



Strasbourg, 28 June 2019

GEC (2019) Report May

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
(GEC)**

15th meeting

(22-23-24 May 2019, Strasbourg, France)

REPORT

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The 15th meeting of the [Gender Equality Commission](#) (GEC) was opened by the Chair (Charles Ramsden, United Kingdom).
2. The draft [agenda](#) was adopted as it appears in Appendix I to this report. The list of participants is attached in Appendix II.

➤ *The GEC adopted the draft agenda as it appears in document GEC(2019)OJ1 revised.*

II. Exchange of views with Snežana Samardžić-Marković, [Director General of Democracy](#), Council of Europe

3. In her presentation to the GEC, Snežana Samardžić-Marković informed the members that gender equality continues to be a top priority for the Council of Europe, highlighted by the fact that it has been among the priorities of presidencies of the Committee of Ministers. She informed the members that gender equality and women's rights were discussed by the outgoing Finnish presidency of the Committee of Ministers during the recent ministerial conference which took place in Helsinki, and that gender equality and women's rights also featured prominently on the agenda of the incoming French presidency. She encouraged the GEC members to promote their work in their member states, especially with Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Ms Samardžić-Marković also informed the members about the budgetary difficulties the Organisation had been facing and said that while a contingency plan had been drawn up, it had not yet been implemented. The situation would be clearer after the Parliamentary Assembly June session. Members would be kept informed should any changes to the GEC working methods be necessary.
4. In reply to a question from Kira Appel (Denmark), Ms Samardžić-Marković said that while there had been a very early stage discussion about the creation of a committee on anti-discrimination, it had not yet reached the Committee of Ministers and no decision had yet been taken. She said that the proposed committee would not include gender equality and that there were no plans to make the GEC a sub-committee of any new structure.
5. Claudia Luciani, [Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance](#), informed the members about her participation in the Women G7 conference organised under the French Presidency of the G7. The Council of Europe had been the only international organisation invited to participate. She said that it had been a very important opportunity to speak about the Council of Europe's instruments and mechanisms in the fight against violence against women, online violence, stalking and women's empowerment.

➤ *The GEC took note of the exchange of views with Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe, who informed the members about the budgetary challenges the Council of Europe was facing and possible implications for the intergovernmental programme.*

III. Exchange of views with Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

6. The GEC members welcomed [Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#), to her first exchange of views with them since her appointment. Ms Mijatović stressed that gender equality and women's rights were among her main priorities and that she has raised the topics in almost all the countries she has visited to date, since she always observed a backlash or at best, a stagnation. She said that gender stereotypes and sexism were always on her country visit agenda and that she has often heard, including from politicians, that domestic violence is a private matter to be addressed "within four walls", something which cannot be accepted. While she has not as yet tackled sexism and reproductive rights during her mandate, she welcomed any ideas from the GEC members about work that is needed on these issues. Ms Mijatović also spoke about the importance of artificial intelligence and how it must be embraced, while one must at the same time remain cautious. In answer to questions from the members, Ms Mijatović said that the recurring issues during her country visits were the situation of NGOs, and the safety of journalists and human rights defenders. She also spoke about the situation of migrants and the pushback in this area and the need to work with civil society. The Commissioner expressed her willingness to co-operate on important topics of common concern to the GEC.

- *The GEC took note of the exchange of views with Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, who informed the members about her gender-equality related work.*

IV. Draft 2020-2021 terms of reference of the Gender Equality Commission

7. The Secretariat presented the [draft terms of reference for 2020-2021](#) and explained that they had been amended to reflect specific tasks for the biennium but they did not take into account any possible reduction in the budget allocation. If the contingency plan that the Director General had spoken about were to be put in place, then the terms of reference would be revised and members would be kept informed. It was explained that the Secretary General would make the final decision on the proposals which are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers at its budget meeting in November. Among the proposals that were made in the ensuing discussion were: the creation of a bureau; making a reference to Beijing +25 in the GEC's tasks; the inclusion of men as active partners; artificial intelligence; and violence against women as topics for future factsheets and studies; and the revision of the [1979 Committee of Ministers Recommendation concerning migrant women](#). The question of appointing a rapporteur for persons with disabilities was also raised and it was decided to discuss this at a future meeting.

