

Strasbourg, 15 May 2019

GEC(2019)1

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

**Draft terms of reference
1 January 2020 until 31 December 2021**

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Type of committee: Steering Committee

Terms of reference valid from: **1 January 2020 until 31 December 2021**

PILLAR/SECTOR/PROGRAMME
<p>Pillar: Human Rights Sector: Promoting Human Rights and Dignity Programme: Equality and Human Dignity</p>
MAIN TASKS
<p>Under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers, the GEC will steer the intergovernmental work in the field of gender equality. In particular, the GEC is instructed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) promote gender equality as a visible priority for the Organisation (internally and externally) and, to this end, support all committees and bodies of the Organisation in ensuring that a gender equality perspective is maintained in their activities; (ii) conduct needs' assessments and provide advice on the development of standards, co-operation and monitoring activities within its field of competence; (iii) provide expertise to member States on the development of legislation, policies, practice, training schemes and awareness material to support implementation of internationally agreed standards at national level; and facilitate exchange of experience and good practice; (iv) support the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023); (v) support governments, parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector for the purpose of achieving real change on gender equality in member States; (vi) promote the inclusion in the political agendas of the Council of Europe member States and beyond of the need to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence; (vii) identify a topic of particular relevance in the field of gender equality and organise an annual thematic conference to exchange experience, good practices and facilitate progress on this topic; (viii) advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on appropriate action to be taken and likewise provide advice as requested on such questions as may arise; (ix) engage in co-ordination and joint planning at regional and international level with the European Union, including the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the UN, in particular UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact, the World Bank, the OAS, the OSCE, the OECD, other intergovernmental organisations and civil society with the aim of strengthening equality and enhancing women's rights as an integral part of universal human rights; promote the visibility of the Council of Europe's standards at these levels through participation in meetings at the level of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Council; (x) take due account of building cohesive societies and of promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 in the performance of its tasks¹; (xi) follow the implementation of the non-binding instruments that it has prepared as well as conventions for which it has been given supervision by the Committee of Ministers; (xii) contribute to co-operation and support activities to national initiatives in this field; (xiii) without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, follow the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies or convention mechanisms; (xiv) in accordance with decision CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind its priorities, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility² in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers.

¹ In accordance with the Committee of Ministers' decision to further mainstream work in the area of the Rights of Persons with Disability across the Organisation (Cf. [CM/Del/Dec\(2018\)1312/11.1a](#)).

² Cf. Relevant decision of the Committee of Ministers ([CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1168/10.2](#)) and list of Conventions in [CM\(2017\)132](#).

SPECIFIC TASKS

- (i) Revise [the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec\(79\)10 concerning migrant women](#)
- (ii) Contribute towards the implementation of the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") and Goal 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels").
- (iii) Prepare [studies / surveys on good practices / factsheets] on [gender equality in the development / use of artificial intelligence], [preventing and combating sexism and violence against women in the political arena], [violence against women in the cyberspace], [the prosecution of rape and other sexual violence], [select articles of the Istanbul Convention³].
- (iv) Prepare annual reports on the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023).
- (v) Prepare a policy and concept for following-up on the implementation of legal instruments (see the above items xi and xiv).

COMPOSITION**Members:**

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the government of the highest possible rank in the field of gender equality.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State. Member States may send other representatives without defrayal of expenses.

Each member of the Commission shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

Participants:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the expense of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- Representatives of other international organisations: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (including ODIHR), United Nations (including UN Women and other relevant UN agencies), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Observers:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, European Women's Lobby and WAVE (Women against Violence in Europe);
- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities.

³ Publications have so far been produced on articles 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 52.

WORKING METHODS**Meetings:**

48 members, 2 meetings in 2020, 2.5 days

48 members, 2 meetings in 2021, 2.5 days

Bureau:

3 members, 2 meetings in 2020 and 2021, to be held by video-conference and, where possible, in the margins of the plenary meetings

The Gender Equality Commission is an integral part of the Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality. With a view to fulfilling its main tasks, the GEC will maintain close links with other elements of the Transversal Programme.

The Gender Equality Commission will engage in a regular exchange of views with Gender Equality Rapporteurs appointed by the respective steering committees and/or monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe.

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

SUBORDINATE STRUCTURE(S) TO THE GEC

The GEC has a co-ordinating, supervisory and monitoring role over the Drafting Committee in charge of preparing a draft update of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(79)10 concerning migrant women.