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GEC (2021) Report April

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
(GEC)**

*19th meeting
14-15 April 2021*

REPORT

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The 19th meeting of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) was opened by the Chair, Andreia Lourenço Marques (Portugal). This was the third meeting of the GEC to be held via videoconference because of the travel and health restrictions in place resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 38 member states participated in the meeting, as well as representatives of non-member observer states and organisations, the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations, and representatives of international organisations. The list of participants is attached in Appendix II to this report.
2. The draft [agenda](#) was adopted as it appears in Appendix I to this report.
3. The Chair introduced Claudia Luciani, [Director of Human Dignity, Gender Equality and Governance](#) of the Council of Europe, who informed participants that she and the management of the Council of Europe greatly appreciated the achievements of the GEC, particularly in the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy, including the promotion of the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism last year.
4. She also spoke about the challenges for the future work of the GEC, which include the preparation of the Committee's terms of reference for the next four years, which is a new feature departing from previous Council of Europe's two-year mandates for inter-governmental committees. In this regard, she invited the members to be bold in their proposals for future work.
5. The second challenge is to ensure that women's rights and gender equality standards are not lowered. In this regard, she encouraged the members to take a transversal approach and to disseminate information about the current Council of Europe standards to all their colleagues in the member states so that all negotiating fora in the Council of Europe keep high gender equality standards.
6. As well as promoting the current standards, Claudia Luciani said that it was important that the new standards being developed, such as through the work of the [Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence](#) (CAHAI), included the fundamental principles of gender equality.
7. Daniele Cangemi, Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, informed the participants about changes in the staffing situation in the Gender Equality Division, with the return of Caterina Bolognese, the Head of the Gender Equality Division, the departure of Carolina Lasén Diaz, who has been assisting the division and is going to work with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, and the arrival of a new temporary staff member on 1 May 2021 to assist with the intergovernmental work of the division.
8. Daniele Cangemi expressed the Secretariat's hope that after the summer there would be a possibility of having, if not fully in-person meetings, then at least meetings in a hybrid format, but for the moment it was not possible to confirm this.

9. He informed the members about the preparation of the Council of Europe's programme and budget for the next four years and said that the present GEC meeting was very timely for the preparation of the GEC's terms of reference for 2022-2025. He stressed that gender equality, violence against women and gender mainstreaming remain priorities for the Secretary General and the Organisation, and he hoped that these issues would continue to be priorities for the member states as well.
10. The Chair called the attention of members to agenda item II "Annual exchange of views and main priorities for the GEC's Terms of Reference for 2022-2025 and GEC working methods", which would be discussed on the second day of the GEC meeting, asking them to prepare for the annual exchange of views, including an evaluation of the committee's activities and discussion on future priorities.
 - *The GEC adopted its [agenda](#), as set out in Appendix I to the present report.*

II. Gender Equality Commission

- Annual exchange of views and main priorities for the GEC's Terms of Reference for 2022-2025 and GEC working methods
11. The Chair introduced the item by informing the participants that the GEC [Terms of Reference 2021-2022](#) include holding an *exchange of views annually in order to evaluate its activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on future priorities in its sector, including possible new activities and those that might be discontinued*. She further explained that the Secretary General had proposed to change the planning cycle from two to four years and, if adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the next GEC terms of reference would cover four years. In preparing for the future priorities of the Organisation, the Secretary General had consulted the Chairs of intergovernmental committees and the previous GEC Chair had put forward [proposals](#) on behalf of the Commission (also available on the GEC website). It should be noted that the Secretary General included gender equality as a priority in her proposed strategic framework.
 12. The Secretariat (Carolina Lasén Diaz) informed the members about the calendar for the preparation of the next terms of reference. The deadline for preparing the main tasks and key deliverables for 2022-2025 (if the 4-year cycle is adopted by the Committee of Ministers) was mid-May 2021; these will then be discussed by the Programme and Budget Directorate in mid-June 2021 and the draft Terms of References of all Council of Europe committees will be put forward for discussion by the Committee of Ministers in the autumn, with the final adoption at the budget meeting scheduled on 23-25 November 2021. A mid-term review of the Council of Europe programme and budget, including the terms of reference of intergovernmental committees, will be carried out in mid-2023 to take account of the situation at that time, so that an adjusted programme for 2024-2025 can be adopted by the Committee of Ministers in November 2023.

13. The Secretariat explained that the GEC is requested to propose the main tasks and key deliverables for the next four years, pointing out that certain tasks already included in the current terms of reference will remain. In addition, and because of the ongoing work of the GEC, there are some tasks for the next budget cycle which are already known, such as the preparation of the next Gender Equality Strategy, from 2024 onwards. The promotion and implementation of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, and the new one to be adopted on migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, as well as future work on men and boys, and the annual thematic conferences are all activities to be included in the next terms of reference of the GEC.
14. The Chair invited comments, feedback and views on the evaluation of the current Terms of Reference and on the GEC's working methods. In the exchange that followed, Kira Appel (Denmark) said that there was not a lot of time to discuss these important issues during meetings, particularly when they take place in a virtual format; so it is important to maintain physical meetings not only for the substantive discussions, but also for the added value that physical meetings have for the participants. She argued that while the plenary meetings should be held in person, there could be *ad hoc* working groups or workshops held in a virtual format. She warned that hybrid plenary meetings would result in leaving members out of any networking that takes place in Strasbourg.
15. Kira Appel also proposed to have more discussion on how the GEC meetings are organised, including working methods. While there are many presentations during GEC meetings, not all the participants get involved in discussions and perhaps sessions in smaller groups, which would encourage more active participation, could be organised on different subjects during a GEC plenary. She added that a clear mandate for the GEC Secretariat was needed to maintain gender mainstreaming, internally and externally, and funding should be ensured for this task.
16. The Secretariat (Daniele Cangemi) informed the Committee that Azerbaijan had expressed agreement with the points raised by Denmark (through the KUDO chat function), adding that Denmark's proposal was very interesting as a way forward and that GEC meetings in person are essential, as GEC-MIG meetings have shown the downside of discussing and negotiating draft text online. He pointed out that adequate resources are very important, and tasks need to be prioritised. In 2020, the Gender Equality Division's activities had to be prioritised because of the reduction in staff. Therefore, he encouraged the members to support the allocation of relevant resources when the GEC mandate will be discussed and approved by the Committee of Ministers, by contacting their colleagues working on these aspects. Finally, he expressed the Council of Europe's interest in hosting secondees from member states, including to work at the Gender Equality Division.

17. Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair, Ukraine) supported Denmark's proposal for different working methods and smaller working groups during plenary GEC meetings.
18. The Chair invited proposals from the members as to what tasks should be included in the GEC Terms of Reference for 2022-2025, with the reminder that there will be an opportunity to review these by mid-2023.
19. In the exchange which followed, Kira Appel (Denmark) recalled what the Secretariat had explained, namely that the GEC has to maintain certain tasks from the current terms of reference, such as the follow-up of the 2019 Recommendation on prevent and combating sexism, to which she agreed. However, in the case of future work on men/boys and gender equality, there was perhaps no need for this to be a main task but could at least be mainstreamed into the overall aims. She said that the GEC should continue working on many of the current subjects but also come up with innovative ideas on how to deal with them, adding that it was important to avoid "monitoring-type" processes right after the adoption of recommendations, which is a burden for member states, and rather discuss how this follow-up could be carried out.
20. Basim Al Alousi (Vice-Chair, the Netherlands) put forward the need to discuss more about the intersectional approach within the work of the GEC, including migrant women and other groups. Furthermore, he agreed with Denmark's proposal to integrate the role of men and boys in the overall aims of GEC's work.
21. The Secretariat (Daniele Cangemi) informed the members that the next terms of reference of the GEC will include more specific deliverables, and not just divide the tasks between 'main' and 'specific', as has been the case so far. In addition to the tasks already mentioned for the next planning period, he suggested that issues which had emerged at the October 2020 GEC seminar, organised with the Greek Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, such as the work and role of gender equality mechanisms, and the balance between private/professional life, may be of interest to the GEC for its future work. He asked the members for further proposals that could be looked into to see what is available and what could be done to develop the existing work, including the possible updating of recommendations or the evaluation of current standards.
22. Karin Bengtson (Sweden) said that economic gender equality is a priority for Sweden but as this was not in the mandate of the Council of Europe and/or GEC, then it did not seem possible to include it. Sweden is also participating in the Generation Equality Forum, with UN Women, on the coalition on economic gender equality. She supported the proposal of including an intersectional approach to the GEC's work, which could be the basis for the approach that the GEC may take in addressing men and boys in gender equality policies.
23. The Chair thanked the members for their interesting proposals and instructed the Secretariat to forward the GEC's views on the content of the next terms of reference to the Programme and Budget Department. She invited any members who had further proposals on these two items to send them to the Secretariat by 23 April 2021.