- *The GEC examined and provided input on the proposed draft 2020-2021 terms of reference of the GEC.*

V. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality

1. Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

- a. [Conference “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism”](#)
(Helsinki, 28-29 March 2019)

8. The GEC members received the [preliminary draft report of the conference](#) which had been prepared by the conference Rapporteur for their review and comments. The members expressed their appreciation to the representative from Finland for hosting such an interesting conference. The members were asked to send any comments on the report to the Secretariat by 13 June. The comments would be integrated and discussed with the Rapporteur. The document would be finalised and made available to the members as soon as possible.

- *The GEC discussed the preliminary draft report of the Conference “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism” (Helsinki, 28-29 March 2019), as well as follow-up to be given; the members were asked to forward any comments/amendments to the report to the Secretariat by Thursday 13 June 2019.*

b. Objective 1 – Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism

- Follow-up to the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the [Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism](#) (CM/Rec(2019)1)

9. The GEC members discussed the various follow-up actions in their countries regarding the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, for example the preparation of legislative proposals, media coverage, translation into the national language, dissemination among all ministries and other stakeholders, inclusion of the Recommendation in training courses.

10. In response to a question about a toolkit that could be used in training courses, the Secretariat informed the members that the Gender Equality Division had been co-operating with the Directorate of Communication to produce a useful infographic and to develop further communication tools, such as a media advisory document containing key messages. Members were encouraged to promote the Recommendation whenever possible and to share any translations produced so that these can be posted on the gender equality portal and made available to all.

11. The members were also informed about several upcoming events in which the GEC and/or Secretariat were participating and speaking on this topic, for instance: a conference organised by the European Federation of Journalists in Istanbul; the Chair had been invited to an exchange with the [PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination](#) in June, the [Congress](#) had invited a member of the GEC to speak at an event in Stuttgart, also in June. (see also the information under the other items). Iceland, who holds the presidency of the [Nordic Council](#), is organising an event in September on #MeToo – why now?

12. The GEC also discussed putting in place a reporting system on the implementation of the Recommendation, for which the Secretariat would prepare a proposal for discussion and adoption at the next meeting.

- *The GEC discussed the follow-up to the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1) and ways in which the Recommendation can be promoted in the member states; GEC decided to come back to the discussion, including future reporting on the implementation of the Recommendation, at their next meeting.*

c. Objective 2 – Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence

- Exchange of views with Feride Acar, President of the [Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence](#) (GREVIO)

13. The GEC held an exchange of views with Feride Acar, President of the GREVIO, who gave an update on its activities (eight country reports are now available) and who pointed to many positive developments taking place even in States which had not yet ratified the [Istanbul Convention](#). She listed some of the gaps and difficulties identified so far in the countries, such as legal loopholes, lack of shelters and support hotlines, the absence of disaggregated data, gender blindness in the work of protective institutions, insufficient resourcing. She said that the GEC and GREVIO were natural allies, as four of the six objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy were directly linked to gender-based violence. Ms Acar said that the studies on the articles of the Istanbul Convention were very useful and well-received and she proposed that future studies could be produced on Article 9 (Non-governmental organisations and civil society), Article 34 (Stalking) in conjunction with Article 33 (Psychological violence), and Article 59 (Residence Status) and Article 60 (Gender-based asylum claims). In response to a question about addressing cyber-violence, Ms Acar said that although this form of violence was not specifically addressed in the monitoring questionnaire, it could be raised through other sources during an evaluation.

- *The GEC held an exchange of views with Feride Acar, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), took note of her observations about issues of common concern and how the intergovernmental programme, gender mainstreaming and co-operation programmes can best complement the work of the GREVIO.*

d. Objective 3 – [Ensure the equal access of women to justice](#)

- Exchange of views on the way forward

14. The GEC discussed challenges with the implementation of this objective. Standards and recommendations which had not yet been translated, lack of knowledge and the need for training of all actors (including lawyers, police, social workers, justice employees) were put forward. Several delegations indicated that reaching out to the judiciary remained particularly difficult. Andreia Marques (Portugal) shared some good practices from her country which included a protocol with the School of Judges to include in their curriculum training on violence against women, domestic violence, trafficking and hate crimes. The State budget has put aside 3.5 million Euros towards this training. It was agreed that the recommendations from the Bern Conference (2015) could be looked at again with a view to developing a concept paper on the way forward.

