

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 4 April 2021

GEC(2021)3

**COMMITTEE FOR GENDER EQUALITY  
(GEC)**

**DRAFT REPORT  
on the place of boys and men in women's rights  
and gender equality policies**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The topic "men, boys and equality" may at first sight appear to be obvious, marked by the seal of "modernity" and the aspiration to enjoy an egalitarian society together in the future. Nevertheless, it is necessary to clarify the terms of the debate before embarking on the "how to". This lucid caution is shared by an increasing number of voices in research, civil society and institutions. This progress report on public policies and this clarification of the issues at stake are the subject of this report, commissioned by the Council of Europe's Commission for Gender Equality.

The stakes are high: mastering a still recent and fragile women's rights and gender equality agenda, and avoiding the many pitfalls in a context of growing threats to progress in these areas. Indeed, all too often, the reflection on boys and men in equality policies is partial, and understood as covering the sole question of boys and men as possible beneficiaries of equality policies, rather than according to a global and complete approach to power relations and the multiple positions that boys and men occupy in social relations, namely:

- place 1 - boys and men as barriers to equality,
- place 2 - boys and men as agents of change for equality,
- place 3 - boys and men as collateral victims of male domination.

Beyond being based on a sometimes partial diagnosis, the focus on boys and men can lead to less resources and attention for women's rights and for women's/feminist organisations, which are already underfunded, as well as through the relay - conscious or unconscious - of a narrative maintaining, in the name of "gender equality", that after the time of women would come the time of men. This narrative subtly questions the persistence of systemic male domination and sometimes draws on the rhetoric of masculinist movements, whose terrain and modus operandi are evolving rapidly and worryingly. The terrain is also undermined by an intense battle of words and concepts, as well as by misinformation and myths: "sacrificial fathers", "new fathers", "women's justice and schools against men", "female domination over men", "women's violence against men", "parental alienation syndrome", etc.

Explaining and promoting a holistic approach does not avoid the central issue of the responsibility of some men (whether they abuse, discriminate, or capture power) and the privileges enjoyed by the whole group of men, nor does it avoid the influence of masculinist groups, nor does it avoid examining how policies aimed at men can benefit women's equality and rights.

With regard to male agents of change for equality, and building on the lessons being learned by UN Women and others from its experience in this field, this study recommends focusing on structural policy changes and men in power. Breaking loose from the prison of gender norms and stereotypes to increase personal freedoms for women and men (at the individual level), must always go hand in hand with determined action to end the domination of the male group over the female group (at the structural level).

## I. INTRODUCTION

In order to respond to the desire of the Council of Europe's Commission for Gender Equality (GEC) to **deepen its reflection on the place of boys and men in gender equality policies**, Claire Guiraud and Romain Sabathier were asked to jointly elaborate, in a short period of time and in a short format, a "*study taking stock of activities and experiences at national and international level on the issue of men and the promotion of gender equality and providing guidelines for Council of Europe action*". This study is intended to inform this debate in view of the work of the GEC at its plenary session on 14-15 April 2021.

This work is in line with the objectives set out in the Council of Europe's Strategy for Gender Equality 2018-2023, which recognises the importance of involving men and boys in achieving gender equality, particularly in relation to the strategic objective of preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism.

By way of introduction, it is important to note that **the topic "Boys, Men and Equality" has become increasingly visible in recent years**: the literature on the subject is abundant and the initiatives claiming to be based on it are growing, from local to global levels.

**While the label is recent, questioning the place of boys and men in equality policies is as old as the place and responsibility of men in gender inequalities: it has always been and remains central.** And since the dawn of time, women and some men have rebelled against this unequal order. Women's rights and equality policies have always sought to rebalance the place of women and men in society, and have always 'integrated' boys and men (for example, recognition of violence in the penal code - to reduce men's hold on women's bodies; or equality education policies for girls and boys to combat stereotypes; introduction of parental and paternity leave).

**The emergence of this title, which is often wrongly perceived as autonomous and independent of policies for the promotion of women's rights, is the result of multiple factors, including**

- *Civil society* Some committed women who seek support from men, particularly in contexts where men control the overwhelming majority of resources and women may not yet have equal rights. In France, for example, between 1870 and the inter-war period, the feminist movement was 30% male, some of whom made their newspapers or other resources available (Jacquemart, 2015). During the women's liberation movements in several countries in the 1970s, fellow activists were invited by women to question, at their level, the reproduction of dominant male archetypes.<sup>1</sup> Then organisations developed whose specific object remained the contribution of men to the feminist movement: Promundo in 1977 in Brazil, a member of the international network MenEngage created in 2004, are examples of this.

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<sup>1</sup>In the United States, for example, Warren Thomas Farrell was invited to sit on NOW's governing bodies and to create a sub-group for men only. He is now considered one of the fathers of "men's studies", has broken away from the feminist movement and his works inspire many masculinist groups. See for example this press article: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-08-09-vw-22148-story.html>

- **Academic sphere** The development of a feminist critique in the field of research with the birth of the concept of "gender", aiming at the double objective of "taking women out of invisibility (...) but also opening the "black box" that constitutes this "social group of men", until then unspecified as a category of sex, dominant in this case".<sup>2</sup> In response, Men's studies developed, followed by Masculinities studies from the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>
- **Anti-feminisms**<sup>4</sup> The influence of masculinist discourses denouncing a 'crisis of masculinity'. The history of anti-feminisms and masculinisms is now documented, from its deadly episodes (the witch-hunt during the Renaissance in Europe or the masculinist attack in Toronto in 2018), to the evolution of its forms and strategies (for example, the online 'manosphere').
- **States and international organisations** Guidelines initiated by a few countries and relayed by international organisations. It was in Sweden and Norway that, for the first time, voluntary quotas within political parties were introduced to limit the over-occupation by men of certain positions of power. In 1993, Norway became the first country in the world to introduce paternity leave. In 2006, the Finnish Presidency of the European Union used the slogan "Gender equality needs men, men need gender equality". The issue of men in gender equality is now one of the four priorities of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Gender Equality Co-operation Programme, which <sup>5</sup>has resulted in funded activities in the so-called developing countries.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, faced with the diversity of discourses, practices and cross-influences, it seems essential to take the time to reflect on two fundamental questions: "boys, men and equality", why and how?

After clarifying the terms, identifying the objectives to be pursued and the risks to be avoided (Part I), a sample of operational initiatives is presented (Part II). Finally, seven recommendations are made to the Council of Europe and the member states to continue to take account of the place of boys and men in women's rights and gender equality policies.

### **The choice of words to say it**

The issue of the place of boys and men in equality policies is addressed through a wide variety of terms and expressions, namely the "involvement", "inclusion", "integration" or "engagement" of boys and men in equality policies; a reflection on the "place", "position", "role", "responsibility" of boys and men in equality policies; the "participation" or "contribution" of boys and men to equality policies; the need or expectation of boys and men to be "supportive", "unified", "active partners", "allies" of women's rights movements and equality policies or "agents of change".

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Yves Le Talec, *From Men's Studies to Masculinity Studies: from patriarchy to the plurality of masculinities* <https://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/5234>

<sup>3</sup> Hearn, J et al. 2012. "Hegemonic Masculinity and Beyond - 40 Years of Research in Sweden", *Men and Masculinities* April 2012 vol. 15 no. 1 31-55

<sup>4</sup> See p. 6 for terminological clarification of "anti-feminisms", "masculinisms" and "myth of the crisis of masculinity".

<sup>5</sup> <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1283606/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> For example, the international baseline survey on men and gender equality - IMAGES (2017) - conducted in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine, was initiated by UN Women, under the aegis of the UN Regional Programme "Men and Women for Gender Equality" funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The 2015-2020 Becoming Men survey, coordinated by the University of Van Amsterdam in the Netherlands and funded with €2 million from the European Union, focuses on men in six cities in South Africa and Tanzania. The MenEngage network, launched with financial support from the Norwegian and Swedish governments, seems to be particularly rooted in southern countries: launched in Nepal in 2007, symposia in Brazil (2009), India (2014) and Rwanda (2020), and its actions and members seem to come mainly from developing countries.

The diversity of these expressions is indicative of the fact that **the contours and meaning of this field seem to be understood in a variety of ways, sometimes even erroneously**. For example, talking about "including" or "integrating" boys and men in equality policies implies that they are illegitimately excluded today. As a preliminary point, it is therefore specified here that the notion of **"the place of boys and men in women's rights and gender equality policies"** seems to be the most relevant to deal with the issue in question in a general way.

### Some key concepts

The term **masculinity(ies)** covers *"behaviours, languages and practices (...) that are commonly associated with men and are therefore defined as unfeminine. (...) Masculinity varies across time, socio-cultural contexts and within groups and networks; and men express their masculinity in diverse and sometimes contradictory ways"* (Council of Europe)<sup>7</sup>. In the 1970s, the concept of **"hegemonic masculinity"** emerged, later clarified by the Australian sociologist R. W. Connell, *who envisages four types of masculinities: hegemonic, complicit, subordinate, and marginalised, thinking of gender "in relation to other social structures: class and race"*.<sup>8</sup>

The term **femininity(ies)** refers to *"different notions of what it means to be a woman, including ideals about women's characteristics, roles and identities, which are constructed on the basis of cultural, social and biological factors and change over time"* European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).<sup>9</sup>

**Feminism** is *"a movement to end sexism, gender exploitation and oppression and to achieve full gender equality in law and practice"* (Council of Europe).<sup>10</sup>

**Pro-feminism** generally refers to men who support the demands of feminist movements and ensure that they do not reproduce relations of domination by reflecting on and deconstructing their own behaviour and privilege.

