT7vigo>
- ✓ **Video on the underrepresentation of women in decision-making** (ELLE UK): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEKo22ryWxM>

ANSWERS TO THE TEST

1. Women represent 40% of members of parliaments in Europe.

Incorrect. Women represent only 26% of members of parliaments in Europe. Council of Europe Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making provides that “the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%”.

2. Women and men have equal access to resources.

Incorrect. Statistics and research show that women and men are in different situations in most areas of life. This is particularly true in relation to access to resources. In most Council of Europe countries, women earn on average only 60% to 75% of men’s wages. In addition, the average gender pension gap in the 28 EU member states is as high as 39%, which is the result of gender inequalities in employment over the life cycle. Beyond wages, there is also a gender gap in relation to access to other assets. For example, women represent only 30% of farm holders on average in 34 European countries. Men also have more access to symbolic resources like networks, which impacts on employment or decision-making opportunities.

3. Public policies are neutral; they affect everybody in the same way.

Mostly incorrect. In most areas of life, regarding paid and unpaid work, access to resources and to power, women and men are in different situations. Public policies therefore need to take this into account, in order to reach their aims. For example promoting part-time work for women only may improve work-life balance for women in the short term, but it will not help to close gender gaps in relation to employment, pay or pensions. It is also counter-productive as it does not encourage the equal sharing of unpaid care work between women and men.

4. Gender roles are socially constructed; they change over time and differ between and within cultures.

Correct. The term "gender" refers to socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and for men. Gender roles are not biologically determined, they depend on what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. There can be significant differences in gender roles depending on country, social class, family status, age, and ethnic or religious background. In addition, gender roles are not neutral they are characterised by a hierarchy of values, rights or decision-making power between women and men. For example, the value given to care work in society (traditionally attributed to women) is lower than the value attributed to technical work. Gender equality aims at less stereotyped gender roles, whereby women and men play an equal role in the public and private sphere and have equal access to and control over resources.

5. Gender-mainstreaming requires the equal participation of women and men in all programmes and activities.

Correct. Ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all programmes and activities is a principle of justice and an aspect of gender mainstreaming. However, the mere presence of women is not enough to ensure the integration of a gender equality perspective in the content of a policy, activity or project. To do this, a gender analysis and consequent integration of gendered aspects is needed. For example, the equal presence of girls and boys in an educational activity will not guarantee their equal participation in practice (speaking time, etc.) nor the fact that the activity will be adapted to the needs of girls and boys, nor that the activity will promote more equality between girls and boys.

6. Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective entails new duties and practices for ministries and civil servants.

Partly correct. When carried out duly and in a planned manner, in particular if support tools and training have been made available, gender mainstreaming does not necessarily entail unreasonable amounts of extra work. However, some reading and/or training is necessary at the beginning. Gender mainstreaming entails a change of approach in policy-making and challenging existing practices and stereotypes.

7. Gender mainstreaming should replace specific policies for the advancement of women and positive actions.

Incorrect. Gender mainstreaming is a tool with the final aim to reach real equality between women and men. In most national and international policy contexts, including the Council of Europe, gender equality policies comprise a so-called “dual approach” combining gender mainstreaming and specific policies for the advancement of women including positive actions.

8. All ministries have duties in relation to the integration of a gender equality perspective.

Correct. Most ministries are implementing policies that affect people; therefore, these policies are likely to affect women and men. In this context, taking into account the situation and needs of all people is a condition for good policy-making. The idea behind gender mainstreaming is also to transform the (unequal) gendered way in which most public institutions have been working and to ensure that all policy-making takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns.

9. Data and statistics on people, in general, should be broken down by sex only if sex-disaggregated information is readily available.

Mostly incorrect. Data and statistics on people should always be broken down by sex, and if possible, other factors, such as age. If it is unreasonably hard to access the information, it is advisable to find out why. If sex-disaggregated statistics are not available at all, aiming at making them available or raising awareness about existing gaps are legitimate and important policy goals and a first step towards gender mainstreaming.

CONTACT

Do not hesitate to contact the Gender Equality Division of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe gender equality website contains information about existing **standards, policy issues, publications, activities and contacts at national level** and **useful links**.

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