- *The GEC discussed ways to advance work on objective 3 of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 - ensure the equal access of women to justice, and instructed the Secretariat to prepare a concept note on the way ahead, taking into account the proposals made during the discussion.*

e. Objective 4 – Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making

- Follow-up to the [2017 analytical report](#) on the third round of monitoring on the implementation of [Recommendation Rec\(2003\)3 of the Committee of Ministers on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making](#)

15. The Chair invited the GEC members to give an overview of follow-up which had been given to the 2017 analytical report in the member states. Several delegations pointed to the benefits of having introduced quota legislation, others to the current plans of their country to introduce such quotas. In Spain, the Constitutional Court had recently ruled in favour of preserving existing quota legislation – challenged as discriminatory – as it was a fundamental matter of balanced participation. Some countries have also managed to progressively raise the thresholds or to extend their scope (to all elections, to the whole public sector management), others had concentrated on awareness-raising, mentoring and education. The Chair informed the members about the upcoming exchange of views with the [Committee on equality and non-discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly](#) which he would use to engage with parliamentarians on the issue of balanced participation. There was a proposal to prepare a compilation of good practices and to improve synergy between the Council of Europe and the European Union in this area.

- *The GEC reported back on follow-up given in the member states to the recommendations of the 2017 analytical report on the third round of monitoring on the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making; the members also proposed actions for further work in this area.*

f. Objective 5 – Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls

16. The GEC discussed the [draft factsheet](#) which had been revised to take into account the discussions at the previous GEC meeting (December 2018), as well as input from experts and comments from the intra-Secretariat Co-ordination Group on Migration, and agreed to its publication. Following a request from Sara Slana (Slovenia), the Secretariat was instructed to prepare a shorter document with key messages that could be used in discussion in the member states with policy- and decision-makers.

- *The GEC examined the revised draft factsheet on the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, agreed to its publication and instructed the Secretariat to ensure a shorter version of it is also produced for more strategic use when engaging with decision-makers.*

g. Objective 6 – Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures

- Gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe activities

17. The Secretariat updated the members about the ongoing work on gender mainstreaming within the Council of Europe. Among the main developments is the pilot training on gender mainstreaming for staff provided by the Directorate for Human Resources. Approximately 320 staff members have participated in courses comprising an introductory course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming and more specific courses on gender mainstreaming in policy-making, in monitoring and in co-operation activities. More tailor-made training was being offered to colleagues working in the Parliamentary Assembly, Human Resources and in the field offices. Developments were ongoing in many areas, for example: gender mainstreaming and artificial intelligence, in the preparation of a new Council of Europe Digital Governance Strategy; gender mainstreaming had been included in a resolution on pharmaceutical care as well as co-operation with the Directorate of Communication regarding gender-sensitive communication. A discussion took place on this topic, including in relation to relevant sections of the Sexism Recommendation. More information can be found in the [Secretariat's presentation](#) which is available on the website and on the dedicated [gender mainstreaming webpage](#). The Secretariat proposed drawing up a document giving guidance on gender-sensitive communication, which could be discussed at November's meeting.

- *The GEC took note of the presentation made by the Secretariat about gender mainstreaming within the Council of Europe activities and about how to strengthen mainstreaming in line with the Gender Equality Strategy.*

h. Committee of Ministers request for information and comments on recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

18. The GEC discussed the [proposed comments](#) on the two recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on “[Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment](#)” and “[The situation of migrants and refugees on the Greek islands: more needs to be done](#)”. The GEC agreed to reinforce the comment about measures to protect women migrants in the latter recommendation.

- *The GEC discussed the draft comments on PACE Recommendation 2152 (2019) “Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment” and PACE Recommendation 2155 (2019) “The situation of migrants and refugees on the Greek islands: more needs to be done”, and instructed the Secretariat to amend them in the light of the discussions and transmit them to the Committee of Ministers.*

i. **[2019 annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023](#)**

19. The GEC members were invited to suggest topics for the thematic section of the 2019 annual report. Among the proposals put forward were artificial intelligence, online violence, sexism, engaging men to promote gender equality and the backlash to women’s rights and gender equality. It was agreed that any subject should relate to the terms of reference.

- *The GEC discussed possible topics to be addressed in the new thematic section of the 2019 annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.*

VI. Co-operation activities

- Exchange of views with Verena Taylor, Director of the Office of the Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes, followed by a presentation by Marta Pietrobelli, Council of Europe expert, on capacity building and co-operation projects making the implementation of the Istanbul Convention a reality
20. The GEC held an exchange of views with Verena Taylor, [Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes](#) (ODGP), who outlined the work of the Office. She said that gender equality was one of the priorities in co-operation activities and was being mainstreamed into all projects/programmes. Following this exchange, Marta Pietrobelli, an expert on gender-based violence, presented her report on “[Capacity building and co-operation projects: making European standards on combating violence against women a reality](#)”. The report was prepared as part of a self-improvement and feedback-gathering policy, and requested by the Gender Equality Division. The report reviews the impact of co-operation programmes/projects which have been concluded or are ongoing and planned from 2016 to 2019 (in total 15). The report also includes lessons learned and recommendations for future work. Ms Pietrobelli’s [presentation](#) is available on the GEC website.