**Masculinism, antifeminism, manosphere:** *"On the English side, the word "masculism" is most often used to designate patriarchal ideology (...). On the French-speaking side, from the 1990s onwards, the word is increasingly used to designate an antifeminist current (...) a conservative or reactionary social movement which claims that men suffer from an identity crisis because women in general, and feminists in particular, dominate society and its institutions."*<sup>11</sup> **The manosphere** refers to *"groups of people, mainly men, who are strongly opposed to feminism and gender equality in society. These transnational groups, active mainly online, feel that the strengthening of women's rights and equality comes at the expense of men."*<sup>12</sup> Originally, masculinist activists *"are disproportionately white, heterosexual, middle-class, affluent men between the ages of 35 and 60, and generally with a high level of education."*<sup>13</sup> The manosphere also includes younger men. These are the "masculinists 2.0".

Masculinists frequently mobilise the idea of a **crisis of masculinity**, which refers to the turmoil experienced by boys and men as a result of changing and contradictory societal norms. The crisis of

<sup>7</sup> Whitehead, S.M., Barret, F.J., *The Masculinities Reader*, Polity Press, 2004 cited by <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/gender-matters/masculinities#%2267587103%22:11>

<sup>8</sup> Delphine Moraldo, "Raewyn Connell, Masculinities. Social Issues of Hegemony", *Readings [Online], The Proceedings*, posted online 11 June 2014, accessed 01 March 2021. <http://journals.openedition.org/lectures/13753>

<sup>9</sup> EIGE, *Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus* <https://eige-europa-eu/thesaurus/terms/1129>

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe, *Feminism and women's movements* - <https://urlr.me/S1mHo>

<sup>11</sup> Francis Dupuis-Déri, *Le 'masculinisme': une histoire politique du mot*, *Recherches féministes*, Volume 22, Number 2, 2009, pp. 97-123, online 15 February 2010, accessed 01 March 2021 <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/rf/2009-v22-n2-rf3635/039213ar/>

<sup>12</sup> Breum Andersson, quoted in the Report of the 16th Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission meeting, November 2019 - <https://rm.coe.int/09000016809cb578>

<sup>13</sup> Mélissa Blais, in *Men, Masculinities and Intimate Partner Violence* (Routledge, 2020)

masculinity discourse is very old and comes back every time women gain autonomy<sup>14</sup>. According to social scientist Francis Dupuis-Déri, the "crisis of masculinity" is more *"a refusal on the part of men to accept equality and their reaffirmation of the importance of a hierarchical difference between the sexes"*<sup>15</sup>.

**This discourse is also echoed in movements/networks that have made "gender" their battle horse**, after abortion rights or the rights of LGBT+ people. These movements are particularly opposed to equality education in schools, fearing *"devirilisation"* and *"homosexual propaganda"* among boys.

The **cost of male domination** refers to the constraints induced for men by male domination: *"emotional and emotional retention, fear of losing face; investment in all forms of competition that give access to success, visibility, the esteem of peers, and material resources; a valorisation of risky behaviour and forms of aggressiveness"*.<sup>16</sup> It can be understood *"either as an objective cost for society or as a subjective cost borne by men"*.<sup>17</sup> **The notion of the 'costs' of masculinity is also central to masculinist rhetoric.** It should be remembered that the "costs" must be *"addressed within the framework of the relations of domination constituted by gender relations"*, because *"while learning a "masculinist" way of being in the world and a "masculinist" worldview may have secondary costs, it does, above all, allow for the enjoyment of incomparable privileges for the rest of life."*<sup>18</sup>

**Male privilege** refers to the set of advantages that come with being born and raised male, such as: *"easier access to material resources (power, money), more freedom (occupation of space, disposition of free time, ...), the possibility of having less responsibility and emotional involvement in the family sphere, more legitimacy (in conversations) and more security (less exposure to aggression, including sexual aggression"*.<sup>19</sup> Most men are not aware of these advantages, which are not chosen and are unspoken: *"If these men (...) perceive that it is men who put "obstacles in the way" of women, they do not deduce that it is thanks to this action of collective and individual domination that their own lives are improved and privileged"*.

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<sup>14</sup> Already in 195 BC in Rome, after one of the first recorded demonstrations of women in history, the consul Cato the Elder was concerned about the lack of authority of their husbands, insulted women as "street girls" and said: "if they become your equals, they will dominate you".

<sup>15</sup> The discourse of the "crisis of masculinity" as a refusal of gender equality: history of an antifeminist rhetoric - Cahiers du Genre 2012/1 (no 52) - published by L'Harmattan - <https://www.cairn.info/revue-cahiers-du-genre-2012-1-page-119.htm>

<sup>16</sup> M. Kaufman, *Cracking the Armour. Power, Pain and the Lives of Men*, Viking Press, 1993. Extract from *Managing the "costs of masculinity"? Mythical Inflation, Practical Issues* - Erik Neveu p. 111-139 <https://books.openedition.org/pur/67098?lang=fr#fn15>

<sup>17</sup> Clément Arambourou quoting Anne Verjus, in *Boys don't Cry! Les coûts de la domination masculine*. PUR, Rennes, 2012, 332 pages, *Dans Travail, genre et sociétés* 2014/1 (n° 31), pages 195 to 198 <https://urlr.me/H6YVv>

<sup>18</sup> Léo Thiers-Vidal, *De la masculinité à l'anti-masculinisme : penser les rapports sociaux de sexe à partir d'une position sociale oppressive*, in *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 2002/3 (Vol. 21), pages 71 to 83 <https://urlr.me/LB2zi>

<sup>19</sup> Peggy McIntosh with "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (1989) quoted by Ségolène Roy in *Mediapart "Le privilège masculin"*, online 4 December 2017 <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/segolene-roy/blog/041217/le-privilege-masculin-0>

## II. FRAMING OF THE "BOYS, MEN AND EQUALITY" FIELD

In view of the great diversity of activities that can fall within the field of "boys, men and equality", it seems necessary to clarify the reasons for these actions (why) and their objectives (for what), in order to reveal the issues at stake and point out possible pitfalls.

### a) A place or places for boys and men?

The analysis of initiatives and discourses makes it possible **to identify three 'places'** that boys and men occupy in social relations and in equality policies:

1. **Men as obstacles to equality, through their individual behaviour** (for example, when they are abusive or do not take their share of unpaid work) or collective behaviour (when they organise to resist progress towards gender equality, such as anti-female movements). or when they do not take their share of unpaid work) or **collectively** (when they organise themselves to resist progress towards gender equality, such as anti-feminist movements, including masculinist or anti-gender groups).
2. **Men as agents of change**, who **mobilise for equality, either individually** (by reflecting on their behaviour, their privileges and the transformation of gender norms and masculinities) **or collectively** (by investing in feminist organisations) with a strategic stake in the **'men of power'** who are in a position to have a multiplied impact.

These first two 'families' of interventions actually constitute a continuum of actions: any man who is not an obstacle is on the way to becoming an agent of change towards equality. Thus, two reasons for action follow:

- Rationale #1 - Men's individual and collective behaviour is crucial to the full realisation of girls' and women's rights and gender equality: they must go from being obstacles to equality to being agents of it, and men in positions of power have a particular responsibility in this respect.
  - Rationale #2 - Masculinist movements threaten progress.
3. Some boys and men as **"collateral victims"** of the gender system and stereotypes associated with masculinity (cost of male domination), Whether it is **violence suffered by other men** (verbal, physical or sexual violence, including incestuous violence, particularly against boys, gay or trans men, or boys and men who do not conform to gender stereotypes) **or the weight of gender norms that can also trap and limit men** by leading, for example, to a greater propensity for risky behaviour, less use of preventive health care, disinvestment in school, etc.

From this observation comes a new reason for action:

- Rationale #3: Boys and men who have either a short-term or long-term interest in equality and the end of male dominance.

## b) Reasons and objectives of public action

Reason #1 - Men's individual and collective behaviour is crucial for the full realisation of girls' and women's rights and gender equality: they must go from being obstacles to equality to being agents of it, and men in positions of power have a particular responsibility in this regard.

- **Facts and figures:** As stated in the Council of Europe's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2018-2023, women still face gross inequalities - especially in unpaid work - and massive gender-based violence. In this respect, we cannot avoid asking **what men do - or do not do - and the impact of these behaviours on women's lives.**
  - **Violence** Since the age of 15, **one in five women** (22%) who are or have been involved in a relationship with a partner have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Of the women concerned, **99.5%** indicated<sup>20</sup> **that it was a male partner**. Furthermore, when the respondents stated that they had been sexually abused since the age of 15 by a perpetrator outside the couple, **97% of the perpetrators were men. 1 in 2 women killed worldwide** in 2012 was killed by a partner or family member.<sup>21</sup>
  - **Sharing of care occupations** Overall in Europe, the proportion of men in all care occupations is around 10% to 20% of the workforce%.<sup>22</sup>
  - **Sharing of paid and unpaid work** In the European Union (EU), **men spend 17 hours a week less than women in unpaid work** (9 hours compared to 26 hours), and 7 hours more than women in paid work (33 hours compared to 40 hours) and **earn on average 16% more** than women per hour for the same work.<sup>23</sup>

These figures are an essential prerequisite to be recalled because they have been the basis for the feminist movement and policies for real equality between women and men for several centuries, and in particular in recent decades. The systemic, and therefore political, nature of inequalities unfavourable to women as women is still far from being understood and accepted by the general population and their representatives.