24. The Secretariat (Daniele Cangemi) explained that draft terms of reference would be prepared, including the proposals from the GEC members, which would be forwarded to the Bureau for approval. He pointed out that neither the GEC nor the Secretariat have full control of the process and the Committee of Ministers has taken an increased interest in the terms of reference of Council of Europe committees.
25. The Secretariat informed the members that there has been an increase of committees working together and there are perhaps some topics that could be looked at for a “joint committee” approach, together with the GEC. He said that interaction with CEPEJ and CDCJ, as regards women’s access to justice, could be strengthened, noting that the majority of work to date on this topic has been carried out through co-operation projects with a limited geographical scope. Furthermore, there could also be a possibility to work with the CAHAI to develop the gender equality dimension in areas such as the risk of bias and discrimination in the development and application of artificial intelligence, or the inclusion of women in the development of algorithms. The CAHAI work has also links with the work of the CDADI on discrimination, and it might be possible to envisage a joint venture in this respect, which could be further discussed.
26. The Chair thanked the Secretariat and asked for the Bureau to be kept informed of future developments in the preparation of the next mandate of the GEC and to bring the next terms of reference to the attention of the GEC once they are approved.
- *The GEC held an exchange of views about the main priorities for the GEC’s Terms of Reference for 2022-2025. The Secretariat will share a preliminary document with the Bureau in view of discussions in the Committee of Ministers, which will make final decisions on the GEC’s Terms of Reference.*
 - *The GEC discussed the GEC’s working methods and agreed that physical meetings should resume whenever possible, and to look at the possibility of working in smaller groups on some topics.*

III. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality

1. [Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023](#)

a. **Draft 2020 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy**

27. The Chair introduced the [draft 2020 Annual Report](#) which had been prepared on the basis of [contributions from member states](#) on their national activities and the measures undertaken towards the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, as well as relevant activities undertaken by the GEC, the Gender Equality Division and various sectors of the Organisation.

28. The Secretariat (Carolina Lasén Diaz) explained that the main part of the report highlighted the work of 2020, with a particular focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 36 member states had submitted national contributions and she invited the remaining nine member states to send in their national reports by 28 April 2021 at the latest.
29. The Secretariat invited feedback on the draft report and in the discussion which followed some members expressed their appreciation for the format and content of the report, including how useful it is to find which countries work on which objective of the Council of Europe strategy, and what activities were being undertaken on the different topics.
30. Some members asked if they could send updates of their national reports to cover activities which took place at the end of 2020, in order to update their original submissions which had been sent by the set deadline of November 2020 (Azerbaijan, Ukraine). The question of the implementation period covered by the annual reports was also raised, given that some important activities take place from October to December each year. The Secretariat invited member states who had had major events or activities to report on from late 2020 to send in this information also by 28 April 2021.
31. Following a request by Fatima Barkan (Morocco), the members agreed that in future, GEC annual reports on the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on Gender Equality would include a section on the measures taken by observer states.
32. In summing up, the Chair invited members to send their contributions to the annual report, or any updates on the already submitted ones, no later than 28 April 2021. The revised report will be approved by the Chair before transmission to the Committee of Ministers.

The GEC

- *took note of the 2020 draft Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, and the deadline of 28 April 2021 for any further contributions to the report.*
- *instructed the Secretariat to revise the draft annual report with any further contributions and updates received by 28 April 2021, and to transmit the final annual report to the Chair for approval before forwarding it to the Committee of Ministers for note to be taken.*

b. COVID-19: one year on

- Report of the Seminar “Advancing Gender Equality: The role and situation for gender equality mechanisms in the context of COVID-19”
- Exchange of views

33. As a result of time constraints, the Chair proposed that the item on COVID-19 would have to be postponed to the next GEC meeting. Sufficient time should be allocated to this discussion when preparing the agenda and order of business of the next GEC meeting.

➤ *The GEC decided to postpone the exchange of views about COVID-19: one year on, to the next meeting of the GEC (24-26 November 2021).*

c. Conference “Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” (online), (Berlin, 11 May 2021)

34. Stefanie Friedrich (Germany) informed members about the Conference “Gender Equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” which will be livestreamed from Berlin on 11 May 2021. The morning panel will focus on the achievements of the Istanbul Convention for the last ten years, while the afternoon panel will address sexism and gender stereotypes. The [programme](#) and [concept note](#) are available on the [conference website](#) and all members were encouraged to participate in the conference.

➤ *The GEC took note of the information provided by the German representative about the online conference “Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” which will be broadcast from Berlin on 11 May 2021.*

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

Promotion of the recommendation on preventing and combating sexism

- Committee of Ministers Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1) – follow up/update on promotional activities

35. The Chair informed the members that a discussion document was being prepared for consideration at the next GEC meeting (24-26 November 2021), outlining proposals for the approach to be followed in reviewing the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism. This topic will also be included in the next terms of reference of the GEC.

36. The Secretariat (Cécile Gréboval) updated the members about the implementation of the campaign "[Sexism: See it. Name it. Stop it](#)" which now includes: 25 translations of the 2019 [Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism](#); 22 subtitled versions and 13 dubbed versions of the [campaign video](#); and 21 versions of the [action page](#) of the campaign. The Secretariat has co-operated with several member states who have contributed towards the translation of these campaign tools.
37. The Secretariat invited other member states who wished to translate the different campaign tools to contact the Secretariat and encouraged the members to disseminate these tools among their relevant ministries and other stakeholders.

The GEC

- *took note of the update of the promotion of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1) presented by the Secretariat.*
 - *took note of the preparation of a discussion document with proposals on the approach to be followed to review the implementation of the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism and looked forward to this debate at its next meeting in November 2021.*
 - Presentation of the results and outputs of the grant awarded to the European Women's Lobby (EWL) for the implementation of the Project "[Mobilise against Sexism!](#)", by Joanna Maycock, Secretary General of EWL
38. The Chair recalled that this item was a follow-up to a presentation by the [European Women's Lobby](#) (EWL) at the previous GEC meeting (October 2020) of the project "[Mobilise against Sexism!](#)", funded by the Council of Europe in 2020. The Chair introduced Joanna Maycock, Secretary General of EWL, who presented the results of the project, underlining that the original plans had been severely affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
39. In her [presentation](#), which is available on the GEC website, Ms Maycock congratulated the GEC and the Council of Europe for the ground-breaking work on preventing and combating sexism through the Council of Europe recommendation, which has proved to be a major tool for action.
40. She informed the members that all nine countries involved in the EWL project (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain) had used the Council of Europe campaign tools throughout the project during webinars and meetings, which had been very well attended. In just two countries along (Croatia and Portugal), the social media and digital dimension of the campaign reached over 20,000 people.