21. Following these exchanges, the GEC participated in a project fair which provided an opportunity for the member states (beneficiary, donor and other states) to see the work being undertaken at first hand, and to have an opportunity to meet with the project managers. The projects all relate to objectives in the Gender Equality Strategy, particularly on violence against women and on women's access to justice. The fair was also an opportunity to raise awareness on the outcomes, outputs and activities of programmes/projects in the member states and neighbouring countries among GEC members, Permanent Representations and Council of Europe colleagues. In addition to the report, two new publications had been prepared for this event: a [new brochure](#) presenting the Council of Europe's approach to projects on combating violence against women and domestic violence; and a [new leaflet](#) calling for support of the Council of Europe work on achieving gender equality and ending violence against women.

- *The GEC held an exchange of views with Verena Taylor, Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes, took note of the presentation by Marta Pietrobelli on co-operation projects being carried out by the Gender Equality Division, and participated in the project fair.*

VII. Thematic conference/discussions

- i. "Women's Rights at the Crossroads: Strengthening International Co-operation to Close the Gap between Legal Frameworks and their Implementation" - conference organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences and with the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers
22. The GEC members participated in the conference "[Women's Rights at the Crossroads: Strengthening International Co-operation to Close the Gap between Legal Frameworks and their Implementation](#)" which took place on Friday, 24 May. The conference gathered high-level participants together from around the world, including members of the "Platform of Violence against Women experts" – a forum for representatives of international and regional monitoring mechanisms which helps to ensure that national laws against violence are adopted and implemented/complied with in practice, and which co-ordinates worldwide efforts to stop violence against women. The conference was opened by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Minister of State for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination of France, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, and the President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). The members of the platform were joined by expert speakers, members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) and members of the permanent delegations to the Council of Europe. The thematic sessions of the conference were devoted to "Putting victims' safety first: Child custody and domestic violence in national and international jurisprudence" and "Ending violence against women and girls: a condition and accelerator towards the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda". The conference was livestreamed to reach a wider audience and the recording is available on the [conference website](#).

- *The GEC participated in the conference “Women’s Rights at the Crossroads: Strengthening International Co-operation to Close the Gap between Legal Frameworks and their Implementation” organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences and with the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.*
- ii. Women, peace and security - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Cyprus and Republic of Moldova); iii. Gender equality backlash (Serbia)
23. The GEC listened with interest to and thanked [Andri Savva \(Cyprus\)](#), [Lilia Pascal \(Republic of Moldova\)](#) and [Ljiljana Loncar \(Serbia\)](#) for their presentations, all of which are available on the GEC meeting website. Several delegates referred to manifestations of the gender backlash in their country, including in the form of a proliferation of isolated incidents in public discussions or provocative actions, in sub-group discussions taking place via Internet or inside social groups of teenage boys. The GEC agreed on the importance of keeping this matter under review and to circulate information about the evolution of the phenomenon.
- *The GEC took note of the presentations made during the thematic discussions on “Women, peace and security – UN Security Council Resolution 1325” (Cyprus and Republic of Moldova) and the “gender equality backlash” (Serbia).*

VIII. Co-operation with other Council of Europe sectors

- Presentation by Clotilde Talleu, Secretariat of the [Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport \(EPAS\)](#) of the Council of Europe/European Union joint project “ALL IN: Towards gender balance in sport”
24. Clotilde Talleu of the Secretariat of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport presented the Council of Europe/European Union joint project “ALL IN: Towards gender balance in sport”. The project, which started in 2018, aimed at reducing the gender inequalities in sport in line with the 2015 [Committee of Ministers recommendation on gender mainstreaming in sport](#). There are 18 countries involved in the project, and the three target groups are ministries responsible for sport, National Olympic Committees and National Federations of Olympic Sports. The project puts emphasis on gender mainstreaming, sexist violence, the need to supply disaggregated data and information. It is supported by several didactic documents (available in an on-line library). The project’s results will be presented in Brussels in September 2019. More detailed information can be found in [Ms Talleu’s presentation](#) which is available on the GEC website.
- *The GEC held an exchange with Clotilde Talleu, from the Secretariat of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe/European Union joint project “ALL IN: Towards gender balance in sport”.*