### "New fathers' or 'sacrificial fathers': getting back to the facts

The term "*new fathers*" refers to fathers who are involved in their family life and suggests that a revolution has taken place compared to previous generations. Despite the progress, however, the figures show that equality is still far from being achieved in this area.

The expression "*sacrificed fathers*", first used by masculinist organisations claiming to be "fathers' rights", refers to fathers whose right to custody of their children is illegitimately withdrawn, due to a justice system that is favourable to mothers, or to the manipulation of mothers, sometimes referring to a "*parental alienation syndrome*". In reality, the vast majority of fathers do not request alternating custody of their children, and when they do, they obtain it in the overwhelming majority of cases.<sup>24</sup> As for the allegation of "*parental alienation syndrome*", which aims to discredit the word of the mother, exceptionally the father or the child, it is a concept criticised by the scientific community, which does not recognise it (it is

<sup>20</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012* <https://urlr.me/8Y7Oy> - page 27.

<sup>21</sup> Spotlight Initiative, UN & EU

<sup>22</sup> Working paper 3rd International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities (ICMEO) 2016 - <https://urlr.me/RrcD4>

<sup>23</sup> Working note 3rd ICMEO conference 2016 - <https://urlr.me/RrcD4>

<sup>24</sup> In France, 18.8% of fathers apply for alternating residence and 17.3% of fathers actually obtain it.

not recognised by the DSM5 Manual of the American Psychiatric Association,<sup>25</sup> nor by the World Health Organisation). Conversely, research shows that false allegations of child abuse or neglect are marginal.<sup>26</sup>

The question of paternal authority is at the root of patriarchy and legal developments have led to parental equality for both parents. We should not underestimate the resistance that this may provoke.

Conversely, **through their individual or collective behaviour, men can contribute to change and become allies** in solidarity with women's movements and equality policies. In this respect, men holding power have a particular responsibility, such as politicians, business leaders, editors, magistrates or police officers, and religious leaders, for example. Furthermore, from a strategic point of view, identifying models of committed men can facilitate the activation of other men - although care must be taken not to endorse the idea that a man's word has more credibility than that of women.

- **Power Sharing** 83% of the **top political positions in Europe are held by men** (heads of state and government, heads of regional governments, mayors - Council of Europe, 2017). 95% of top positions in the technology sector are held by men.<sup>27</sup> 94% of the top 100 media companies are headed by men.<sup>28</sup>

➤ **Policy objectives:** In order to support changes in men's individual and collective behaviour towards the full realisation of girls' and women's rights and gender equality, equality policies should:

*To remove the obstacles...*

- Promote and enforce laws, including international instruments such as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) that prohibit violence and punish perpetrators to reduce impunity; better analyse the backgrounds and profiles of perpetrators; change these boys and men, including to better prevent recidivism; identify and strengthen resources and knowledge to promote positive behavioural change.
- Promote real incentive or even binding mechanisms (for example, shared childcare leave) for a real sharing of unpaid domestic and care work, including the associated mental burden.
- Promote, or even impose, real power sharing (for example, quotas).

*... and support mobilisation for change :*

- Educate for equality and in particular promote respect for consent from an early age; provide positive, diverse and non-stereotypical role models.

<sup>25</sup> Patrizia Romito and Micaela Crisma <https://www.cairn.info/revue-empan-2009-1-page-31.html>

<sup>26</sup> Hélène Romano, *Suspicion d'abus sexuel chez les enfants de moins de quatre ans, À propos des fausses allégations* In *Le Journal des psychologues* 2006/5 (No. 238), pages 40 to 44 <https://www.cairn.info/revue-le-journal-des-psychologues-2006-5-page-40.htm>

<sup>27</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers, cited by Jessie Smith, *A glass ceiling in male-dominated Big Tech is keeping innovating women from making their mark*, published online 13 November 2019 <https://urlr.me/b5y1P>

<sup>28</sup> Nordicom citing Institut für Medien- und Kommunikationspolitik, in *"The media is a male business"*, online 26 February 2018 <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/latest/news/media-male-business>

- Promote a discourse of responsibility towards men - especially those in positions of power, an awareness of the privileges they consciously or unconsciously enjoy.
- Promote as a man a supportive discourse towards feminist and women's rights movements and towards equality policies; contribute as a man to deconstruct preconceived ideas and caricatures about feminist movements and to decipher masculinist discourses and their influences in the public debate (the idea of a crisis of masculinity for example).
- Rejecting single-sex and/or unequal power frameworks ("*boys club*") as men; breaking sexist complicity with other men; speaking out against violence; supporting victims.
- Put its power at the service of the egalitarian transition, by allocating the necessary resources.

### Transforming or deconstructing masculinity(ies)?<sup>29</sup>

While it is useful to understand how the norms and injunctions associated with women and men are changing, **equality policies should focus on deconstructing and rolling back these norms and injunctions and support the idea that there is no inherent female or male identity.**

The Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell, who developed the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', has herself made it clear that this is a tool for analysis, not for change that might lead to the transformation of masculinity(ies). In the same vein, a new field of research is developing within gender studies, *Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM)*. It is also interesting to note that while the field of masculinities studies has developed considerably over the last few decades, in the wake of *women's studies* which have become *gender studies*, 'femininities' per se are not the subject of research.

### Reason #2 - Masculinist movements threaten progress

- **Facts and figures: While individual men's behaviour can sometimes unconsciously stand in the way of equality, there are groups of men who voluntarily organise themselves to resist the march towards equality, sometimes masking their actions: these are the masculinists.**

Despite the lack of figures to measure the weight and influence of masculinist organisations, academic research and the testimonies of associations attest to the fact that they continue to gain ground, especially over the last ten years. Research shows that they have a great capacity to adapt to conceptual and societal changes in order to develop their discourse, terrain and operating methods. From activism in the field, masculinists are now operating on the web. From being political activists, they now recruit social workers, educators and researchers. They have gone from demanding "fathers' rights" to tackling broader issues such as education and men's health. Finally, they are reappropriating the notion of intersectionality to recruit outside their original audience, among non-white and non-heterosexual men, for example. Whether they contribute to the dissemination of discourses aimed at confusing the diagnosis

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<sup>29</sup> See also box on key concepts.

of inequality or organise more violent actions against feminists and women, masculinist movements threaten women and progress towards equality.

- **Policy objectives:** In order to counter the masculinist movements that threaten the progress made, equality policies must:
  - Better decipher these oppositions and reactions in order to limit their power to recruit, to cause harm and to better prevent their violence.
  - Recognise masculinist violence as a form of terrorism and prevent alliances or convergences with other radical and violent movements (for example, links with far-right, white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups).

### Reason #3 - Boys and men who experience collateral effects of male dominance may have an interest in equality.

- **Facts and figures:** Expressions of male dominance over boys can take the following forms:
  - **Sexual violence against boys** 27% of girls and 14% of boys worldwide have experienced sexual violence.<sup>30</sup> The prevalence of sexual assault is 14%<sup>31</sup> among girls and 6% among boys in Europe.<sup>32</sup>
  - **Violence against men** Research converges on the idea that the use of violence by men is an important component of the making of 'real men', whether it is used against women to subordinate them, or whether it is used against other men, particularly young men and men from marginalised groups (migrants, GBT+ men, men from ethnic and religious minorities, homeless and men with disabilities) or those who do not conform to dominant gender norms.<sup>33</sup> Boys and men in non-traditional male roles, occupations and sports may also be subject to sexist language and behaviour.<sup>34</sup>
  - **Violence against gay, bisexual, transgender boys and men** On average in the EU, 47% of LGBT+ people have felt discriminated against or harassed in the past 12 months because of their sexual orientation (55% of lesbian women, 45% of gay men, 46% of transgender people).<sup>35</sup> A quarter (26%) have been assaulted or threatened with violence at home or elsewhere in the last five years.

These figures are indicative of the inherent link between male dominance and violence against LGBT+ people, as *"patriarchy implies the acceptance of fundamental ideas about the nature and value of women, their potential and their roles - including heterosexual norms of womanhood and motherhood. (...) Heteronormative societies impose a very specific way of*

<sup>30</sup> Andrews G et al. Child sexual abuse. In: Ezzati M, et al, eds. Comparative quantification of health risks: global and regional burden of disease attributable to selected major risk factors. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Rapport de situation mondial sur la prévention de la violence contre les enfants 2020 13 citing Moody G, Cannings-John R, Hood K, Kemp A, Robling M. Establishing the international prevalence of self-reported child maltreatment: a systematic review by maltreatment type and gender. BMC Public Health. 10 October 2018;18(1):1164.

<sup>32</sup> For the record, in the wake of #MeToo, #MeTooGay reported in February 2021 in France a wave of testimonies of sexual violence against gay men in the context of a broader debate around incest and sexual violence in France.