41. The ultimate aim of the campaign was to pass legislation or adopt action plans in line with the Council of Europe recommendation and in this respect, commitments have been made in each country to adapt tools and measures and/or develop action plans to address sexism. Ms Maycock provided examples of key project activities and their impact in each of the nine countries, which are available in her [presentation](#).
42. EWL put forward recommendations to the Council of Europe, including having a definition of sexist hate speech, putting in place a procedure to monitor and evaluate the implementation in the member states of the Council of Europe Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, as well as facilitating “shadow reports” to ensure input from civil society in the review of the implementation of the Council of Europe recommendation. More information is available in Ms Maycock’s [presentation](#).
43. Ms Maycock took the opportunity to announce that EWL was launching the report “[Towards a Europe Free from Male Violence against Women and Girls](#)” on the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Istanbul Convention. The report looked at the positive impact of the Istanbul Convention and the challenges in implementing it.
44. Anne Nègre (Council of Europe Conference of International NGOs) expressed support for this work with EWL and highlighted that it is a good example of co-operation between member states and NGOs.
45. Rocio Cervera (Council of Europe North-South Centre) informed the GEC that the centre is also promoting the Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, outside Europe, in the Southern Mediterranean.
 - *The GEC took note of the presentation by the Secretary General of the European Women’s Lobby of the results of the project “Mobilise against Sexism!”, funded by the Council of Europe and implemented in nine member states.*

The place of men and boys in gender equality policies

46. The Chair introduced the item by reminding the members that the GEC’s current terms of reference include “the engagement of men and boys in promoting gender equality policies”, as a specific topic on which to prepare a study. The following two presentations were provided to assist the GEC in the planning for further work and next steps in this area.

- Presentation by Christian Mogensen, author of the report “The angry internet – A threat to gender equality, democracy & well-being” (prepared by the Centre for Digital Youth Care, in the framework of the Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers)

47. The Chair introduced Christian Mogensen, who presented the report “[The angry internet – a threat to gender equality, democracy & well-being](#)”. Mr Mogensen outlined the premise for the report, which was to establish a baseline number of people ready to commit violence online. This was done by analysing more than 4 billion posts from different platforms and then carrying out a qualitative assessment of over 100,000 posts from different platforms. The study addressed 850 active Nordic “authors of interest”, including those that were promoting violence and anti-democratic methods to combat the voice of women in a democratic society - the so-called “manosphere movement”.
48. In his presentation, Mr Mogensen looked at the causes behind these attitudes and opinions among certain men. In interviews with some of them, many were unwell and sad, feeling like ‘losers’ and failing in certain areas in life because of their fixed ideas as to how they should be. However, instead of addressing these issues by themselves, they met other like-minded men on digital platforms and discussed using anti-democratic tools targeting their anger at what they perceived as the reason for their sadness: usually women, but also people of colour and different religious minorities.
49. Mr Mogensen explained that many of these men had not had happy younger lives and had been ostracised from groups because they did not fit in, and as a result they did not participate in the usual social fora such as after-school groups, youth groups or sports activities. Instead, they would form their own communities and create group opposition to any ideas that came from the “popular kids”, or the feminists.
50. Mr Mogensen put forward, as the solution to prevent gendered aggression, to emotionally empower boys and promote healthy coping mechanisms for them from an early age, including through sexual education. In order to avoid further ostracization and antagonization, men who are at risk of becoming violent and anti-democratic, should be socially re-integrated. In order to protect potential victims, those seeking to use antidemocratic actions must be prosecuted as the only way to prevent them from being violent.
51. In the exchange which followed, Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair, Ukraine) welcomed this very interesting report and noted that these anti-feminist groups were also very active in Ukraine. She noted that it would be very interesting if the report could be translated into other languages and disseminated widely, including presentations in Ukraine. Kira Appel (Denmark) informed the members that Denmark, as part of the Nordic Council of Ministers, will organise an online conference on this subject, with a focus on professionals working with young people, in June 2021. The invitation for this conference will follow, closer to the date.

52. In answer to a question from the Secretariat (Daniele Cangemi) about what the Council of Europe could do within its mandate on this issue, Mr Mogensen underlined the immense benefit that could be gained from more education resources and by providing education material on this subject to youth care and outreach professionals, as well as by working with social media platforms as to what they allow regarding free speech.
- *The GEC took note of the presentation by Christian Mogensen of the report “The angry internet – A threat to gender equality, democracy & well-being”.*
 - Presentation of the mapping study on the place of men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies by Claire Guiraud and Romain Sabathier, authors of the report
53. Claire Guiraud and Romain Sabathier made a [presentation](#) about the [mapping study on the place of boys and men in women’s rights and gender equality policies](#) (both documents are available on the GEC website). They identified three areas that men and boys occupy in relation to gender equality: as barriers to equality (for example, when they do not share the burden of unpaid work or when they are perpetrators of acts of violence); as agents of change (individually questioning their own behaviour, etc. or collectively, when men engage in feminist movements); and as co-victims of the gender system (men who are victims of violence from other men, or violence against gay men and boys or trans men and boys).
54. For each of these areas, the two experts provided examples of how public policies can help improve the situation, as well as initiatives already undertaken in some countries. They also identified risks linked to putting a stronger focus on men and boys within gender equality policies, including losing sight of the course set by international standards regarding the rights of women and girls, deviating from analyses which are based on agreed definitions and gender research, and the weakening of feminist organisations through increased competition. To counter these risks, the authors proposed recommendations for the Council of Europe, arising out of the mapping study, such as: investing in existing policies; responding to masculinisms, strengthening gender mainstreaming, elaborating operational guidelines; supporting research development and co-operating with feminist organisations.
55. The Chair welcomed the mapping study as a good basis to help the GEC in its discussions about future work on this area. In the discussion which followed, Kira Appel (Denmark) acknowledged that her views had been reflected in the report following her interview with the two authors. She added that Denmark’s position on this topic is that there is a win-win situation when including men and boys in gender equality. More time was needed to discuss the topic, noting that she did not entirely agree with the conclusions of the report and the virtual format did not allow for an in-depth discussion. She stressed that terminology is very important and we should not speak of men’s violence against women as “terrorism”. Ms Appel agreed with the six recommendations of the mapping study and was pleased to see that gender mainstreaming was included as one. Finally, she underlined that working with feminist groups is as important, as working with male groups, who should also have a platform to voice their concerns.

56. Ralph Kass (Luxembourg) noted that the mapping study provided clarification on terminology for which there is a lot of confusion. He agreed with Denmark on the issue of gender mainstreaming and not to create a new policy area for men and boys in gender equality. Furthermore, he also indicated that it was important to work on the basis of figures and to have gender breakdown data as a basis in all policy areas in order to know the scale of the problem. He thought the report reflected an antagonism as regards including men and boys in gender equality (voicing the fear that if too much is done for men, then women will be neglected), which should be avoided. Mr Kass agreed that the report contains some important and interesting ideas and he would send other suggestions for additions to the report directly to the authors.
57. Sami Nevala (EU Fundamental Rights Agency) informed the members about a [FRA survey on Crime, safety and victims' rights](#) which showed that men are predominately the perpetrators of violence (68% of violence against women is perpetrated by men; 81% of violence against men is perpetrated by men). The report would be made available to the members.
58. Karin Bengtson (Sweden) informed the members that her country works to integrate men and boys within gender equality policies and particularly addresses men and boys as regards education, violence, health and unpaid work. She pointed out that the report should not propose initiatives that target men and boys but rather integrate them in a gender mainstreaming approach, adding that some of the recommendations included in the report presented by Christian Mogensen could be integrated in the mapping study.
59. Ellen Beate Grotnes (Norway) supported including men and boys in gender equality work as a win-win situation and advocated for the need to look at specific issues targeting men and boys, and not just as perpetrators of violence and problem-makers.
60. Ana Arrillaga Adama (Spain) stressed that this is a very relevant subject, which needs dialogue, debate and education at all levels. She welcomed that the report referred to the 16 weeks of maternity/paternity leave for each parent, applied in Spain, adding that her country is working on a national strategy for the eradication of men's violence against women, which includes sexist masculinities and violence.
61. Anne Nègre (Conference of INGOs) said that feminist organisations had repeatedly tried to include more men in their work and reflections but had found that this created difficulties, as mentioned in the experts' report. She shared the position, according to her experience, that as long as there is not true gender equality, it is relevant to have women's rights organisations reflect on these issues, but the involvement of men changes the dynamic.
62. Claire Guiraud and Romain Sabathier thanked everyone for their comments and feedback on the report and said that the new data and information provided will be taken on board.