- Presentation by Florence Mabileau, Secretariat of the [Pompidou Group – Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs](#)

25. Florence Mabileau from the Secretariat of the Pompidou Group made a presentation about the gender specificities of the use of drugs by women. She also presented a case study of a specialised service for women suffering from alcohol and other drug addictions in Egypt which was developed through funding by the [Pompidou Group MedNET](#). One of the main achievements of the project – which has led to the production of [detailed sets of data](#) – has been that more professionals now recognise that there are many gender-specific patterns in the field of addiction and thus specific needs for women in their treatment. More information about the project and its achievements can be found in [Ms Mabileau’s presentation](#) which is available on the GEC website.

- *The GEC held an exchange with Florence Mabileau from the Secretariat of the Pompidou Group – Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs*

IX. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

- Exchange of views with Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director, [UN Women, Europe and Central Asia](#)

26. The Chair introduced Alia El-Yassir who gave an overview of the work of the UN Women regional office in Istanbul. She spoke about the link between Beijing+25 and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and said that the regional Beijing+25 review was being organised by [UNECE](#) and will take place on 29 and 30 October 2019 in Geneva; she added that there was an opportunity to organise sub-regional consultations. She also encouraged the members to contact their Permanent Representations in Geneva with a view to organising side events in the margins of the UNECE Beijing+25 meeting. Ms El-Yassir informed the members that the [CSW in 2020](#) would be devoted to Beijing+25, which would be another opportunity to exchange good practices and to take stock of progress and future priorities. She also encouraged member states to include young people and civil society in their delegations to these United Nations gatherings. Ms El-Yassir announced that a Global Forum on gender equality will be organised in Paris, by France and Mexico in June or July 2020.

- *The GEC held an exchange of views with Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director, UN Women, Europe and Central Asia, on areas of common interest.*

- [Council of Europe’s contribution to the Beijing+25 review process](#)

27. The Secretariat presented the document on the Council of Europe’s [contribution to the Beijing+25 review process](#) which had been prepared with the view of presenting it at the forthcoming [UNECE regional review meeting](#) (Geneva, 29-30 October). The document draws on a number of existing documents with the focus largely being on the Istanbul Convention and the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism. Proposals were made by delegates to include information about the GEC’s working methods and to reflect the [Gender Equality Strategy](#) by including men as partners for gender equality.

- *The GEC discussed and approved the draft factsheet on the Council of Europe's contribution to the Beijing+25 review process and agreed to explore ways to develop the factsheet to include reference to the Gender Equality Commission's working methods, and to the need to involve men as partners for gender quality, as reflected in the Gender Equality Strategy.*

- Council of the European Union - gender equality agenda:

- [Romanian Presidency](#) (January – June 2019)

28. Monaliza Cirstea, the representative of Romania, informed the members about the events which had already taken place on the three main gender-related priorities of Romania's Presidency: increasing the economic independence of women; preventing and combating domestic violence and emergency protection measures to protect and support victims; and addressing the gender pay gap. Representatives from the Council of Europe will speak at upcoming high-level conferences devoted to gender equality: "The Role and Status of Women in Modern Society - Between Empowerment, Leadership and Gender Discrimination" (Bucharest, 29-30 May) and "Towards a Europe free from violence against women and girls – the Istanbul Convention creating a new horizon" (Bucharest, 4-6 June). More detailed information can be found on the website for the [Romanian Presidency](#). The Romanian Presidency is also actively promoting the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention and a new dialogue to share a common understanding of its content. Ms Cirstea's [presentation](#) is available on the GEC website.

- Finnish Presidency (July – December 2019)

29. Päivi Yli-Pietilä, the representative of Finland, informed the members that the overarching theme of the Finnish Presidency would be the Economy of Wellbeing, and that equal opportunities for women and men and gender equality as a driver for sustainable growth are topics which will feature prominently. Among the events planned in Helsinki during the Presidency were: a high-level conference "Europe for Gender Equality: Taking Stock – Taking Action," (30 September and 1 October 2019). The conference will focus on the future priorities and directions of EU gender equality policies on the basis of the Beijing+25 Review, as well as on gender equal economies; a meeting of the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (2-3 September 2019); and a conference "New Pathways to Gender and Equality in Research and Innovation in the European Union" (23 and 24 October 2019) which would be a stocktaking event on 20 years of advancement of gender equality in research and innovation in Europe.

