

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 25 November 2021

GEC (2021) Report November

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
(GEC)**

**20th meeting
23-24-25 November 2021
Hybrid meeting**

Abridged Report

The Gender Equality Commission (GEC), chaired by Andreia Lourenço Marques (Portugal),

1. adopted its agenda, as set out in Appendix I to the present abridged report.
2. discussed the draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls; took note of certain dissenting views expressed by the delegations from Austria, Hungary and the Russian Federation on parts of the text, which will be reflected in the report of the 20th Gender Equality Commission meeting; adopted the draft Recommendation and instructed the Secretariat to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers at the earliest opportunity, following the internal procedures regarding draft recommendations;
3. instructed the Secretariat to update and finalise the preliminary draft annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 with contributions from the member states (deadline for receipt of contributions 3 December 2021); in light of discussions, agreed on the text of the preliminary draft annual report; and, subject to revisions and updates to be further made, incorporating the contributions from member States, and subject to a further verification of the factual accuracy of the report by written procedure, instructed the Secretariat to transmit the final revised report to the Committee of Ministers and to the GEC members at the same time;
4. held an exchange of views on the gendered impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and invited members to submit information in writing to the Secretariat about activities in this respect in their countries in order to contribute to work on this file in 2022;
5. discussed the options proposed in document GEC(2021)8 on the approach for reviewing the implementation of Recommendation "Rec/CM(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism"; and instructed the Secretariat to propose a revised approach taking into account the discussions at the GEC meeting, for decision by the GEC at its next meeting in May 2022;
6. took note of the presentation by Andreia Lourenço Marques (Chair/Portugal) about the activities and developments at the meeting of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI);
7. took note of the progress made on the new Council of Europe Recommendation on hate speech at the subordinate meeting of the CDADI, the Expert Committee on Combating Hate Speech (ADI/MSI-DIS);
8. took note of the presentation by the Secretariat about the ongoing activities regarding gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe sectors;

9. took note of the takeaways from the conference on “The role of foreign policy in advancing gender equality: addressing the challenges, pushbacks and obstacles faced by women” (Nicosia, 26 October 2021), presented by Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance;
10. took note of the report of the conference “Gender Equality and Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” (Berlin, 11 May 2021) and agreed to disseminate the report;
11. took note that the study on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies would be finalised in early 2022; was invited to inform the Secretariat by 15 December 2021 if any member wishes to participate in future work on devising guidelines on the roles of men and boys;
12. took note of the information contained in document GEC(2021)7 on events attended by GEC members, experts and the Secretariat and agreed to update information about their expertise directly with the Secretariat (gender.equality@coe.int);
13. took note of the information provided by Stefano Pizzicannella (Italy) about the gender equality programme of the current Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers including hosting the GEC annual conference on work-life balance through women’s empowerment in Rome on 12 April 2022;
14. took note of the information provided by Brigitta Gyebnar (Hungary), Deirdre Ní Neill (Ireland) and Ambassador Ragnhildur Arnljotsdottir (Iceland) about the gender equality programme of their respective presidencies of the Committee of Ministers;
15. took note of the information provided by Alexis Rinckenbach (France) about the Generation Equality Forum;
16. took note of the information provided by Andreia Lourenço Marques (Chair/Portugal), Jasna Jeram (Slovenia) and Alexis Rinckenbach (France) about the gender equality programme of their respective presidencies of the Council of the European Union.
17. took note of the information provided by the Secretariat about the conference on “Women’s Access to Justice: moving closer to full ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention” which took place on 7 and 8 October 2021 and the updates about ongoing co-operation projects in the member states on the topic of equal access to justice for women;
18. (with Vice-President Basim Al Alousi acting in the Chair) elected Andreia Lourenço Marques (Portugal) as Chair and Kateryna Levchenko (Ukraine) and Andrii Savva (Cyprus) as Vice-Chairs of the Gender Equality Commission for a mandate of one year from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022;