63. In summing up the discussion, the Secretariat (Carolina Lasén Diaz) said that the activity included in the current GEC terms of reference on this subject has been completed with the preparation of, and debate on, the mapping study. Note had been taken of all the contributions and proposals made by members, which will be discussed with the authors as they prepare the final version of the study. The Secretariat made clear that this is a report prepared by the experts, as a basis for discussion in the GEC on the subject of men and boys and gender equality. The proposal now is to allow more time at the November GEC meeting for discussion on future work on this topic, in the framework of the next terms of reference of the GEC.

- *The GEC took note of the presentation of the mapping study on the place of men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies, prepared by consultants Claire Guiraud and Romain Sabathier.*

e. Objective 2 - Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence

- Exchange of views with Marceline Naudi, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

64. Marceline Naudi, President of the [Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence](#) informed the members that GREVIO activities had not slowed down despite the COVID-19 situation and five out of the seven evaluation visits that were planned in 2020 had indeed taken place. Ms Naudi said that it was important for both the GEC and the GREVIO to keep the spotlight on the immediate and longer-term consequences of the pandemic as regards achieving gender equality as well as on protecting women and girls from gender-based violence. While the 17 GREVIO baseline evaluation reports to date do not reflect the effects of COVID-19, future reports to be published in 2021, and possibly beyond, will address the pandemic.

65. GREVIO's [2nd General Activity Report](#) had just been published covering the period from June 2019 to December 2020. From now on, GREVIO will move to annual general activity reports, highlighting a thematic area each time to shed light on the positive impact of the Istanbul Convention, as well as to show where the challenges lie.

66. Ms Naudi gave further information about GREVIO's draft General Recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women, on which the GEC had been consulted, and said that the final text should be completed by the end of 2021. She added that the aim was to provide guidance to parties in addressing the digital dimension of violence against women, building on the 2019 Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism and to respond to forms of sexism that represent a form of violence against women, as covered by the Istanbul Convention.

67. Ms Naudi spoke about the misinterpretations of the Istanbul Convention and stressed the need for a collective belief in its aims and purposes. Working collectively towards a common goal is best done on the basis of legally binding standards, and the Istanbul Convention has become an essential component in the European human rights framework. She encouraged the members to use the convention as a tool to offer women and girls more protection from violence.
68. Lilia Pascal (Republic of Moldova) expressed appreciation for the timely preparation of GREVIO's first General Recommendation, on the digital dimension of violence against women, and said the need for specialist services for victims of online violence was more evident now during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms Naudi agreed and said that unfortunately increases in technology brought increases in abuse. She said that while a new form of violence could not be added to the Istanbul Convention, it was clear to GREVIO that action was needed to address online violence and it was hoped that the General Recommendation would do this.
- *The GEC took note of the exchange of views with Marceline Naudi, President of GREVIO, on the current activities of GREVIO.*
 - Sharing experiences by states parties on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and information on further ratifications
69. Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair, Ukraine) informed the members about the positive developments in the second attempt of Ukraine to ratify the Istanbul Convention, including the support of the General Prosecutor's Office to the draft bill on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, expected to be considered by Parliament before the end of the year. She also spoke about an advocacy campaign which Ukraine is organising in the region with the assistance of the Council of Europe, international organisations and civil society. The campaign aims to overcome the resistance to the Istanbul Convention and to encourage ratification by other countries in the region.
70. Ana Arrillaga Adama (Spain) expressed the commitment and support of her Minister of Equality to the Istanbul Convention. A new law addressing consent (the so-called "yes means yes" law) is expected to be adopted in the next months. She underlined that Europe cannot go backwards and that the human rights enshrined in the Istanbul Convention must be a reality in all Europe.
71. Lilia Pascal (Republic of Moldova) informed the GEC that unfortunately she did not have positive news regarding the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, even though there is progress on the harmonisation of national legislation with the provisions of the convention. However, in 2020, two draft laws were adopted: one on the electronic monitoring of perpetrators, and another one to improve the protection of victims of domestic violence.
- *The GEC took note of national experiences by states parties on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and information on further ratifications provided by the members.*

- GEC comments on the draft General Recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women

72. The Chair recalled that the GEC had been requested by GREVIO to send written comments on the scope and structure of its first general recommendation, on the digital dimension of violence against women. The Secretariat (Carolina Lasén Diaz) explained that because of the short deadline given by GREVIO (15 April 2021), the Bureau had agreed that the Secretariat would forward some proposals to the GEC for their comments by 26 March 2021, before the Bureau meeting on 29 March, so that the complete set of proposals in document [GEC\(2021\)4 Revised](#) could be reviewed during the GEC's plenary meeting. Several members had expressed their support for the draft comments, before the meeting, while one delegation had made a proposal to be integrated into the final document which will be sent to GREVIO.
- *The GEC agreed on their comments on GREVIO's draft General Recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women and instructed the Secretariat to transmit them to GREVIO.*
 - Update by the Secretariat of co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning violence against women and domestic violence
73. The Secretariat (Marta Becerra) made a [presentation](#) about the ongoing-co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division. She gave an update about the [HELP course on violence against women](#), which is now available in 18 languages. The course is the second most requested and translated HELP course after the one on the European Convention on Human Rights. As a result, a complementary module targeting police officers will be developed in 2021, and then translated into other languages.
74. The methodology for awareness-raising campaigns on the Istanbul Convention targeting national NGOs, developed in co-operation with the WAVE Network and UN Women, was recently launched in three member states: Czech Republic, Latvia and Poland. This pilot work will continue with a national NGO in each country and then the methodology will be made available to other NGOs in the member states and beyond.
75. The [infographics on the four pillars](#) of the Istanbul Convention had been finalised and are now available in several languages on the co-operation website.
76. Work on the counter-narratives to mis-information on the Istanbul Convention has been a main focus of the Gender Equality Division's co-operation work and more specifically in the Republic of Moldova, where there is an awareness-raising project to demystify and disseminate accurate information about the convention. In addition, and more recently, a campaign has been devised in Armenia, in co-operation with the Minister of Justice and the United Nations.

77. Work has continued with Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation and, upon request, the Co-operation and Capacity Building Unit will continue to provide technical assistance and facilitate exchange of experiences, subject to the availability of funding.
78. The impact of the withdrawal of Turkey from the Istanbul Convention on the co-operation project in Turkey is currently being assessed. It is hoped that co-operation with Turkey will continue, but a decision had not been taken yet.
79. An [information document](#) giving more detail about the different projects is also available on the GEC website.
- *The GEC took note of the presentation on current and planned co-operation projects regarding violence against women and domestic violence, managed by the Gender Equality Division.*

f. Objective 3 - Ensure the equal access of women to justice

- Exchange of views with Jasa Vrabec, Chair of the Working Group on Evaluation of Judicial Systems (GT-EVAL) of the Council of Europe European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ), and presentation of the 2020 edition of the “European judicial systems: Efficiency and quality of justice (2018 data)”
80. The Chair introduced Jasa Vrabec, Chair of the Working Group on Evaluation of Judicial Systems (GT-EVAL) of the Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). Mr Vrabec presented the 2020 edition of the report “European judicial systems: Efficiency and quality of justice (2018 data)”, which had taken 20 months to prepare. The report is composed of three parts: [tables, graphs and analyses](#), CEPEJ statistics and [country profiles](#), and addresses topics such as the judicial budget, justice professionals (judges and prosecutors), courts (users, information and communication technologies, efficiency) and gender equality in member states.
81. With regard to gender equality, the report shows that of the 47 member states and 3 observers that had replied to the survey, 15 have a national programme or orientation document to promote female/male equality within the judiciary system. However, there are still very few states and entities who have specific provisions for facilitating gender equality in the recruitment and promotion of judges and prosecutors. Some specific figures from member states show that the glass ceiling still exists; while there are 54% female judges, there are only 34% female Court Presidents; there are 52% female prosecutors but only 36% are heads of prosecution offices. It is clear that the higher the level in the judicial system hierarchy, the fewer women there are in these positions.
82. Mr Vrabec invited the members to consult the [special file](#) on this subject which is available on the [CEPEJ website](#). His [presentation](#), which includes links to other information sources, is available on the GEC website