- *The GEC took note of the information provided by the Romanian and Finnish representatives about their respective gender equality agendas during their EU Council Presidencies.*

X. Events attended by GEC members, experts and the Secretariat

30. The Chair pointed out that information about participation at events since the last meeting was contained in document [GEC\(2019\)2](#) which was available on the website. He invited members to inform about events which took place in their countries to mark International Women's Day. Among the many events which were organised was a film financed by Portugal on women's empowerment, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued their initiative of having every year a week of celebrations organised jointly with civil society organisations, Azerbaijan organised a meeting of women farmers and Malta held a conference highlighting the advancement of women. Unprecedented demonstrations took place in Madrid (attended by many young people and men) and in Belgium (accompanied by many round tables, campaigns etc).

- *The GEC took note of the information in the summary document of events attended by GEC members and Secretariat, and held a tour de table about the events which took place in the member states to celebrate International Women's Day 2019.*

XI. Current and future activities at national and international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:

- [Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers](#) (November 2018-May 2019)

31. Ms Yli-Pietilä (Finland) informed the members that equality and women's rights had been highlighted throughout the Finnish Presidency which had just finished. She said that the timing of the adoption of the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism by the Committee of Ministers helped to give more visibility to the conference "Tackling gender stereotypes and sexism" and, through the conference, to the Recommendation itself. Another important event was the International Roma Women's Conference which took place on 25-27 March 2019. She also spoke about the high-level conference on artificial intelligence which had taken place in February. This was one of the main events of the Presidency. It discussed the broader implications of artificial intelligence for the values of democratic societies, including equality.

- [French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers](#) (May-November 2019)

32. The [priorities for the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers](#) were made available to the members on the GEC website. The conference on "Women's Rights at the Crossroads" (see paragraph 22 above) was the Presidency's first major event.

- *The GEC took note of the reports by the representatives of Finland and France about the gender equality agenda during their respective presidencies of the Committee of Ministers.*

XII. Other business

33. Anje Wiersinga of the [International Alliance of Women](#) informed the members about an event being organised during the CSW in New York in 2020 on the implementation of the UNSC resolution 1325 and encouraged all members to participate. The Finnish representative informed about the [International Labour Organization's \(ILO\) ongoing negotiations about violence and harassment in the workplace](#). It was agreed to invite the ILO for an exchange of views at a future GEC meeting.

- *The GEC took note of an event being organised on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 during the CSW in 2020 and the ILO negotiations on violence and harassment in the workplace.*

XIII. Proposals for the agenda of the next meeting

34. The GEC members proposed items to be included on the agenda of the next meeting (13-14-15 November 2019), particularly under the item "Thematic Discussions".

- *The GEC proposed the following points for the draft agenda of the next meeting: good practices identified by the Committee of the Parties of the Istanbul Convention (Belgium); terms of reference 2020-2021 (Belgium); exchange with the Gender Equality Rapporteurs (Slovenia); gender equality related work of the Municipalities and Regions at the local level (Sweden).*

XIV. Dates of forthcoming GEC meetings

35. The Chair announced the proposed dates of the future GEC meetings, which were agreed by the members.

- *The GEC agreed on the dates of its next meetings: 16th meeting, 13-14-15 November 2019; 17th meeting, 27-28-29 May 2020*

XV. Adoption of the abridged report of the 15th GEC meeting (22-24 May 2019)

- *The GEC adopted the [abridged report](#) of the 15th GEC meeting (22-24 May 2019) and agreed to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers (GEC(2019)Abridged Report May).*

Appendix I

AGENDA

- I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**
Draft Agenda *GEC(2019)OJ1Revised*
- II. Exchange of views with Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe**
- III. Exchange of views with Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights**
- IV. Draft 2020-2021 terms of reference of the Gender Equality Commission**
GEC(2019)1
- V. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality**
- 1. Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023**
- a. Conference “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism”**
 (Helsinki, 28-29 March 2019)
Preliminary draft conference report *GEC(2019)6*
- b. Objective 1 – Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism**
- Follow-up to the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1) *Publication*
- c. Objective 2 - Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence**
- Exchange of views with Feride Acar, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)
Oral presentation
- d. Objective 3 - Ensure the equal access of women to justice**
- Exchange of views on the way forward

e. Objective 4 - Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making

- Follow-up to the 2017 analytical report on the third round of monitoring on the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making

f. Objective 5 - Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls

Factsheet on the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls *GEC(2018)12 revised*

g. Objective 6 - Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures

- Gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe activities

Oral presentation

h. Committee of Ministers request for information and comments on Recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