<sup>33</sup> EU, Role of men in gender-equality, 2013, p. 106 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f6f90d59-ac4f-442f-be9b-32c3bd36eaf1>

<sup>34</sup> In France, for example, 45% of male managers at work have already heard remarks related to sexism directed at them or a male colleague, such as "he's too nice, to do this job you need to have some", "I need real men, I need real men, with stomachs and hearts", "with generation Y, we don't get anything out of boys", "he's not good at it, he's a woman", "he's a father, you can't count on him" (LH2-CSEP survey, conducted in 2013, published in 2015).

<sup>35</sup> EU LGBT survey, European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey, 2013 - <https://urlr.me/3WJVW>

*understanding the roles of men and women. (...) Such assumptions and norms lead to direct or indirect discrimination of LGBT+ persons in the public sphere, limiting their access to - or even denying them access to - various services.<sup>36</sup>*

### **Battered men: myth or reality? Data on male victims of intimate partner violence: questionable methodologies and analytical frameworks**

**Studies show** that women and men play an almost equal role in intimate partner violence, supporting the idea that women's violence against men is invisible. These studies are mainly based on **the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)**.<sup>37</sup> **These studies have been widely criticised** by researchers and experts. **The researchers<sup>38</sup>** point out in particular: a questionable definition of violence (confusion with the notion of conflict, no measurement of the intensity of the acts recorded or the nature of the injuries caused) (Cavalin, 2013); a failure to take into account the recurrence of attacks; a failure to define the context of violence (legitimate defence, for example) (Lapierre & Côté, 2014); a failure to take into account the reality of experiences, which varies greatly according to gender when the responses are probed (Brown & Lefaucheur, 2012).

**The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) also raises doubts about the extent to which men are abused by their wives.** The evaluation reports on Belgium (2020), Denmark (2017) and the Netherlands (2020) reveal two difficulties: GREVIO notes, on the one hand, a lack of gender-based analysis and sex-disaggregated data on intimate partner violence in these countries (in Belgium, for example, the gender of victims is not yet included in police data on deaths in couples), and on the other hand, population surveys on intimate partner violence are based on a supposedly 'gender-neutral' definition of 'interpersonal violence'.<sup>39</sup>

**The questioning of specifically male violence and the idea of a reciprocity of violence in couples is at the heart of masculinist discourse,** fuelling the idea that men have been neglected or even wronged by policies and that, basically, women's rights have become superior to those of men. **Therefore, the recognition of the existence (marginal and not systemic) of violence committed by women against their partners should not lead to the qualification of such violence as 'gender violence' and to questioning the legitimacy of the institutional resources conquered by the feminist movements, nor should it lead to an in-depth revision of public policies to combat male violence.**

<sup>36</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender equality and gender mainstreaming* - <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/gender-equality-and-gender-mainstreaming>

<sup>37</sup> Tool originally developed in 1971 by the Family Violence Research Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire (USA)

<sup>38</sup> Lucie Jouvét-Légrand, "Domestic violence: a rise in the masculinist trend?", *SociologieS [En ligne], Débats, Penser les inégalités*, online 14 April 2018, accessed 01 March 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/6620>

<sup>39</sup> On the Netherlands, GREVIO states that it is "concerned that, overall, the gender-neutral approach to data collection creates particular difficulties in understanding the different nature and severity of violence against women, the gender dimension of the majority of domestic violence in the Netherlands and the presentation of the findings of this data to the public".

- **Mental health and suicide** Worldwide, **suicide rates are about twice as high for men as for women** (6.3 deaths per 100,000 for women, 13.9 per 100,000 for men).

### Men's suicide, women's fault?

As Francis Dupuy-Déri accurately analyses in his book *"La crise de la masculinité - Autopsie d'un mythe tenace"* (*The crisis of masculinity - autopsy of a tenacious myth*), the mobilisation of the apparent gender inequality in the face of suicide in the public debate has been widely put forward by the masculinist movements claiming in particular the "fathers' rights", attributing the higher rate of male suicides to the increase in divorces and the resulting withdrawal of custody of the children.

However, the gap between the suicide rates of women and men is historically stable and does not correlate with the place of women in societies; moreover, there is a wide variation in this gap across the world and it is sometimes reversed.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, it should be remembered that women have more suicidal thoughts than men and make more suicide attempts, but use less lethal means to end their lives. **The instrumentalisation of suicide prevention policies by masculinist movements does not invalidate the legitimacy of these policies.** While research shows that the primary factors in suicide are economic crises and poverty, racism, homophobia and transphobia (for example, one in three young transgender people in Canada has seriously considered suicide)<sup>41</sup>, Francis Dupuy-Déri adds that *"the conventional representation of an active, strong, autonomous and always winning man makes men more vulnerable to personal failure - professional, family, etc. - and limits their willingness to ask for help."* Thus, in many countries **the contribution of gender and masculinities studies is now rightly taken into account in an integrated approach to equality in public health.**

- **Education** In 2012,<sup>42</sup> 14% of boys and 9% of girls in OECD countries did not reach the PISA benchmark proficiency level in all three subjects: reading, mathematics and science. Since 2000, the gaps between girls and boys have narrowed, but girls continue to outperform boys in reading and boys continue to outperform in mathematics and to be over-represented among the top performers. In contrast, boys are more likely to repeat a grade or drop out of school.<sup>43</sup> In 2019 in the EU, 11.9% of men and 8.4% of women aged 18-24 left the education system with at most, lower secondary education.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The suicide rate is estimated to be even higher among women in, for example, Bangladesh, China, Lesotho, Morocco and Myanmar (Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation-IHME).

<sup>41</sup> Veale, J., Saewyc, E., Frohard-Dourlent, H., Dobson, S., Clark, B. and the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey Research Group. (2015), cited in <https://urlr.me/7jSC1>

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2015\\_eag-2015-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2015_eag-2015-en)

<sup>43</sup> EU Commission; Eurydice (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency), *Gender differences in educational outcomes: study on the measures taken and the current situation in Europe*, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2010, Brussels, <https://urlz.fr/f24m>

<sup>44</sup> OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2015 <https://urlz.fr/f24o>

### **A school more unfavourable to boys?**

Many books or newspaper articles defend the idea that the discrepancies between girls and boys at school are the result of a school that is too 'feminine', a consequence of feminist struggles, and that does not meet the needs of boys (according to a conception of masculinity associated with a supposedly more active and aggressive nature).

In reality, the discrepancies between girls and boys at school predate the conquest of women's rights and have been established since the beginning of the 20th century. Furthermore, despite a profession composed mainly of women, schools are not yet free of sexism (for example, school textbooks, sometimes unconscious practices such as less encouragement for girls, vertical segregation of jobs, etc.). Finally, studies show that social origin is much more decisive than gender in the gaps between pupils (the gaps between girls and boys from privileged classes are almost zero).

Above all, the greater success of girls at school is not reflected in the labour market and, more broadly, in terms of economic independence. The orientation of girls and boys is still very much imbued with stereotypes. Girls often end up in the least professionally rewarding fields and the effects of dropping out of school on professional integration are much stronger for girls than for boys.

- **Policy objectives:** Since boys and men who suffer collateral effects of male domination may have an interest in equality, equality policies should:
  - Mobilise gender studies to better analyse the roots of violence and other pressures against men and between men, including the link between sexism and other relations of domination such as homophobia or racism.
  - Support the development of gender mainstreaming in all sectoral policies and the training of public policy professionals in gender and equality issues.

### **c) Points to watch out for**

Putting a 'spotlight' on boys and men raises inherent pitfalls and threats that should not be underestimated:

- **#1 - A focus on boys and men should not render invisible or detract from a comprehensive analysis of sex/gender relations and male domination, as enshrined in international standards**

**Making visible the issue of the place of boys and men in equality policies requires a double lucidity:**

- **On the one hand, there is a need to be clear about the responsibilities of some men (whether they abuse, discriminate, or capture power) and about the privileges enjoyed by all men.** Without seeking to make all men feel guilty or to deny the 'cost' of male domination for some, it would be neither fair nor honest to want to 'do more' for boys and men in equality policies without first addressing men's responsibility to change the situation. And while this exercise is salutary, it is sometimes

uncomfortable, for both women and men, for whom it requires going beyond the injunctions to listen, empathise and seek consensus. Faced with a reality that is difficult to say or to hear, it is then tempting to minimise or smooth out one's speech.

- **On the other hand, lucidity on the influences of masculinist discourses** that lead to a weakening of the credibility of equality policies and feminist discourses.

**Making the issue of the place of boys and men visible in equality policies means not losing sight of the course set by international standards** (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), European treaties, binding and non-binding Council of Europe standards, etc.): improving the lives of women and girls to achieve equality.

Therefore, in order to find their place in equality policies, interventions that insist on the "cost" of male domination should be subject to in-depth vigilance and *ultimately* contribute to the **strengthening of girls' and women's effective rights**, their power to act and their freedom. **Equality policies require more than questioning masculinity, in itself, for itself and for men.**

#### **An illuminating feedback: UN Women's turnaround**

After widely supporting the value of working extensively with men in gender equality programmes, UN Women is now rethinking its approach and seems to be preparing to take a step backwards.