83. Ana Arrillaga Adama (Spain) welcomed the availability of this data and the importance of having it broken down among the different categories. She informed the members about the Organic Law on the Judicial Power in Spain which reinforces the training of judges and prosecutors, including on topics such as non-discrimination and equality between women and men, and the special legislation to combat violence against women. Such training is included in compulsory initial, as well as in-service, training. The training is complemented with awareness-raising meetings to improve gender equality in the judicial system. There are also some measures to ensure gender equality among judges and prosecutors and as pointed out in the presentation, while this balance is getting better, it will be important to see the evolution in the coming years.
84. Karen Bengtson (Sweden) informed the members about the measures to implement gender equality policy in government agencies in Sweden. In 2013, the government introduced a new programme to strengthen gender mainstreaming in selected government agencies. The aim is to develop the core activities and/or services provided by the different agencies in order to achieve gender equality policy goals and the results of each agency are followed up annually by the Minister for Gender Equality.
85. Ms Bengtson said that there are many different agencies within the Swedish judiciary which are part of this gender mainstreaming programme and there is also a specific responsibility to implement the national strategy to prevent men's violence against women. One agency, the National Courts Administration, implemented a project on how the courts treat everyone who comes into contact with them or how the premises should be designed to be perceived as safe for all users, regardless of gender. Some of the activities of the project included: a study of how judgments are formulated from a gender equality perspective; surveys to map and develop the work and to counteract abusive discrimination; integration of a gender equality perspective in training for managers; and mandatory sessions on gender equality and equal treatment for new employees, as well as looking at internal and external communication. Results have shown an increased awareness of gender equality; increased prevention work against discrimination, bullying, harassment and gender-based sexual harassment; and a contribution to better working environment and health.
86. Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair, Ukraine) thanked Mr Vrabec for his presentation and said that Ukraine has a female general prosecutor, for the first time, and as a result of her activities, combating gender-based violence, including domestic violence, was included in the priorities for prosecutors, and 2021 had been announced as the year to combat violence against women. She said that state and gender are very important to really ensure equal access to justice and not only to justice.
87. The representatives from Germany, Morocco and Serbia welcomed the presentation of this report and provided information about the increasing number of women judges and prosecutors in their countries, as reflected in the CEPEJ report.
88. Mr Vrabec invited members to consult and share the information of the database, which is also a collection of good practices, and he encouraged them to contact their national CEPEJ correspondent.

- *The GEC took note of the exchange of views with Jasa Vrabec, Chair of the Working Group on Evaluation of Judicial Systems (GT-EVAL) of the Council of Europe European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ), and presentation of the 2020 edition of the “European judicial systems: Efficiency and quality of justice (2018 data)”.*
 - Update by the Secretariat on co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning equal access of women to justice
89. The Chair reminded the participants about the [call for tenders](#) they had received from the secretariat for international consultants in the field of women’s access to justice. The purpose of the call is to create a pool of international consultants with the relevant background and work experience in the areas of research and capacity building on access to justice, gender equality and preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence to support the implementation of the project. Members were encouraged to disseminate the call among their contacts.
90. The Secretariat (Anca Sandescu) made a presentation about the latest developments on the implementation of the [regional project on women’s access to justice](#) which focuses on the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. The main objective of the project is to ensure the gender-responsiveness of the justice chain and to apply knowledge and practical skills on the Council of Europe’s standards regarding women’s access to justice. Since the last GEC meeting, the project has enhanced competences through a mentoring programme for legal professionals; organised national courses for legal aid lawyers on access to justice for women victims of violence; translated the [HELP](#) course on equal access to justice for women into the EaP languages; and through the launch of the HELP course by the [Synergy Network](#) , reached out to European Union countries that are leading the anti-Istanbul Convention trend, to raise further awareness on the Council of Europe standards. A [report on the Framework for measuring access to justice including challenges facing women](#) which includes recommendations for the EaP countries has been produced and is available on the gender equality website.
91. Anca Sandescu encouraged the members to consult the [gender equality website](#) where they will find all the tools and practical elements developed in the framework of the project, including an [interactive tool for gender mainstreaming in law schools](#) which is relevant for all universities throughout Europe.
92. She also drew the attention of the members to two events: the regional launch of the HELP course on Access to Justice for Women on 8 June 2021, and an international conference on “Women’s Access to Justice: Moving closer to full ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention” which will take place in hybrid format on 7 and 8 October 2021.
- *The GEC took note of the presentation the Secretariat on co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning equal access of women to justice.*

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

- Report by Vera Eloi da Fonseca, Chair of the Drafting Committee on migrant women (GEC-MIG)
93. The Chair of the Drafting Committee on migrant women, Vera Eloi da Fonseca updated the members about the work of this drafting committee. Two meetings had taken place since the last GEC meeting and members had received the reports of both meetings, held in [December 2020](#) and [March 2021](#). Progress continued on the preparation of the draft recommendation and the most recent meeting in March had concentrated on discussing the consolidated version of the draft appendix to the recommendation, as well as the large number of amendments received from member states and other participants.
94. Agreement had been reached on the terminology to be used in the recommendation, as regards the target group of each measure, as well as on the use of the terms “gender-based violence” and “violence against women”. It was agreed to follow the wording in the Istanbul Convention and use “violence against women”, while acknowledging that it would be necessary at times to use the word “gender” to address specific situations regarding women and girls.
95. The Secretariat (Cécile Gréboval) informed the members about the next steps of the work of the GEC-MIG. Following its next meeting (27-28 April 2021), a revised version of the draft recommendation will be prepared and sent for internal consultation to the relevant sectors within the Organisation, to the members and observers to the GEC and GEC-MIG as well to relevant stakeholders for external consultation. Following these consultations, a new draft will be prepared (early June). GEC-MIG members and all relevant stakeholders will have six to eight weeks (from early-June to mid-July) to contribute to the text. The revised text will be ready by mid-August for discussion and finalisation at the fifth GEC-MIG meeting, planned for end- September. The finally agreed text from GEC-MIG will be sent to the GEC by 10 November, for discussion and possible adoption at the next plenary meeting, in November 2021.
96. In the absence of comments from the members, the Chair proposed to agree on the approach and future steps of the work of the GEC-MIG, as presented by the Chair of GEC-MIG.