- (i) PACE Recommendation 2152 (2019) "Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment" and
- (ii) PACE Recommendation 2155 (2019) "The situation of migrants and refugees on the Greek islands: more needs to be done"

GEC(2019)3

i. 2019 annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

GEC(2018)5

VI. Co-operation activities

Exchange of views with Verena Taylor, Director of the Office of the Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes and presentation by Marta Pietrobelli, Council of Europe expert, on capacity building and co-operation projects making the implementation of the Istanbul Convention a reality for all women

Oral presentation

Report on "Capacity building and co-operation projects: making European standards on combating violence against women a reality"
Brochure – The Council of Europe's approach

VII. Thematic conference/discussions

- i. Women's Rights at the Crossroads: Strengthening International Co-operation to Close the Gap between Legal Frameworks and their Implementation - conference organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences and with the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers

Draft programme

- ii. Women, peace and security - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Cyprus and Republic of Moldova)
- iii. Gender equality backlash (Serbia)

VIII. Co-operation with other Council of Europe sectors

- Presentation by Clotilde Talleu, Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) of the Council of Europe/European Union joint project "ALL IN: Towards gender balance in sport" *Oral presentation*
- Presentation by Florence Mabileau, Pompidou Group – Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs *Oral presentation*

IX. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

- Exchange of views with Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director, UN Women, Europe and Central Asia *Oral presentation*
- Council of Europe's contribution to the Beijing+25 review process *GEC(2019)4*
- Council of the European Union - gender equality agenda:
 - o Romanian Presidency (January-June 2019)
 - o Finnish Presidency (July-December 2019)

X. Events attended by GEC members, experts and the Secretariat *GEC(2019)2*

- International Women's Day (8 March)

XI. Current and future activities at national and international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:
 - o Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (November 2018-May 2019)
 - o French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (May-November 2019)

XII. Other business

XIII. Proposals for the agenda of the next meeting

XIV. Dates of forthcoming GEC meetings

- 16th GEC meeting, Strasbourg 13-14-15 November 2019
- 17th GEC meeting, Strasbourg, 27-28-29 May 2020

XV. Adoption of the abridged report of the 15th GEC meeting (22-24 May 2019)

Calendar of forthcoming events and meetings

- 4-6 June 2019 – High Level Conference organised in the context of the Romanian Presidency to the EU Council “Towards a Europe free from violence against women and girls – The Istanbul Convention creating a new horizon and a paradigm change for all stakeholders”, Bucharest, Romania
- 12 June 2019 – Council of Europe side event on access to justice at the Victim Support Europe annual conference, Strasbourg, France
- 13 June 2019 - “Women’s Human Rights in the changing world of Work”, UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice (WGDAW) Geneva, Switzerland
- 21 June 2019 – International Conference “Boys in Care - Strengthening boys to pursue care occupations, Florence, Italy
- 25 June 2019 – Exchange of views between the GEC Chair and the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Equality and Anti-Discrimination, Strasbourg, France
- 28 June 2019 – Debate on the terms of reference for a report on sexist violence against women in local politics, Current Affairs Committee of the Congress, Stuttgart, Germany
- 5 July 2019 – Pre-conference to IAMCR Conference “Actualizing Section J through Transnational Collaborations: Making Gender Equality in the Media and ICT Visible in the 2030 Agenda”, Madrid, Spain

The GEC meeting will continue in Room G03 on 24 May 2019 with the thematic conference “Women’s Rights at the Crossroads: Strengthening International Co-operation to Close the Gap between Legal Frameworks and their Implementation”

Appendix II

Representatives/Représentant-e-s**Andorra/Andorre**

Josep ARENY
Mireia PORRAS GARCIA
Geraldine SASPULGAS

Armenia/Arménie

Ambassador/Ambassadeur Paruyr
HOVHANNISYAN
Karine SUJAYAN

Azerbaijan/Azerbaïdjan

Aytan BASHIROVA
Ulfat MACHANOV
Sabina MANAFOVA

Belgium/Belgique

Alexandra ADRIAENSSENS
Hélène DUCKER

**Bosnia and Herzegovina/Bosnie-
Herzégovine**

Samra FILIPOVIĆ HADŽIABDIĆ

Bulgaria/Bulgarie

Elena GYUROVA

Cyprus/Chypre

Iosifina ANTONIOU
Andri SAVVA

Czech Republic/République tchèque

Radan ŠAFAŘIK

Croatia/Croatie

Ankica VRKLJAN SUČIĆ

Denmark/Danemark

Kira APPEL (Vice-Chair)