In the November 2020 publication "*Work with men and boys for gender equality: A review of field formation, the evidence base and future directions*", the authors note that "*concerns about evaluation (...) go well beyond the field of 'men for gender equality', but are of particular importance in the field, given the legitimate questions posed about the direction of resources for anti-patriarchal work towards those who, on the face of it, are the clearest beneficiaries of patriarchy. Behind the "what works?" the fundamental question is: "is it worth it?"*". The UN Women representative interviewed, Victoria Diaz-Garcia, confirmed that "*UN Women is at a turning point in its focus on men and boys, learning from the lessons of recent years. We need to remember our mandate as a UN agency dedicated to women's equality and empowerment*", adding that "*we often hear the idea that 'gender equality is also good for men'. This is right and proper, but it must go hand in hand with being clear about the priority given to the rights of women and girls and the responsibility of men and boys to act to establish an equal relationship with women and girls to achieve equality for all.*"<sup>45</sup>

- **#2 - Focusing on boys and men cannot be done without analysis based on agreed definitions and gender research**

The development over the last fifty years of gender studies and scientifically robust quantitative and qualitative data - initially promoted by women's/feminist associations and later relayed by universities and institutions - has been key to the development of equality

<sup>45</sup> *UN women is at a turning point in its orientation towards working with men and boys, learning the lessons of the past years. We must remember our mandate as the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. She added that "we often hear the idea that "gender equality is good for men too". This is fair and relevant, but it must go hand in hand with being clear about the priority given to the rights of women and girls and the responsibility of men and boys to establish equal relationships with women and girls so that gender equality can be achieved for all".*

policies, making it possible to objectify an unequal state of affairs while measuring the progress made.

It appears that **some of the interventions targeting boys and men are based on diagnoses that are contradicted by gendered data and gender research**, either because they use questionable definitions - and incidentally not recognised by international texts (for example, data on domestic violence), or because they are used with bias - thus obscuring the overall analysis of inequalities (for example, data on suicide or school disinvestment by boys).

- **#3 - Focusing on boys and men should not lead to weakening women's/feminist organisations working for women's rights and equality through increased competition with already weak funding, in terms of visibility or practices (threat of non-mixing)**

The emphasis on the 'boys and men' agenda can also lead to the undermining of feminist organisations in several ways:

**- A risk of diverting already low levels of funding to interventions labelled "boys and men".** The experts interviewed and UN Women<sup>46</sup> point to a risk of increased competition for funding in a constrained or even declining financial context (particularly in the South). To counter this risk, MenEngage's advocacy includes the need to: increase funding for equality policies; not make funding for feminist organisations whose main focus is on women and girls conditional on the development of actions targeting boys and men. MenEngage also insists on the need for dialogue with the feminist organisations to which it considers itself accountable. The development of new initiatives targeting boys and men cannot therefore be done without additional and new funding - although it is questionable who should be the priority beneficiaries of this 'new' funding. On the other hand, initiatives aimed at redressing the "cost" of male domination (men's mental health, etc.), whose impact on women's and girls' rights is not obvious, should be fully integrated into sectoral policies as part of the integrated approach to equality (health policies, education policies, etc.).

**- A risk of questioning the non-mixed nature of some organisations or actions, and the hidden costs to organisations.** Non-mixed gender for women can be a necessary step towards gender equality, as a space for pooling and sharing experiences as well as safe and secure spaces. On the other hand, non-mixing between men is most often a matter of capturing power between peers (boys' club), the ultimate objective of which is not gender equality and without the need to advocate non-mixing. The discourse supporting the necessary "involvement" of men can lead to the weakening of organisations that carry out single-sex activities. This discourse is all the more problematic as the majority of feminist organisations are mixed and open to volunteers of all sexes.

A risk of **diversion of recognition and visibility of women's organisations and initiatives.** In many cases, what men say still gets more validation and visibility. To counter this bias, MenEngage is committed, for example, to refusing to act as a keynote speaker.

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<sup>46</sup> See list of interviewees in Appendix I to this report and the above-mentioned UN Women report "Work with men and boys for gender equality: A review of field training, the evidence base and future directions".

### **Identify and deconstruct myths, misconceptions and caricatures**

The debates on the place of boys and men in equality policies are littered with many preconceived ideas, sometimes relayed without awareness of their origins or malice, but which should be identified because they weaken the foundations of action in favour of equality.

**Equality would be good for everyone, "win-win"** and men would have "everything to gain". While it is true that in the medium term and at the level of society as a whole, equality is a factor of social cohesion and well-being, and while it is also true that some men have something to gain from a relaxation of gender-related injunctions and diktats, it is important to be aware that progress towards equality entails a reduction in the privileges mentioned above for men. To suggest that men have nothing to lose is therefore an incomplete analysis of power relations and a form of dishonesty towards men in particular.

**Equality is said to be "already here" and the time of women's rights is said to be "over", so working with boys and men is said to be "innovative"**. While the figures show that so-called "women's rights" policies have not yet had their full effect, it seems ever more urgent to move on to the next stage. This has been reflected, for example, in increasingly rare references to the term 'women's rights'. While these changes in terminology may have been made for understandable reasons, several of the people and institutions interviewed called for not "jumping the gun" and for making both women's rights and the goal of gender equality visible.

**Too much would be done for women, too many resources for equality.** Studies on the financing of equality policies show that budgets remain far below what is needed and minimal in relation to total public investment. For example, only 5% of development aid targeted gender equality as a primary objective in 2012-2013.<sup>47</sup> For investment in women's economic empowerment, the percentage was even lower (2%). This financial underinvestment leads to a strong precariousness of the vast majority of organisations - associative, public or private - in charge of defining, implementing, supporting or evaluating women's rights and gender equality policies.

**Feminist organisations are said to be exclusionary, aggressive, "anti-male" and to be waging a "war of the sexes"** to replace one domination with another. This hackneyed argument cannot dismiss the fact that no current claims this reversal, and that "if feminism has never killed anyone, machismo kills every day" as the author Benoîte Groult said. Even if some activities are sometimes conducted on a non-mixed basis, the doors of the vast majority of organisations promoting women's rights and equality are open to men who do not face any objective obstacle to getting involved. In France, for example, men have always had a place in the feminist movement, and the proportion has been stable since the interwar period, at around 15%.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> According to the OECD's development assistance evaluation reports.

<sup>48</sup> Jacquemard Alban, *Les hommes dans les mouvements féministes. Socio-history of an unlikely commitment*, Rennes, PUR, 2015.

### III. OPERATIONAL MAPPING

Four groups of initiatives can be identified according to the objective pursued: (1) developing scientific data and the normative and political framework; (2) targeting boys and men as obstacles to women's rights and gender equality; (3) as agents of change; or (4) as collateral victims of male domination. The examples cited illustrate the variety of the repertoire of actions, without prioritising them and even less validating them as "good practices".<sup>49</sup>

#### a) Initiatives aimed at developing a scientifically informed diagnosis and a shared normative and political framework

##### Produce data, studies, reports

At national level, statistical data disaggregated by gender are still often not available. This is even more true at European and local levels, and for data that cross-reference the gender dimension with other variables (age, social class, origin, sexual orientation, disability status, territory, etc.).

Furthermore, great care must be taken with the methodology used to produce and analyse these data. The case of data on male victims of intimate partner violence is revealing (see p. 13).

Finally, the lack of objectivity is also reflected in the fact that most programmes and initiatives in the field of boys and men and gender equality have not yet been subject to robust impact studies.<sup>50</sup>

To address the lack of available and comparable data, the OECD published in February 2021 the report "*Man Enough? Measuring Masculine Norms to Promote Women's Empowerment*". The report provides a **list of indicators to measure changes in 10 norms of "restrictive masculinities"** (5 norms related to the economic and political spheres, 5 to the private sphere). This work is part of the existing Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), which measures barriers to the effectiveness of women's rights in general. This is an important operational contribution to guide government efforts to develop and harmonise data systems and approaches based on measurable and comparable evidence over time<sup>51</sup>.

**The European Commission published in 2012 the report "*The role of men in gender equality: European strategies and perspectives*".** The report provides comparative data between women and men in various key areas (education, work, care, health, violence, men's participation in equality policies), including summary country sheets. The report mentions the costs of traditional gender roles on boys and men, while reiterating the crucial importance of not losing sight of the goal of gender equality and rejecting the antifeminist perspective of "gender discrimination" and "men's rights".

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<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 2 for methodology and sources of information.

<sup>50</sup> Greig & Flood, UN Women Discussion paper, 2020, p.33

<sup>51</sup> See: [OECD iLibrary | Man Enough? Measuring Masculine Norms to Promote Women's Empowerment \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](https://oecd-ilibrary.org/)

Co-ordinated by **UN Women and the NGO Promundo, the IMAGES study<sup>52</sup>**- entitled "**Understanding Masculinities**" (2017) - is an international reference. Based on the methodology of the IMAGES study, a similar study was conducted in Georgia with the support of UNDP and UNFPA: "Men, Women, and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes" (2019).

At the Scandinavian level, a **report by the Nordic Council of Ministers co-ordinated by the NGO Promundo entitled "State of Nordic Fathers" (2019)** reports on the results of a survey of 7,515 women and men, 85% of whom were parents and a majority of whom had taken at least two weeks of parental leave.

#### **Key findings from the State of Nordic Fathers Report (2019)**

While fathers and mothers agree on the importance of equally shared parental leave, fathers believe that childcare responsibilities are indeed shared equally between the two parents, while mothers believe that this is not the case.