The GEC

- *took note of the reports of the 2nd and 3rd meetings of the Drafting Committee on migrant women (GEC-MIG) and the presentation by its Chair, Vera Eloi da Fonseca.*
- *agreed on the approach followed by the GEC-MIG to date, and on the future steps as outlined by the GEC-MIG Chair regarding the ongoing preparation of the draft recommendation.*

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

- 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

97. The Chair called the attention of the members to the online “multi-stakeholder consultation” launched by the [Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence](#) (CAHAI), which had been sent to the GEC members, stressing that the deadline for input was 29 April 2021.
98. Käthlin Sander (Estonia) informed the members about the third and fourth meetings of the CAHAI, which had taken place after her last report to the GEC last October. The [third meeting](#) focused on the finalisation and adoption of the [feasibility study](#) on a legal framework on AI design, development and application, based on Council of Europe standards. This legal framework should include non-discrimination, gender equality, fairness and diversity among the main elements. The [fourth meeting](#) focused on preparing the [multi-stakeholder consultation](#), which was launched in March 2021.
99. Käthlin Sander and the Secretariat (Cécile Gréboval) also participated in the meetings of two subordinate groups of the CAHAI – the Policy Development Group (CAHAI-PDG) and the Legal Frameworks Group (CAHAI-LFG). The GEC is also represented in two sub-working groups of the CAHAI-PDG: one working on a model for a human rights, democracy and rule of law impact assessment, and the other on recommendations for the use of AI in the public sector. Within the CAHAI-LFG, GEC is represented in two of its sub-working groups: one on non-discrimination, gender equality, fairness and diversity and the second is on scope, purpose, definitions and guiding principles.
100. Käthlin Sander reminded the members about the multi-stakeholder consultation which had been sent to all GEC members. She encouraged members to forward it to the relevant person in their countries and to also contact their [representative on the CAHAI](#). She highlighted that it was clear from discussions in the different CAHAI meetings, that while the CAHAI must take a gender equality perspective into account, it was important that member states and organisations include references to gender equality in their replies to the consultation, so that it is duly reflected in the outcomes of CAHAI’s work.
 - *The GEC took note of the presentations made by Käthlin Sander (Estonia) following her participation in the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) and in its subordinate Legal Frameworks Group (CAHAI-LFG) and Policy Development Group (CAHAI-PDG).*

- Meetings of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its subordinate committees

101. The Chair informed the members about her participation in the [second meeting](#) of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) which took place in February, at which draft guidelines on “upholding equality and protecting against discrimination and hate during the COVID-19 and similar crises in the future” were presented and discussed. The GEC Chair had put forward some comments to strengthen the gender equality perspective, some of which were accepted by the committee. There were several exchanges of views during the CDADI meeting and also with the Chair of its subordinate body, the Committee of Experts on Combating Hate Speech (ADI/MSI-DIS). The GEC Chair informed participants at the relevant CDADI meeting about the work which the youth and gender equality sectors had already carried out on sexist hate speech. She also raised the issues of some women being faced with particular forms of sexist hate speech and the particular targeting of some groups of women. She drew the attention of the participants at the CDADI meeting to the 2019 Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, which calls on member states to consider measures to define and criminalise incidents of sexist hate speech.
102. The GEC Chair also participated in two meetings of the [Committee of Experts on Combating Hate Speech](#) (ADI/MSI-DIS), which discussed the preliminary outline for the draft Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to combating hate speech, and agreed that it was necessary to include a working definition of hate speech. The GEC Chair raised concerns about the importance of taking into account sexist hate speech and its effects on women. She also submitted [comments from the GEC Bureau](#) with the aim of strengthening the gender equality and women’s rights perspective in the draft recommendation. A further consultation of all GEC members on the draft recommendation will take place during the summer.
103. The Secretariat (Daniele Cangemi) stressed that the work that the GEC members and the Secretariat are doing in these committees is critical to ensuring that a gender equality dimension is included in the future Council of Europe texts on both hate speech and artificial intelligence. He reiterated Kätthlin Sander’s appeal to the GEC members to contact their colleagues on these committees in order to support the need for a gender equality dimension to be included in the final texts to be prepared by these committees.
- *The GEC took note of the presentation made by Andreia Lourenço Marques following her participation in the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its subordinate body, the Committee of Experts on Combating Hate Speech (ADI/MSI-DIS).*

IV. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

- Exchange of views with Irena Moozova, Director for Equality and Union Citizenship, European Commission
104. Irena Moozova, the Director for Equality and Union Citizenship at the European Commission, informed the members about the first annual report on progress in the application of the European Union's (EU) Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. She said that while much remains to be done, there had been some important achievements during the first year of its implementation, including an increase in action to combat gender-based violence through the first Victims' Rights Strategy, and addressing the issue of online violence through the Digital Services Act (adopted in December 2020), which clarifies the responsibilities of online platforms. The European Commission is also working on specific legislation to support victims and prosecute perpetrators of gender-based violence, as well as on measures to address the persistent gaps in the labour market. Ms Moozova indicated that the commission was also looking at gender inequality in the EU's external action and had adopted a new Gender Action Plan for 2021-2025 in this respect. The EU's strategy includes a strong emphasis on mainstreaming a gender equality perspective into all policies and actions, and this work has been supported through the creation of an internal Task Force Equality in 2020.
105. In reply to questions from the Danish, Spanish and Ukrainian members, Ms Moozova informed that further progress on ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU is not possible pending the opinion of the European Court of Justice on the EU's accession to the convention, which is expected this summer. However, it has been decided to go ahead with the public consultation to assess existing legislation at the European level and Ms Moozova informed the GEC that it would be contacted about this. Legislative proposals are under preparation to achieve the same effects of the Istanbul Convention, should it prove difficult to get agreement on its ratification at the Council level, but Ms Moozova stressed that full ratification of the Istanbul Convention remains a political priority. Their legislative proposals will address all relevant issues in this field, including online violence against women and other aspects.
106. Ms Moozova underlined that as the EU and the Council of Europe gender equality strategies share several policy objectives, she believed this creates an opportunity to work together in order to increase impact in these areas. There had already been contacts and mutual support between the two Organisations and there is room for further powerful synergies in areas such as the dissemination of the Council of Europe Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, and working with the tools the Council of Europe has developed on gender mainstreaming.
107. Claudia Luciani stressed that the leadership of both organisations agree on the crucial importance of gender equality and the fight against violence against women, and that regular contacts at technical level would continue and were much appreciated. Alliances between the two organisations, but also with the member states and with civil society, and among the member states, are critical for success in this joint venture.

108. Finally, the Italian delegation informed members of their planned International Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment which will take place in Santa Margherita Ligure on 26 August 2021, as part of their events in relation with the Italian Presidency of the G20.
- *The GEC took note of the exchange of views with Irena Moosova, Director for Equality and Union Citizenship, European Commission, including areas of common interest for possible further co-operation.*
 - CSW65 – Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 15-26 March 2021)
109. Claudia Luciani reported back about the CSW side events in which she had actively participated and those which she had followed. The importance of the Istanbul Convention had been highlighted in several of the events on violence against women in politics and the power of conventions. The need to implement the Istanbul Convention had been underlined, including an increased understanding and awareness among members of the legal professions when dealing with women victims of violence. Events relating to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic had also shown that governments have made efforts towards combating the rise in domestic violence and, in this respect, reference was made to the Council of Europe [Secretary General's toolkit concerning human rights during the COVID-19 health crisis](#), and the work of GREVIO and the GEC.
- *The GEC took note of the information provided by the participants about the various side events organised during the Commission on the Status of Women CSW-65 (New York, 15-26 March 2021).*
 - Generation Equality Forum (Mexico, 29-31 March 2021; Paris, 30 June-2 July 2021)
110. The Chair asked Alexis Rinckenbach (France) and UN Women to send information about the Generation Equality Forum to the secretariat, by e-mail, for dissemination among the members.
111. The Chair invited the members to take note of the information provided by Thomas Thentz (Switzerland) regarding the forthcoming United Nations-related activities to be hosted by Switzerland. The 3rd United Nations World Data Forum (UNWDF) will be held in Bern from 3 to 6 October 2021. The programme will be structured around six thematic areas including gender statistics (thematic area "Leave no-one behind"). The week preceding the UNWDF, a Gender Statistics Week will be organised to include the 8th Global Forum on Gender Statistics, organised by the UN Statistics Division, and the Work Session on Gender Statistics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Further information on these events can be found on the website <https://roadtobern.swiss/>.
- *The GEC took note of the Generation Equality Forum which took place on 29-31 March 2021 in Mexico, and asked Alexis Rinckenbach (France) and UN Women to provide information about the plans for the Forum events in Paris on 30 June-2 July 2021.*

- Council of the European Union – gender equality agenda

112. Because of a shortage of time, the Chair requested that information regarding the German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies be sent to the secretariat for dissemination to the members by electronic means.