Estonia/Estonie

Käthlin SANDER

Finland/Finlande

Päivi YLI-PIETILÄ

France

Alexis RINCKENBACH

Germany/Allemagne

Sophie BORKEL
Stephanie FRIEDRICH

Greece/Grèce

Christina AGORITSA

Hungary/Hongrie

Rita NAGYLAKI

Iceland/Islande

Rósa ERLINGSDÓTTIR

Ireland/Irlande

Éimear O'BRIEN

Latvia/Lettonie

Agnese GAILE

Lithuania/Lituanie

Aurelija MINEIKAITE

Malta/Malte

Renee LAIVIERA

**Republic of Moldova/République de
Moldova**

Ambassador/Ambassadrice Corina
CALUGARU
Rodica CIOCHINA
Lilia PASCAL

Monaco

Corinne MAGAIL-BOURDAS

Montenegro/Monténégro

Tatjana ANDELIC

Netherlands/Pays-Bas

Sacha DEKKER
Basim AL ALOUSI

North Macedonia/Macédoine du Nord

Elena GROZDANOVA

Norway/Norvège

Truls DESBANS
Anette HOEL
Johanne HAMMERSLAND

Poland/Pologne

Wiesława KOSTRZEWA-ZORBAS
Bogumila Anna WARCHALESKA

Portugal

Andreia LOURENÇO MARQUES

Romania/Roumanie

Monaliza CIRSTEA

Russian Federation/Fédération de Russie

Maria ASTAKHOVA
Olga OPANASENKO

San Marino/Saint-Marin

Sara TAMAGNINI

Serbia/Serbie

Ljiljana LONCAR

Slovak Republic/République Slovaque

Olga PIETRUCHOVA

Slovenia/Slovénie

Sara SLANA

Spain/Espagne

Ana ARRILLAGA ALDAMA

Sweden/Suède

Karin BENGTSON
Karin FLARUP

Switzerland/Suisse

Thomas THENTZ

Turkey/Turquie

Onur DİNÇER

United Kingdom/Royaume-Uni

Charles RAMSDEN (Chairperson)

* * *

Permanent Observers/Observateurs**Permanents****Holy See/Saint Siège**

Anne-Julie KERHUEL

Mexico/Mexique

Lorena ALVARADO QUEZADA

Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe/Délégation de l' Union Européenne auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Giulia CASELLI
Angela Maria PRATAVIERA
Elitsa TODOROVA

* * *

Non member states/Etats non membres**Tunisia/Tunisie**

Amel BEN ALI

* * *

**International Organisations/
Organisations Internationales**

Alia EL-YASSIR
Regional Director, UN Women, Europe
and Central Asia/Directrice régionale,
ONU-Femmes, Europe et Asie Centrale

* * *

Other

Marta PIETROBELLI
 Council of Europe expert on gender-based
 violence/Experte du Conseil de l'Europe
 sur la violence sexiste
 Italian Research Council/Conseil italien
 pour la recherche

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**Organs and committees of the Council of
 Europe/Organes et comités du Conseil de
 l'Europe**

**Commissioner for Human
 Rights/Commissaire aux droits de
 l'homme**
 Dunja MIJATOVIĆ

**Conference of International Non-
 governmental Organisations of the
 Council of Europe/Conférence des
 Organisations internationales non-
 gouvernementales du Conseil de l'Europe**
 Anne NEGRE
 Vice-President for Gender Equality /Vice-
 Présidente en charge de l'Égalité

**International Alliance of Women at the
 Council of Europe/Alliances
 Internationale pour les Femmes auprès du
 Conseil de l'Europe**
 Anje WIERSINGA

**Group of Experts on Action against
 Violence against Women and Domestic
 Violence/Groupe d'experts sur la lutte
 contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et
 la violence domestique (GREVIO)**

Feride ACAR
 President/Présidente

* * *

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 Direction générale de la Démocratie**
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¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations

Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

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Executive Secretary, Head of Division/
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Mediterranean Cooperation and Gender Aspect/Coopération Méditerranéenne et Dimension Genre

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