COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 24 October 2022 GEC (2022) Bureau 5

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
15th Bureau meeting

Friday, 21 October 2022

Report

1. Preparation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2019-2024

The Secretariat (Natacha De Roeck) presented the proposed calendar for the preparation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2019-2024. Kateryna Levchenko (Ukraine) remarked that it was a very intensive calendar but that it was good to have a roadmap. The Secretariat said that it was also important to plan enough time for discussion of the draft strategy at the GEC plenary meetings in 2023.

The Bureau agreed to transmit the document to the GEC members for discussion during the 22nd GEC plenary meeting (16-18 November 2022).

2. Forthcoming events

The Secretariat (Caterina Bolognese) explained that there were several areas of work in which GEC involvement was required in order to ensure a gender perspective in the activities.

- Nomination of a GEC representative to follow the work of the Task Force on freedom of expression, including contributing to the Secretary General's report on freedom of expression with a focus on the safety of women journalists (2022) and contributing to a 2023-2027 Council of Europe campaign for the safety of journalists.

The Secretariat (Cécile Greboval) informed the participants that the Task Force on Freedom of Expression is working on a report by the Secretary General. She explained that as the Task Force is an intra-secretariat group, the work on this activity for any interested GEC members would not involve attending any meetings, but would rather involve providing comments on the draft report, which will focus on the safety of women journalists. It would be important to ensure that the report includes the perspective and standards of the GEC.

The second part of the work in this area is the Campaign for the Safety of Journalists (2023-2027), aspects of which will include a focus on women journalists. Exactly how the GEC would be involved in this campaign was still to be clarified, but it would be important to nominate a GEC member to follow the campaign.

The Secretariat (Caterina Bolognese) proposed to circulate the information to GEC members inviting members to show their expertise/interest in this area of work. The Bureau would then decide who that would be on the basis of the replies received. The Bureau agreed to this approach.

- Possible nomination of a second GEC member to follow the Task Force work on artificial intelligence and participate in meetings in 2023;

- Nomination of a GEC member to follow the work and participate in the meetings of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence.

The Secretariat (Christa Jakobsson) informed the members that the Norwegian expert who had been nominated was no longer in a position to follow the work of the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and it was important that she be replaced as soon as possible. Andri Savva (Cyprus) was currently following this work on behalf of the GEC and agreed that it was necessary to have another representative. It was pointed out that the CDADI, with whom the GEC was jointly working on this topic, had six people following this work on their side (four experts and two secretariat).

The Secretariat also informed the members that the work on a future convention on artificial intelligence, which was under the mandate of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), would continue with a plenary in January 2023. This work had also been followed on behalf of the GEC by the Norwegian expert, so it was necessary to ensure GEC representation at these meetings as well.

Andri Savva confirmed the need to have someone with expertise in the area of artificial intelligence. The Secretariat (Natacha De Roeck) pointed out that it would be difficult to ensure that the GEC representative in such work would have expertise in both gender equality and artificial intelligence. She explained that someone with expertise in the field of gender equality, unconscious bias and/or discrimination law could be very useful in this area of work, in spite of not having expertise on artificial intelligence.

The Secretariat (Caterina Bolognese) said that GEC members who read the new draft study on the impact of artificial intelligence, its potential for promoting equality, including gender equality, and the risks to non-discrimination (GEC(2022)9) might be encouraged to come forward. She also explained that the GEC members could co-opt a governmental expert who is not a GEC member for this role, as was the case for the Norwegian expert.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to invite expressions of interest from the GEC members to follow this area of work.

The Secretariat (Natacha De Roeck) informed participants that both she and the GEC Chair would participate in the conference on drugs and gender being organised by the Pompidou Group in Lisbon on 22 November 2022. She said it would be important that the GEC continue to follow the work in this area. The GEC Chair confirmed that she was willing to follow this issue on behalf of the GEC.

Kateryna Levchenko mentioned that she had been invited to an international conference on "Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict", which will take place in London on 28-29 November 2022. She asked that GEC members be informed about this event. The Secretariat (Caterina Bolognese) agreed, mentioned the Council of Europe's work in this area and said she would also contact the GEC member from the United Kingdom to obtain more information about the event.

The Secretariat (Cécile Greboval) informed the participants that 16 December 2022 is the tentative date for the next (hybrid) meeting of the EC Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities.

3. Other business

- Feedback from exchange of views GEC Chair and GREVIO (Strasbourg, 12 October 2022).

Andreia Lourenço Marques (Portugal) informed the participants about the exchange which took place with the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) on 12 October 2022 in Strasbourg. She presented the work of the GEC on several cross-cutting areas. GREVIO members were very interested in the work, having appreciated the opportunity to comment on the guidelines on men and boys, for example. Looking forward to continue the good co-operation with the GEC, they showed particular interest in contributing to discussions around the report on the impact of COVID-19 on access to justice and around the future Strategy.

- Feedback from the CEPEJ meeting of the Network of Pilot Courts (Strasbourg, 13 October 2022).

Andreia Lourenco Marques (Portugal) informed the members that she had participated in an exchange with the Network of Pilot Courts organised by the European Commission on the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), briefly presenting the GEC work in the area of access to justice. The author of the study on "the impact of Covid-19 on women's access to justice", Lori Mann, provided the Network members with an overview of the report, which will be launched on 17 November 2022 during the GEC plenary meeting. The event was also an opportunity for the Secretariat (Anca Sandescu) to present the HELP course on access to justice. The Chair said that the exchange went very well, with participants showing great interest in the GEC's work as well as in the HELP course. The Secretariat (Caterina Bolognese) pointed out that the exchange was a very important mainstreaming opportunity, showing positive co-operation with the Organisation's justice sector.

4. Proposed date of next Bureau meeting: will take place after the next GEC meeting.

Participants:

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

Secretariat: Caterina Bolognese, Natacha De Roeck, Cécile Gréboval, Christa Jakobsson, Tryggvi Hallgrímsson, Adrienne Looby