- *The GEC took note that the information about the gender equality agenda of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union (July-December 2020), the current Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January-June 2021), and the forthcoming Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (July-December 2021), will be sent by email following the GEC meeting*

V. Current and future activities at national and international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:

- German Presidency (November 2020-May 2021)

113. Stefanie Friedrich (Germany) informed the participants about the various events taking place during the German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, including the online conference taking place on 11 May organised in co-operation with the Council of Europe. During the Commission for the Status of Women which took place in March 2021, Germany organised a side-event on “Digital Gender Gaps and Opportunities: Fostering equal participation and ending violence” in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the National Council of German Women’s Organisations.

114. Germany also focused on LGBT+ topics and in November 2020 they organised an international conference on “Intersectionality and LGBTI Policies in Europe: Lived Realities of Lesbian* Women and the Recognition of Rainbow Families”. A second conference was planned for 5 May 2021, on the strategic policy measures to implement the 2010 Committee of Ministers Recommendation on [measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity](#).

- *The GEC took note of the gender equality agenda during the German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (November 2020-May 2021).*

- Hungarian Presidency (May-November 2021)

115. Rita Nagylaki (Hungary) informed the members about the gender equality topics to be addressed during the forthcoming Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, which include youth policies, children's rights and the protection of family values. There will be a particular focus on young people belonging to national minorities, non-discrimination, and support of young talents and volunteering. The Budapest Talent Summit will take place from 6 to 8 October 2021 and will provide a platform to share best practices and explore the aspects of talent management. Supporting women's talent will be a focus of the summit. From 23-25 September 2021, Hungary will organise a Roma conference which will present the lives of successful Roma women. The Budapest Demographic Summit will take place in October 2021 and the reconciliation of work and family life is closely linked to the main topics of this high-level event.

➤ *The GEC took note of the gender equality agenda during the forthcoming Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (May-November 2021).*

- Italian Presidency (November 2021-May 2022)

116. Stefano Pizzicannella (Italy) informed the members about the priorities of the forthcoming Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, which will be based upon the following four key priorities: women's rights and the fight against gender-based violence; children's rights and youth policies; artificial intelligence and human rights; and the protection of cultural heritage. A task force has been set up to organise the various events during the Italian Presidency and a programme will be developed shortly. More information will be made available at the next GEC meeting in November.

➤ *The GEC took note of the gender equality agenda during the forthcoming Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (November 2021-May 2022).*

- Icelandic Presidency (November 2022-May 2023)

117. The Chair introduced Ambassador Ragnhildur Arnljótsdóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the Council of Europe, who informed the members that discussions had already taken place about the forthcoming Presidency of Iceland which starts in November 2022. She announced that gender equality is a top priority for Iceland and the Presidency will focus on a number of topics such as the human rights of women, gender self-identification and the importance of men and boys' involvement in strategies and actions towards gender equality. Iceland will organise events to discuss best practices, policies and actions on preventing and combating violence against women and girls, sexual harassment, gender stereotyping, sexism and digital violence, as well as focusing on the rights of survivors of violence and the introduction of legislative steps to increase these rights. Ambassador Arnljótsdóttir stressed the importance of including men and boys in gender equality policies and how this can lead to men taking on equal responsibilities, particularly in the home.

- *The GEC took note of the gender equality agenda during the forthcoming Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (November 2022–May 2023).*

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

118. The Chair invited proposals from the members for the agenda of the next GEC meeting in November. Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair, Ukraine) proposed to have an exchange of views with representatives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). She said that they had expressed an interest in sharing information on common activities with the GEC.
119. The Secretariat (Carolina Lasén Diaz) said that the Gender Equality Division is in contact with OECD on different areas of common interest and welcomed the proposal. However, she pointed out that depending on the format and length of the next meeting, it may be difficult to have the exchange on the November's agenda taking into account the substantial items already foreseen for discussion and decision (draft recommendation on migrant women and refugees, COVID-19 and gender equality, future steps on the implementation of the sexism recommendation and the work on men and boys, etc.). It was agreed that the exchange of views with the OECD could be placed on the agenda of a forthcoming GEC meeting.
- *The GEC took note of the proposals by members for the agenda of the next meetings, including having an exchange of views with the OECD during one of the forthcoming meetings of the GEC.*

VII. Other business

120. Ana Aldama Arrillaga (Spain) informed the members about a new publication from the Government of Spain, "[Spain's Feminist Foreign Policy – Gender Equality Priorities in Spain's External Action](#)", which is a guide to Spain's external priorities in the field of gender equality, which includes women, peace and security, violence against women; the human rights of women and girls; participation in decision making and economic justice; and the empowerment of women.
- *The GEC took note of the information provided by the delegation of Spain on the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy.*

VIII. Dates of forthcoming meetings

121. The Chair informed the members about the dates of forthcoming meetings and hoped that the next GEC meeting planned for November could be a physical meeting in Strasbourg.

- *The GEC took note of the next GEC-related meetings: Conference “Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” (Online) (Berlin, 11 May 2021); 4th meeting of the GEC-MIG (Strasbourg, 27-28 April 2021); 5th meeting of the GEC-MIG (Strasbourg, 30 September-1 October 2021, date to be confirmed); 20th GEC meeting (Strasbourg, 24-26 November 2021).*

IX. Adoption of the abridged report of the 19th GEC meeting (14-15 April 2021)

122. The Chair went through the draft abridged report, which was adopted with one amendment proposed by Estonia. The Chair thanked the speakers, members and participants for their active participation, as well as the technical staff, the interpreters and the Secretariat, and closed the meeting hoping that the next one would take place in Strasbourg with everyone present.

- *The GEC adopted the abridged report of the 19th GEC meeting (14-15 April 2021) and agreed to its transmission to the Committee of Ministers.*

Appendix I

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

- *Draft Agenda*

GEC(2021)OJ1 Revised

II. Gender Equality Commission

- Annual exchange of views and main priorities for the GEC's Terms of Reference for 2022-2025
[Terms of reference 2021-2022](#)
[GEC Chair's reply to SG questionnaire \(September 2020\)](#)

- GEC working methods

- GEC Work Plan

Draft Work Plan 2020-2021

III. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality

2. Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

a. Draft 2020 annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy

GEC(2021)2

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

[GEC\(2021\)1](#)

b. COVID-19: one year on

- Report of the Seminar "Advancing Gender Equality: The role and situation for gender equality mechanisms in the context of COVID-19" [Publication](#)
- Exchange of views

c. Conference "Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action" (online), (Berlin, 11 May 2021)

*Concept Note
Programme*

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

Promotion of the recommendation on preventing and combating sexism

- Committee of Ministers Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism (CM/Rec(2019)1) – follow up/update on promotional activities
- Presentation of the results and outputs of the grant awarded to the European Women's Lobby (EWL) for the implementation of the Project "Mobilise against Sexism!", by Joanna Maycock, Secretary General of EWL

Oral presentation

The place of men and boys in gender equality policies

- Presentation by Christian Mogensen, author of the report “The angry internet – A threat to gender equality, democracy & well-being” (prepared by the Centre for Digital Youth Care, in the framework of the Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers) *Oral presentation
Report*
- Presentation of the report on the place of men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies by Claire Guiraud and Romain Sabathier, authors of the report *GEC(2021)3*

e. Objective 2 - Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence

- Exchange of views with Marceline Naudi, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)
- Sharing experiences by states parties on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and information on further ratifications
- GEC comments on the draft General Recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women *GEC(2021)4*
- Update by the Secretariat of co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning violence against women and domestic violence *Oral presentation
[Information document](#)*

f. Objective 3 - Ensure the equal access of women to justice

- Exchange of views with Jasa Vrabec, Chair of the Working Group on Evaluation of Judicial Systems (GT-EVAL) of the Council of Europe European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ), and presentation of the 2020 edition of the “European judicial systems: Efficiency and quality of justice (2018 data)” *Oral presentation
[Special file](#)*
- Update by the Secretariat on co-operation projects undertaken by the Gender Equality Division concerning equal access of women to justice *Oral presentation*

