



Strasbourg, 20 April 2022

GEC (2022) Bureau 2

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
12th Bureau meeting

Wednesday, 30 March 2022

REPORT

1. Consequences of the war in Ukraine

The Secretariat briefly introduced the item in order to inform Bureau members of developments within the Organisation which are of particular relevance to the GEC, especially as regards efforts to adapt both Ordinary Budget and Extra-Budgetary resource programmes to the current and emerging needs.

Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair, Ukraine) provided an update about the impact the war in Ukraine is having on women. She suggested that the forthcoming Gender Equality Commission meeting would provide an excellent occasion to discuss the impacts of the war as regards gender equality, women's rights and the challenges faced by refugees. Cases of sexual violence had been reported to La Strada and it would be important to include the NGO perspective in any discussions. Kateryna Levchenko also informed the Bureau that she had taken part in a meeting of GRETA to discuss refugees' vulnerability to trafficking. She referred to a potential role by GREVIO of ad hoc monitoring to States Parties to the Istanbul Convention (Ukraine not having ratified). And she recalled the need to include a gender mainstreaming perspective in all humanitarian responses, in particular to prevent gender-based violence against refugees.

Both Andreia Lourenço Marques (Chair, Portugal) and Andri Savva (Vice-Chair, Cyprus) expressed their countries' support for the populations affected by the war. The Bureau agreed to include an exchange of views on this subject during the next GEC meeting in May. Representatives of the Ukrainian authorities, such as the Deputy Prime Minister, or the Prosecutor-General, could be invited, as well as a Ukrainian NGO. It was also agreed that one main message should be to push for ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Andri Savva also mentioned that it would be important to emphasise the need to step up national action plans for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325.

The Bureau also proposed to include reference to the situation of women affected by the war in Ukraine in the conference on "work-life balance as a leverage for women's empowerment and promoting gender equality" (12 April 2022, Rome). The Secretariat was instructed to consult with the Italian hosts to propose that Kateryna Levchenko intervene on the subject of the economic empowerment of refugee women.

The Bureau also agreed that, should the Human Rights Commissioner, Dunja Mijatovic, accept the GEC's invitation, the impact of the war in Ukraine would also be included in the discussion topics.

2. Preparation of the 21st GEC meeting (Strasbourg, 11-13 May 2022 – 2.5 days)

The Bureau reviewed and agreed the preliminary draft agenda of the 21st GEC meeting and instructed the Secretariat to forward the convocation documents to the GEC members and observers. More detailed information about agenda items, such as the war in Ukraine and the exchange with UNESCO, would be provided at a later date.

3. Nomination of GEC representatives to participate in activities of other Council of Europe sectors

i. [Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion \(CDADI\)](#)

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the discussions during the recent CDADI meeting, which referred to forthcoming work on artificial intelligence, in cooperation with GEC.

ii. [Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues \(ADI-ROM\)](#)

The Bureau agreed to appoint Elena Grozdanova (North Macedonia) as the GEC representative to follow the work of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) in the preparation of a draft CM Recommendation on equality for Roma and Traveller women and girls. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to inform Elena Grozdanova and the ADI-ROM Secretariat about the decision.

iii. Artificial Intelligence

Due to a lack of time, discussion under this item was postponed to the next Bureau meeting.

4. Update on events

- CSW - New York, 15 March 2022 – “STEM education as a stepping-stone towards gender transformative climate change policies”

Due to a lack of time, there was no discussion under this item.

- Thematic conference - Rome, 12 April 2022 – “Work-life balance as a leverage for women’s empowerment and promoting gender equality”

Due to a lack of time, there was no discussion under this item beyond the discussion under Agenda item 1.

- CEDAW plenary session – invitation to GEC Chair to participate and present the GEC activities in relation to protection of women rights and best experience in promoting gender equality (June 2022)

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to discuss this invitation further with the Chair and to confirm a date for the exchange with CEDAW.

5. Any other business

- Draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls had been discussed at the GR-H meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on Tuesday 29 March 2022. However, because of lack of time, no decision had been taken on that day and discussions were postponed to a further meeting to take place in April. The Secretariat will continue to update the Bureau and the GEC members about developments in this regard.

6. Date of next Bureau meeting: 28 April 2022, 3:00 - 4:00 pm (to be confirmed)

Participants:

Bureau: Andreia Lourenço Marques (Chair), Kateryna Levchenko (Vice-Chair), Andri Savva (Vice-Chair)

Secretariat: Caterina Bolognese, Adrienne Looby, Ioana Borza, Christa Jakobsson, Evrydiki Tseliou, Hannah Hetgens (Trainee)