Fathers who take the longest parental leave are the least likely to rely on a female partner to do most of the care work, the least likely to adhere to traditional norms of masculinity, and also the most likely to seek information about parenting from books, doctors, friends or partners.

When childcare is shared equally, fathers and mothers are more satisfied with their relationship as a couple, fathers are more satisfied with their role as parents and mothers are more satisfied with their work.

Fathers who do not take paternity leave or short leave are the most likely to say that their relationships with colleagues or managers would deteriorate if they took longer parental leave. Finally, the longer a father has been on parental leave, the more he wants to make changes in his working life to care for his children.

In **Lithuania**, too, the government commissioned a study measuring men's attitudes to life-time measures. In **Serbia**, an **analysis of the economic value of unpaid care work** was conducted.<sup>53</sup> Among other things, the analysis shows that the total value of unpaid care work is estimated at 21.5% of Serbian GDP compared to 9% worldwide (14.9% of GDP from women's unpaid care work and 6.6% of GDP from men's unpaid care work).

In **France**, the legal mission to produce an "**Annual Report on the State of Sexism**" is entrusted to the High Council for Equality between Women and Men. The 2020 edition informs, for example, that in France, while women still do 80% of domestic tasks, 56% of the population believes that domestic equality has been achieved (this rises to 63% for men). A strong illusion of equality persists.

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<sup>52</sup> [Understanding masculinities, results from the International Men and Gender Equality Study in the Middle East and North Africa | UN Women - Headquarters.](#)

<sup>53</sup> With the support of UN Women and the United Kingdom Good Governance Fund.

### Organise time for reflection and exchange

The ICMEO - **International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities** - conference cycle was launched and co-organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers and EIGE from 2012.<sup>54</sup> At the civil society level, the MenEngage Alliance has organised three **international symposia since its creation**.

### Paying attention to language and communication

In general, many developments have led to the replacement of the neuter masculine by the double-flexion to make visible the masculine and feminine or to the use of epicene terms (for example, "*humankind*" instead of "*mankind*"). Conversely, and in a sign of attention to boys and men, in **Norway**, for example, the title of *helsesøster* (*health sister* in English, corresponding to the title of school nurse in French) is now replaced by a gender-neutral title (*helsesykepleier*). The effect is twofold: to recruit more men to the profession and to increase the proportion of boys using the health service.

## b) Initiatives targeting boys and men as barriers to women's rights and gender equality

These initiatives can aim to: prevent the rise of active resistance as women's autonomy and freedom increase; limit the negative consequences of such resistance; and, finally, positively transform reluctant boys and men into allies who promote and practice equality.

### Sharing responsibilities and resources in the public and private spheres

"We will not see gender equality achieved unless men take on 50% of the domestic and parental work". Gary Barker, CEO of Promundo, Co-founder of MenEngage Alliance.

The sharing of unpaid care work is still far from gender-neutral, even in the countries singled out as the most advanced.<sup>55</sup> The Working Paper for the 3rd ICMEO conference entitled "Caring masculinities" points out that in order to achieve equal sharing of care "*a policy of 'individual freedom of choice' does not work, if it does not first create the necessary conditions (for example, in the form of equal pay) for the effective implementation of this freedom of choice*". Thus, more and more member states are adopting legal and structural reforms.

<sup>54</sup> The conferences were hosted successively by Germany (2012), Austria (2014), Luxembourg (2016), Sweden (2018) and Estonia (2020).

<sup>55</sup> According to a survey of 5,000 women on the distribution of domestic and household tasks (IFOP for Consolab, 2019), 69% of Italian women say they "do a lot more" than their spouse, 44% in Spain and France, 43% in Germany and the United Kingdom. 73% of women on average say they "do more" than their spouse, compared to 16% of men. In Iceland and Sweden, fathers take around 30% of available parental leave, 20% in Norway, and 11% in Denmark and Finland (State of Nordic Fathers Report, Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). In none of the Nordic countries does the share taken by men in parental and domestic work approach 50%. For example, in 2010 in Sweden, men's share of parental work was 42.2%, and 36.9% of domestic work, and in Denmark men's share of parental work was 43.5%, and 30.5% of domestic work (2010, EWCS in the country sheets of the EU's 2013 Gender Equality Report).

**Spain: a 16-week "birth and childcare leave" for both parents, non-transferable and paid at 100% of salary**

Following in the footsteps of pioneering countries such as Norway (1993), where 15 weeks of parental leave is reserved for fathers and is lost if not taken (71% take it), since 1 January 2021, Spain has become the first country in the world where both parents - women and men - are entitled to **an equal 16 weeks of non-transferable birth leave paid at 100% of salary**. The Spanish government has made the adoption of this reform part of the implementation of the Spanish Constitution and Spain's international commitments on human rights and women's rights, in particular the objective of combining work and family life and the co-responsibility of both parents. The implementation of the reform of the 'birth and childcare leave' (*permiso por nacimiento y cuidado de menor*) - which replaces maternity and paternity leave - has been gradual: while maternity leave was 16 weeks, 8 weeks were granted to the second parent in 2018, 12 in 2020 and 16 since 2021. The reform is led by the Ministry of Labour, considering in particular its impact on employability and non-discrimination on the labour market for women, and on the articulation of life time and involvement in the care sector for men.

In 2020, several other Council of Europe member states adopted reforms along the same lines: **Switzerland** (new right to two weeks' paternity leave); **Estonia** (30 days' paternity leave, compared to 10 previously); in **France** (childcare leave extended to 28 days from 11 days); the **Netherlands** (new right to take 5 weeks' leave paid at 70% of salary by the state in addition to the week's leave paid at 100% of salary when the child is born); in the **Slovak Republic**, the number of fathers taking 'maternity leave' (the legal term, regardless of whether the leave is taken by a woman or a man) has risen from 78 in 2009 to 17,000 in 2019 - and over the same period, the number of fathers on parental leave has risen from 4,000 to 7,000.

Other reforms or initiatives encourage or accompany the egalitarian transition towards co-responsibility between the two parents: **in Denmark**: a law under consideration to ensure that **official correspondence relating to a child is addressed digitally to both parents and not only to the mother**; **in France**: a new **public service for the recovery of unpaid alimony payments**, while about 30% of them are not paid or are paid irregularly; **in Norway**: a government parenting support strategy to increase the participation and use of these services by fathers (for example, via the **podcast "My Daily Daddy Life"**); **Ukraine**: the **"4 Hands of Happiness" awareness-raising campaign** involving professional football players and their children; **Slovenia**: **"Project Action Dad"** (March 2020-February 2022) which emphasises the importance of men's active involvement in fatherhood and childcare from birth. Other reforms or initiatives concern the sharing of **care tasks for other dependants** such as elderly persons or persons with disabilities.

In the public sphere, getting men to make room for women in representative and decision-making positions can be achieved by adopting binding measures such as quotas in the political, economic and social spheres. While in the management boards of the largest listed companies in Europe, women are at best 25% in **Sweden and Great Britain**, **Germany** has just legislated (following other European countries) that at least one third of the seats must be held by women, whereas they currently represent only 12.8% of the boards.

### Sanctioning violence and discrimination and preventing recidivism

Impunity remains the rule in most contexts in relation to violence and discrimination by men against women, children and LGBT+ persons. Despite this, and in particular the provisions of the Istanbul Convention (Article 45 Sanctions and Measures), the question of the effectiveness of sanctions and the consequences for women and men of this widely shared sense of impunity is not generally addressed in action on men and equality. Few of the papers on 'men and equality' address the issue. But in the post #MeToo context, this could change. To quote from the working paper published by UN Women (November 2020): "Progress towards gender equality is thwarted in particular by institutional inaction and impunity. With regard to violence against women and girls, for example, institutional failures when it comes to systemic responses are well documented." **Linking the Council of Europe's work on access to justice for women with this issue of men and gender equality would be a lever for action.**

Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention requires States Parties to set up or support programmes aimed at teaching men who commit violence against women, in particular to prevent re-offending. Such programmes began to be set up in the late 1970s. Paragraph 3 of the same article stresses the importance of keeping the safety, support and rights of victims as a priority and that "these programmes are set up and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims". It is also important to regularly evaluate the impact of these programmes.<sup>56</sup>

In **Spain**, for half of the programmes, 80% of their participants are referred **by a court order**, and they rely on municipal or regional government funding (for example, the programme of the **Region of La Rioja** articulated with support for women victims of gender violence). At the national level, the Government Delegation against Gender Violence is working on a "**National Strategy for the Eradication of Men's Violence against Women (2021-2025)**". It will include a **strategic line dedicated to work on "gendered masculinities and violence" to develop specific measures that engage young people and men in exercising their responsibility** to end gender-based violence and, therefore, commit to gender equality.

**In other European countries, services dedicated to violent men, such as telephone hotlines, care centres and temporary accommodation, seem to be developing with the aim of preventing the perpetration of crimes and recidivism (Belgium, France, Norway, etc.).** In its general evaluation questionnaire adopted on 11 March 2016, GREVIO asks the States Parties to the Istanbul Convention to provide information about these programmes. **GREVIO questions the fact that, sometimes, in the judicial field, such programmes are deployed as an alternative to a conviction<sup>57</sup> rather than as a complement to a conviction.**

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<sup>56</sup> Lucas Gottzén, Margunn Bjørnholt, and Floretta Boonzaier, *Introduction: What Has Masculinity to Do with Intimate Partner Violence?*, in *Men, Masculinities and Intimate Partner Violence* (Routledge, 2020).