19. took note of the information about the adoption of the GEC terms of reference for a period of four years – 2022-2025-, and of the terms of reference of the subordinate body to the GEC and the CDADI, the GEC/ADI-AI, for 2024-2025;
20. took note of the presentation by Käthlin Sander (Estonia) about the activities and developments at the CAHAI and subordinate meetings;
21. took note of the information presented by the Secretariat about the proposed study to be carried out in co-operation with CDADI and the GEC on the impact of artificial intelligence; was invited to submit information about any national studies, names of experts in artificial intelligence and their own interest in taking an active part in the future work on this issue to the Secretariat by 15 December 2021;
22. took note of the information presented by the Secretariat about the ongoing co-operation projects in the member states in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence and balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
23. hosted a high-level panel exchange on preventing and combating violence against women, with the participation Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Elena Bonetti, Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family of Italy and Iris Luarasi, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;
24. proposed an exchange of views with UNESCO, for example regarding artificial intelligence, or an exchange of views with OECD for the agenda of the next meeting;
25. agreed on the dates of the next GEC-related meetings:
 - GEC Conference 2022: High-level event on work-life balance through women's empowerment – hosted by the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (November 2021 – May 2022), Rome, 12 April 2022;
 - 21st meeting of the GEC, Strasbourg, 11-13 May 2022;
 - 22nd meeting of the GEC, Strasbourg, 16-18 November 2022;
26. agreed on the abridged report of the meeting and instructed the Secretariat to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for note to be taken of it.

Appendix I

AGENDA

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

- *Draft Agenda*

GEC(2021)OJ2 Revised

II. Gender Equality Commission

- Election of President and two Vice-Presidents (January-December 2022)
- GEC Terms of Reference (2022-2025)

III. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality**1. Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023****a. Draft 2021 annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy**

GEC(2021)6

Activities and measures in member states towards the achievement of the objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy

GEC(2021)5

b. Thematic discussion/exchange of views on COVID-19: its effect on gender equality

Report of the seminar "Advancing Gender Equality: the role and situation for gender equality mechanisms in the context of COVID-19"

Publication

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

- The places of men and boys in gender equality policies – plans for future work on this topic

- Committee of Ministers Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism – the approach to review its implementation GEC(2021)8

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

- High level panel with Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Elena Bonetti, Minister for Family and Equal Opportunities of Italy and Iris Luarasi, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)
- Update by the Secretariat of co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning violence against women and domestic violence

e. Objective 3 – Ensure the equal access of women to justice

- Update by the Secretariat on co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning equal access of women to justice

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

- Update by the Secretariat of co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making

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

- Preparation of a draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls
 - o Presentation by the Secretariat of the GEC-MIG process and presentation of the text of the recommendation by Vera Eloi da Fonseca, Chair of the Drafting Committee on migrant women (GEC-MIG)

4th meeting report (April 2021)

5th meeting report (October 2021)

- o Discussion and adoption of the text of the Draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls *GEC(2021)9*

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

- Update by the Secretariat about gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe activities
- Reports from GEC members who have participated in the following intergovernmental committee meetings:
 - Meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) and its subordinate committees
 - Meetings of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its subordinate committees
- Study, together with CDADI on the impact of artificial intelligence, in close co-operation with CAHAI
- Conference on “The role of foreign policy in advancing gender equality: addressing the challenges, pushbacks and obstacles faced by women” (Nicosia, Cyprus, 26 October 2021) *Takeaway points*

i. Follow up to the conference “Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” (Berlin, 11 May 2021)

Report

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

GEC(2021)7

V. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

- Generation Equality Forum (Paris, 30 June-2 July 2021)
- Council of the European Union – gender equality agenda:
 - Portuguese Presidency (January-June 2021)
 - Slovenian Presidency (July-December 2021)
 - French Presidency (January-June 2022)

VI. Current and future activities at national and international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:
 - o Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (May-November 2021)
 - o Italian Presidency (November 2021-May 2022)
 - High level event on work-life balance in the perspective of women empowerment. *Draft preliminary concept note*
 - o Irish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (May-November 2022)
 - o Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (November 2022-May 2023)

VII. Proposals for the agenda of the next meeting, including thematic discussions

VIII. Other business

IX. Dates of forthcoming meetings

- *High Level Event of the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on work-life balance in the perspective of women empowerment, Rome, Italy, Rome, 12 April 2022*
- *21st meeting of the GEC, Strasbourg, France, 11-13 May 2022 – dates to be confirmed*
- *22nd meeting of the GEC, Strasbourg, France, 16-18 November 2022 – dates to be confirmed*

X. Adoption of the abridged report of the 20th GEC meeting (23-25 November 2021)

Calendar of forthcoming events and meetings

- *International Conference on the roles of women and children in terrorism, Strasbourg, 15-16 December 2021*
- *High Level Event of the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on work-life balance in the perspective of women empowerment, Rome, Italy, 12 April 2022*
- *Conference organised by the Pompidou Group in the framework of the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers about rape drugs, Spring 2022*
- *21st meeting of the GEC – Strasbourg, 11-13 May 2022 – dates to be confirmed*
- *22nd meeting of the GEC – Strasbourg, 16-18 November 2022 – dates to be confirmed*