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

- Report by Vera Eloi da Fonseca, Chair of the Drafting Committee on migrant women (GEC-MIG)

GEC-MIG Reports [\(2020\)December](#) & [\(2021\)March](#)

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

- Gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe activities

Oral presentation

- 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

Oral presentation

- Meetings of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its subordinate committees

Oral presentation

IV. Co-operation with international/regional organisations

- Exchange of views with Irena Moozova, Director for Equality and Union Citizenship, European Commission
- United Nations: related activities
- CSW65 – Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 15-26 March 2021)
- Generation Equality Forum (Mexico, 29-31 March 2021; Paris, 30 June-2 July 2021)
- Council of the European Union – gender equality agenda:
 - German Presidency (June - December 2020)
 - Portuguese Presidency (January - June 2021)
 - Slovenian Presidency (July - December 2021)

V. Current and future activities at national and international level

- Council of Europe gender equality agenda:
 - o German Presidency (November 2020 - May 2021)
 - o Hungarian Presidency (May - November 2021)
 - o Italian Presidency (November 2021 - May 2022)
 - o Icelandic Presidency (November 2022 – May 2023)

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

VII. Other business

VIII. Dates of forthcoming meetings

- *Conference “Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” (Online) (Berlin, 11 May 2021)*
- *4th meeting of the GEC-MIG (Strasbourg, 27-28 April 2021)*
- *5th meeting of the GEC-MIG (Strasbourg, 30 September-1 October 2021, dates to be confirmed)*
- *20th GEC meeting (Strasbourg, 24-26 November 2021)*

IX. Adoption of the abridged report of the 19th GEC meeting (14-15 April 2021)

Calendar of forthcoming events and meetings

- *Conference “Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action” (Online) (Berlin, 11 May 2021)*
- *4th meeting of the GEC-MIG (Strasbourg, 27-28 April 2021)*
- *Generation Equality Forum (Paris, 30 June-2 July 2021)*
- *5th meeting of the GEC-MIG (Strasbourg, 30 September-1 October 2021, dates to be confirmed)*
- *Event on sexism (Cyprus, October/November 2021, dates to be confirmed)*
- *20th GEC meeting (Strasbourg, 24-26 November 2021)*

Appendix II**Members**

Andorra	Mireia Porras Garcia Head of the Equality Policies Service Social Affairs Department Ministry of Social Affairs, Justice and Interior
Armenia	Hasmik Simonyan Head of Division on International Co-operation on Human Rights Department of Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Austria	Valerie Dori Federal Ministry of Labour Unit International and EU social policy in labour law
Azerbaijan	Sabina Manafova Head of International Relations and Protocol Service Department State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs
Belgium	Barbara Brunisso Director ad interim Director of Equal Opportunities Ministry of the Walloon Federation Brussels
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Samra Filipović Hadžiabdić Director Agency for Gender Equality Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees
Bulgaria	Irina Ivanova Head of Unit Equal Opportunities, Antidiscrimination and Social Assistance Benefits Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Croatia	Martina Bosak Expert associate Government Office for Gender Equality
Czech Republic	Radan Šafařík Head of the Secretariat of the Government Council for Equality of Women and Men Acting Director of the Gender Equality Department
Denmark	Kira Appel Deputy Head of Department Department for Gender Equality Ministry of Employment

Estonia	<p>Käthlin Sander Head of Gender Equality Policy Equality Policies Department Ministry of Social Affairs</p>
Finland	<p>Päivi Yli-Pietilä Ministerial Adviser Gender Equality Unit Ministry of Social Affairs and Health</p>
France	<p>Alexis Rinckenbach Head of the European and International Affairs Office Directorate General for Social Cohesion Ministry of Solidarity and Health/Delegate Ministry for Equality w/m</p>
Georgia	<p>Guliko Matcharashvili Specialist Human Rights Secretariat Administration of the Government</p> <p>Ana Shonia Senior specialist Public International Law Department Ministry of Justice</p>
Germany	<p>Stefanie Friedrich European and international gender equality policy Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth</p> <p>Waltraud Dahs Head of Division Division 404 - European and international gender equality policy Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth</p>
Greece	<p>Georgia Papageorgiou Head of the Independent Department of European and International Co-operation General Secretariat for Demography, Family and Gender Equality Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</p>

Hungary	<p>Rita Nagylaki Women's Policy Officer Women's Policy Unit Ministry for Families Prime Minister's Office</p> <p>Brigitta Gyebnár Head of Women's Policy Unit Ministry for Families Prime Minister's Office</p>
Iceland	<p>Ragnhildur Arnjótsdóttir Ambassador Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe</p> <p>Tryggvi Hallgrímsson Special Advisor Directorate of Equality</p>
Ireland	<p>Deirdre Ni Neill Assistant Principal Officer Inclusion, Equality and Gender Equality Unit, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth</p>
Italy	<p>Stefano Pizzicannella General Director Office for International and General Affairs, Department for Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Cordialina Coppola Presidency of the Council of Ministers Office for International and General Affairs, Department for Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Cristiana Carletti Expert of the Department of Equal Opportunities Presidency of the Council of Ministers</p>
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Lithuania	<p>Kristina Jurkšienė Adviser Equal Opportunities & Women and Men Equality Division Ministry of Social Security and Labour</p> <p>Lina Charauskaite Advisor of Equal Opportunities & Women and Men Equality Division Ministry of Social Security and Labour</p>

Luxembourg	Ralph Kass Senior Advisor 1st Class Ministry of Equality between Women and Men
Malta <i>Malte</i>	Annalise Desira Senior Manager, Human Rights Directorate Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance
Republic of Moldova	Lilia Pascal Head Division of policy for ensuring equality between women and men Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection Svetlana Albina Consultant Division of policy for ensuring equality between women and men Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
Montenegro	Apologised
Netherlands	Basim Al Alousi (Vice-Chair) Gender Equality and LGBTI Equality Department Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
North Macedonia	Elena Grozdanova State Counsellor for Equal Opportunity Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
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Poland	Katarzyna Kaczmarek Chief specialist Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment Ministry of Family and Social Policy
Portugal	Andreia Lourenço Marques (Chair) International Relations Advisor Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality
Romania	Andreea Pascu Head of Unit National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
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Switzerland	Thomas Thentz Federal Department of Home Affairs Federal Office for Gender Equality FOGE
Ukraine	Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair) Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy Oleksandr Ostapenko Chief Specialist of the Office Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers

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Holy See	Anne-Julie Kerhuel Section for Relations with States Secretariat of State
Japan	Yusuke Sato Director, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office Sayaka Arimatsu Deputy Director, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office

Non member states

Morocco	<p>Fatima Barkan Director of Women's Affairs Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and the Family</p> <p>Rachid Meziane Department of Women and Children's Affairs at the Ministry of Justice</p>
Tunisia	<p>Sarra Chakroun Director of Planning Ministry of Women, Family and Seniors</p>

Participants

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Group of Experts on Action Against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)	<p>Marcelline Naudi President, GREVIO</p>
Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)	<p>Jasa Vrabec Chair of the Working Group on Evaluation of Judicial Systems (GT-EVAL)</p>
Drafting Group on Migrant Women (GEC-MIG)	<p>Vera Eloi da Fonseca Chair</p> <p>Louise Hooper Expert supporting the work of the Drafting Committee</p>
UN Women	<p>Nargis Azizova Programme Specialist UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia</p>
European Commission	<p>Irena Moozova Director for Equality and Union Citizenship</p>
European Institute for Gender Equality	<p>Živilė Macijauskienė Stakeholder Relations Officer</p> <p>Lina Salanauskaite Researcher EIGE</p>
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European Women's Lobby	<p>Joanna Maycock Secretary General</p>

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