<sup>57</sup> See GREVIO report on Belgium (2020).

### Combating violent collective movements against women's rights and gender equality

Resolution 35/10 adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 22 June 2017 entitled "Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls" stresses, as a general condition for the engagement of men and boys, the **need to address violence against women and girls, including violence against women human rights defenders. Denmark initiated a study on the "Manosphere" in 2020** (see p.6). The study "The Angry Internet: A Threat to Gender Equality, Democracy and Welfare"<sup>58</sup> identified that approximately 850 young Nordic men are active in misogynistic Internet communities such as INCEL (Involuntary Bachelorhood - whose members share the belief that women have deprived them of their right as men to sexual relations), or MRA (Men's Rights Activists), who believe that women's rights and feminism are a direct threat to society that needs to be fought. The study points to the serious democratic problem posed by this online violence with the direct consequence of pushing women out of public discussions and thus silencing them.

### c) Initiatives targeting boys and men as agents for the promotion of women's rights and change towards gender equality

While the strong tendency has been to address civil society, there is a growing emphasis on men of power.<sup>59</sup>

#### Holding men in positions of power to account

*"More work is needed directly with men in positions of political power, such as elected officials, political party members and senior civil servants, to promote political spaces and debates through which public policy changes for gender equality can be achieved"* Alain Greig and Michael Flood (UN Women, 2020)

Since 2015, the **International Champions Leaders network** has been bringing together decision makers who are determined to break down barriers to gender equality in their sphere of influence, for example by committing to no longer participate in an all-male panel.

The **HeForShe movement**<sup>60</sup> is an **international solidarity movement** initiated by UN Women in 2014 that aims to strengthen women's rights to make them universal. To achieve this, HeForShe calls on men and boys to speak up and fight against the inequalities that affect women and girls around the world. **HeForShe's IMPACT initiative has engaged male heads of state, business leaders and university presidents. Two male allies' guides**<sup>61</sup> and other communication resources were produced.

Men and women elected to the leadership of a state and government appoint parity governments. **Of the only 14 countries in the world to have 50% or more women in government, half are in Europe: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Finland, France, Spain and Sweden.**

<sup>58</sup> Led by the Centre for Digital Youth Care - <https://www.norden.org/en/nyhed/report-prevalence-men-who-use-internet-forums-characterised-misogyny>

<sup>59</sup> UN Human Rights Council resolution 35/10, 2017; UN Women discussion paper, 2020.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.heforshe.org/fr/movement>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.heforshe.org/fr/impact> / <https://www.heforshe.org/en/9-ways-men-can-become-allies-equal-rights>

At the diplomatic level, and in the image of the "**feminist diplomacy**" claimed by Sweden since 2014, women and men heads of state and government have decided to make women's rights and gender equality one of the main priorities of their diplomatic action:<sup>62</sup> **Finland, France,**<sup>63</sup> the **Netherlands, Sweden** and the **United Kingdom**. International organisations such as the Council of Europe, the European Union and the United Nations do the same in their co-operation and external action policies.

### **Education and training in human rights, equality and non-violence**

The international normative framework clearly reminds governments of the requirement to integrate gender equality and a gender approach into education and initial and continuing training systems.

In **Belgium**, the French Community continued in 2020 its project for an **online module for initial and in-service teacher training**, '*Filles-Garçons une même école*' (girls-boys: one school).<sup>64</sup> In the youth sector, a programme is being developed for the labelling and funding of organisations working in the field of **education for relational, emotional and sexual life (EVRAS)**. In **France**, where the purchase of a sexual act is forbidden (as in Sweden since 1999), the law considers that **education on sexuality and the issue of equality between girls and boys, non-discrimination and the non-commercialisation of the body** are inseparable. In **Germany**, a digital strategy ([www.meintestgelaende.de](http://www.meintestgelaende.de)) funded has been funded since 2013 to facilitate exchanges between young people and professionals.

As adults, compulsory professional training schemes - especially for directors and managers - effectively involve a large number of men and promote profound organisational changes and individual practices. The **French Ministry of Agriculture, for example, has set itself the target of training 100% of its managers and executives** in two years in professional equality, the fight against sexual and gender-based violence and the fight against discrimination.

### **Working in a mixed environment**

In **Norway**, the national programme *Men in Health* (Menn i helse) targets non-employed men aged 25-55 by providing them with the training required for employment in the **health and care sector** (65 municipalities participate in the programme, which is almost one in six municipalities in the country). In **Germany**, the federal pilot programme "Career change - men and women **in early childhood education and care**" (*Quereinstieg - Männer und Frauen in Kitas*) is run by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and has about 35% male beneficiaries (almost double the percentage usually found in training for childcare workers). Since 2011, a "**Girls' Day**" and a "**Boys' Day**"<sup>65</sup> are held annually in April to encourage counter-stereotypical training or study choices.

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<sup>62</sup> [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe \(PACE\) - Doc. 14627 \(2018\) - The gender dimension of foreign policy](#)

<sup>63</sup> France recently decided to fund a study on "Masculinities, violence and peace" by Swisspeace: <https://ch.ambafrance.org/Masculinites-violence-et-paix-etude-de-Swisspeace>

<sup>64</sup> [www.egalitefillesgarçons.be](http://www.egalitefillesgarçons.be)

<sup>65</sup> [www.boys-day.de](http://www.boys-day.de) 300,000 German boys participated in this day. Like *Girls' Day*, it is usually held on the fourth Thursday in April.

### Engaging boys and men to be non-violent and for equality

Until now, this type of action has often involved relaying and supporting civil society initiatives. While there are several such initiatives around the world,<sup>66</sup> one initiative stands out globally for its visibility and impact: the *White Ribbon Campaign*, which was born in Canada in 1991 in response to the murder of women students at the Ecole Polytechnique de Montréal. White Ribbon Canada asks men who wear the white ribbon to pledge to "never commit, condone or remain silent about any form of gender-based violence"<sup>67</sup> (the original call was for "violence against women").

In the **Netherlands**, in the wake of the White Ribbon movement, **the government decided in 2016 to create a co-operation framework called Emancipator**<sup>68</sup> with over 30 organisations working with boys and men to stop violence against women. **In Estonia, the government launched a similar campaign in 2020** to invite men to be vigilant about their behaviour and its effects on those around them: "What kind of man do you want to be? ("What kind of male-character do you want to be?"). The **Barbershop events**, initiated by Iceland and Suriname in 2014, "encourage men and boys to actively engage in promoting women's rights and equality". For example, a **Barbershop conference was organised in Riga, Latvia in 2020**.<sup>69</sup>

### d) Initiatives targeting boys and men as collateral victims of male domination

The documentation available for this study shows a relatively small number of initiatives in this area. Several factors can be put forward to explain this: low social demand, issues dealt with in other sectoral policies without identifying the link with gender or reluctance to act due to the many pitfalls mentioned above (see Part I). The few countries that do take initiatives in this area do so, in the majority of cases, on issues where the gender dimension divides research and which can be exploited by masculinist groups (for example, boys dropping out of school or violence against men by women in the home). Furthermore, there are few initiatives where the reasons for action are the least questionable from a gender equality point of view, for example on sexist and sexual violence against boys, gay men or trans men.

The 5th ICMEO conference<sup>70</sup> in Estonia in 2020 emphasised the importance of men "taking care of themselves" (gaining autonomy) and "taking care of themselves" (gaining well-being). In her presentation, Carlien Scheele, Director of EIGE, used the Eurobarometer on Gender Equality to point out that there are wide variations in Europe regarding men's relationship with emotions: while in Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden, almost all men think it is acceptable for a man to cry, about 35% of men in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania think the opposite.

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<sup>66</sup> Zero Macho against the use of prostitution in France, Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW) in India (Shahrokh, Edström, Kumar, & Singh, 2015), One Man Can in several African countries (van den Berg et al., 2013), or anti-rape men's groups in the USA

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.whiteribbon.ca/about.html>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.emancipator.nl/whiteribbon/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3arJCKNSryM>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.sm.ee/et/uritused/5th-international-conference-men-and-equal-opportunities-men-who-care>

In **Norway**, the Ministry of Children's Affairs has commissioned two recent reports (2019) that address gender equality for girls and boys, including in schools, noting that 'areas where men's issues are particularly relevant are school dropout, career choices, health and risk factors and issues related to violence'. Since 2010, Norwegian municipalities have a legal obligation to provide emergency shelter services for women and "men who are victims of intimate partner violence".

Concerning **Germany**, the authorities point out that 'boys and men are also victims of violence (mainly in the public sphere, but also in the private sphere, in care institutions and in institutions for children and young people)'. In order to offer "specific advice to men" who are victims of violence, a training course started in 2019 with the intention that this advice will be disseminated by the existing counselling institutions. A national co-ordination centre for the protection of men against violence is being set up as part of a two-year project which includes "raising awareness of violence against men among the general public" and the "establishment of shelters for men and their children".

As regards **Denmark**, the authorities point out that "men are also over-represented and at the bottom of the scale, for example, with regard to health and social problems", and that "unskilled and single men are particularly affected; they die earlier, earn less and have fewer children". Special initiatives are therefore taken for boys and men. For example, in the field of health, **vaccination against HPV** is also recommended from the age of 12 for boys,<sup>71</sup> and general practitioners are made aware of the symptoms of **penile cancer**. Work is also being done at municipal level to improve **men's mental health**, or to **break the solitude and malaise of elderly men**. Similar actions to improve men's use of health care are carried out in Norway and Switzerland.

Finally, it should be noted that gender norms regarding contraception may limit **men's contraceptive choices** - and weigh on women. In **Great Britain**, **vasectomy** is systematically presented as one of the various contraceptive methods by the health services and, as a result, this country is distinguished in Europe by the common practice of vasectomy being accessible free of charge and fairly widely, whereas in most other European countries this service is not offered at all or only very marginally.

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<sup>71</sup> In France, since 1 January 2021, this vaccination has been reimbursed for boys between the ages of 11 and 14, as was previously the case for adolescent girls.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the issue of boys and men is often presented as a matter of course, a new "modern" and "indispensable" step in gender equality policies. So, it may seem incongruous to ask the "Why?" before coming to the "How to?". However, the work undertaken by this scoping study has revealed that it is, on the contrary, urgent to clarify the terms of the debate before embarking on the "How to? This is essential to master a still fragile women's rights and gender equality agenda and avoid pitfalls.

In fact, questioning the place of boys and men in equality policies is as old as the place and responsibility of men in gender inequalities: it has always been and remains central. This argues for the confirmation and consolidation of a comprehensive public action strategy for women's rights and gender equality rather than the development of an autonomous strategy around boys and men.

Breaking loose from the prison of norms to increase personal freedoms for women and men (individual level) must always go hand in hand with determined action to end the domination of the male group over the female group (structural level).

The study conducted here does not advocate for one single dedicated recommendation, but rather identifies six recommendations for the Council of Europe.

### 1. Making men agents of change towards substantive equality

Men's individual and collective behaviour is crucial to the full realisation of girls' and women's rights and gender equality. They must go from being obstacles to equality to agents of it, and men in positions of power have a particular responsibility in this regard (Rationale #1).

**Recommendation 1 - Remind member states, especially men in positions of power, of their duty to invest massively in equality policies and to be accountable for their international commitments. In this context, it is also necessary to insist on the objective of enforcing existing laws and strengthening them whenever possible, prioritising macro-economic public policies over ad hoc actions focused on civil society and an individual approach.**

Examples of measures and actions:

- ✓ enforce laws that prevent and prohibit violence, protect victims and punish perpetrators;
- ✓ promote a real sharing of unpaid domestic and care work, as a priority by adopting a childcare leave that is equal and compulsory for both parents, non-transferable and paid at 100% of salary;
- ✓ promote real power sharing, including through binding measures;
- ✓ funding equality education from an early age;
- ✓ adopt national plans for mandatory training on professional equality for target audiences in the public and private sectors.

## **2. Understanding and responding better to attacks from masculinist movements**

It is clear that masculinist movements threaten the progress made in women's rights and equality (Rationale #2).

**Recommendation 2 - Integrate the issue of masculinist groups into the Council of Europe's actions and strategies on internet governance, hate speech, gender equality, children's rights and counter-terrorism**

In a context of rising populist, xenophobic and religious radicalism, this question of "masculinities" can, if we are not careful, discredit public equality policies and feminist discourse, give rise to hate speech and real aggression against girls and women, and in particular, women defenders of their rights, and support the idea that "problematic" boys and men are never "us" but "the others" (foreigners, the poor, etc.).

## **3. Strengthening the integrated approach to equality**

Boys and men have both a short and a long term interest in equality and ending male dominance, which requires an integrated approach and better situational awareness (Rationale #3).

**Recommendation 3 - Reaffirm to the member states and within the Council of Europe the need to consolidate an integrated approach to equality, in particular by mobilising gender studies in all sectoral policies.**

Examples of measures and actions:

- ✓ support the development of gender mainstreaming in all sectoral policies (for example, education or health);
- ✓ support the training of professionals managing these sectoral policies;
- ✓ mobilise gender studies to better analyse the roots of violence and other pressures between and against men, including the link between sexism and other relations of domination such as homophobia or racism.

**Accompanying action with guidelines.** In order to avoid all the pitfalls identified, it would be relevant to identify and disseminate practical guidance (for example, the elements identified below) to accompany the development of initiatives relating to boys and men in line with the women's rights and gender equality policy framework.

This tool could include the following aspects:

- ✓ establish democratic governance involving girls and women on an equal footing in the definition, implementation and monitoring of initiatives involving boys and men, by systematically consulting recognised organisations working for women's rights (1), by organising transparency of funding (2), and by scheduling accountability to the women's movement and to funders (3);
- ✓ ensure that the primary political objective of these initiatives is to equality and the strengthening of girls' and women's effective rights, empowerment and freedom (4), and

not an alternative policy objective that would, in itself, aim at strengthening men's and boys' rights and empowerment without challenging male domination. This objective is in line with the normative framework and international and European standards on gender equality policies (Council of Europe standards, CEDAW, European treaties, etc.);

- ✓ ensure a transformative approach to gender relations (not a fixed approach to social gender roles and categories of 'woman' and 'man' which essentialise and homogenise 'woman' and 'man') (5);
- ✓ be based on a diagnosis objectified by research and scientifically robust data that draw on the concept of gender to inform the baseline situation and allow for monitoring (6);
- ✓ be subject to additional resources (7) so as not to compromise opportunities and resources for women and girls or increase the competition and material and financial insecurity to which organisations are already subject working for equality;
- ✓ not lead to the weakening, in any way, or reduction of the visibility of organisations working for women's rights and equality targeting women and girls as a priority (8);
- ✓ recognise the leadership role of women and girls in advancing equality (9);
- ✓ organise an evaluation of the actions carried out in terms of the objective of equality and the strengthening of girls' and women's effective rights, empowerment and freedom (10).

#### **4. Supporting the development of research**

The aim here is to support research or studies in order to gain a better understanding and, *ultimately*, to avoid the risk of rendering invisible or setting back a comprehensive analysis of sex/gender relations and male domination, as enshrined in international standards (trap #1), and to avoid an analysis based on agreed definitions and research on gender (trap #2)

Examples of areas of study or research for the Council of Europe and its member states:

- ✓ the perception of the gender transition by women and men and the evolution of gender norms. These elements could be addressed for example on the basis of indicators<sup>72</sup> and regular surveys and studies allowing for European and international comparisons, in order to better understand national contexts and adapt policies accordingly;
- ✓ the study of masculinist movements and in particular their links with other radical and/or violent movements;
- ✓ the evaluation of programmes for dealing with perpetrators of violence.

#### **5. Co-operate with women's/feminist organisations**

In order to counter the risk of weakening women's/feminist organisations working for women's rights and equality through increased competition for funding that is already weak in terms of visibility or practices (trap #3), the Council of Europe and its member states should closely involve feminist civil society targeting girls and women in debates and activities related to boys and men and strengthen support for these organisations working primarily with girls and women.

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<sup>72</sup> Such as the indicators proposed by the OECD (2021).

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 - List of interviews

- **Kira Appel**, Deputy Head of the Division for Gender Equality at the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, member of the Council of Europe Commission for Gender Equality (13 January 2021)
- **Ana Arrillaga Aldama**, Head of Department at the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities in Spain, member of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (27 January 2021)
- **Laxman Belbase**, Co-Director of the MenEngage Global Secretariat based in Washington; **Katrien Van der Heyden**, Belgian member of the MenEngage Europe members' Steering Committee; **Jennifer Rodriguez Bruno**, Advocacy Co-ordinator at the Global Secretariat based in Washington, **Anna Lindqvist (Sweden)**, Swedish member and Co-Coordinator of the MenEngage Europe Network (25 January 2021)
- **Mélissa Blais**, Professor at the University of Quebec, Montreal (UQAM) and member of the *Institut de recherche et d'études féministes*, of the Québécois network on feminist studies (RéQEF) and of TRYSPACES in Canada & **Francis Dupuis-Déri**, Professor in political science at UQAM and member of RéQEF (20 January 2021)
- **Victoria Diaz-Garcia**, Partnerships and Advocacy Specialist in the Civil Society Division at UN Women in New York (21 January 2021)
- **Gwendoline Lefebvre**, President of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) (20 January 2021)
- **Pierrette Pape**, former Director of Policy and Campaigns at the European Women's Lobby (2009-2017) and co-ordinator of the EWL project and publication on men and equality European Women's Voice in 2011-2012 (8 February 2021)

### Appendix 2 - Methodological Issues

The study is based on the compilation of documents previously provided by the Secretariat of the Commission for Gender Equality (GEC), a series of interviews (listed in Appendix I), and additional research.

In particular, the mapping proposed in Part II was based on the contributions sent by eight member states to the Council of Europe GEC secretariat (between December 2020 and January 2021); additional information concerning 12 other member states, taken from the national reports submitted by the member states to the Council of Europe; the document "*Activities in the member states on men and boys and gender equality*" (December 2020); and other initiatives identified in the course of the literature review. The proposed mapping cannot claim to be exhaustive. The examples cited illustrate the variety of the repertoire of actions, without prioritising them or even validating them. At this stage, given the limited information available and the time constraints, it has not been possible to assess the robustness and impact of the actions mentioned, particularly from the point of view of strengthening women's rights, transforming gender relations towards greater equality, or with regard to their funding.