

Strasbourg, 12 October 2023

GEC (2023) Bureau 5

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION 21th Bureau meeting online

Tuesday, 10 October 2023

Report

1. Update on the draft GEC terms of reference 2024-2027

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the draft terms of reference 2024-2027 of the GEC, including those of its two proposed subordinate bodies, were presented to the delegations in August and discussed in September by the Rapporteur Group on human rights (GR-H). No change was proposed, only one deliverable was added - a collection of best practices from member states on the involvement of men and boys in gender equality policies with a deadline of 31/12/2027. The Secretariat recalled that the next step would be the adoption of the draft terms of reference by the Committee of Ministers in November during its Budget meeting.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to send the GEC members the draft GEC terms of reference for information.

2. GEC24: Draft agenda and draft annotated agenda

The Bureau discussed the draft annotated agenda of the 24th GEC plenary meeting. The main focus of this meeting would be the finalisation of the draft Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 and sufficient time should be allocated for the discussion and adoption. The Bureau agreed that should more time than the 1.5 days foreseen be needed, some items would be dealt with by written procedure or postponed to the 25th GEC plenary meeting.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that 20 members have already confirmed their participation, including new GEC members from Azerbaijan, Iceland, Lithuania and Switzerland. The Secretariat confirmed that to ensure that the quorum would be reached, a reminder would be sent together with the relevant documents on 20 October.

The Bureau looked at the revised consolidated draft Gender Equality Strategy. The document incorporates all amendments adopted during the 23rd plenary meeting up to and including paragraph 58, as well as certain proposals from the Secretariat

pursuant to instructions from the members of the GEC, including the insertion of a box to explain in one single place the inclusive and intersectional approach adopted in the strategy. These changes would remain in bold, so as to be visible for the GEC members. The Bureau endorsed this approach and also agreed that decisions taken during the plenary meeting in May in respect of paragraphs 1 to 58 should also be applied to paragraphs 59 until the end, as this would facilitate the discussion. GEC members would be informed of the relevant changes prior to the discussion and would have the possibility to discuss those changes if need be.

The Bureau expressed great enthusiasm about the planned exchange of views with Síofra O'Leary, President of the European Court of Human Rights, and agreed that the focus should be on the principles of general application regarding gender equality and violence against women and domestic violence in the Court's case law, in view of the new Gender Equality Strategy. Where possible, the exchange should cover cases related to technology-facilitated violence against women and girls as well as cases relating to relevant developments in the area of artificial intelligence. The Bureau also took note that a Masterclass on gender equality for judges could be proposed as a concrete follow-up to this exchange.

The Bureau took note that the exchange of views with Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, the new President of GREVIO, would focus on the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention as well as on GREVIO's work on technology-facilitated violence against women.

The Secretariat presented the main conclusions of the report on the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, based on the answers provided by 28 member states and 9 NGOs. The Bureau agreed that factual mistakes could be corrected at the 24th meeting of the GEC but that no new contribution could be made as the report was due by the end of 2023 according to the terms of reference. In-depth discussion on how to further work on the implementation of this key recommendation would be proposed for the 25th plenary meeting, possibly in relation to the exchange of views with the CEDAW Chair.

The GEC Bureau took note that a new page on national campaigns to prevent and combat sexism good practices (including the Luxembourg campaign, for example) was under preparation for the Gender Equality Division website.

The Bureau took note that the Bureau would be renewed at the 24th plenary meeting and that 4 experts would have to be appointed for each subordinate body (GEC/ADI-AI and GEC/PC-eVIO). The Secretariat indicated that a document explaining the different roles and functions for which GEC members could volunteer would be sent to the GEC members together with the call for nominations.

3. Update on the work of other Council of Europe committees/ bodies (inclusion of a gender perspective)

The Secretariat provided updated information about the preparation of the HELP course on gender equality, which should be finalised soon, and about the development of a mainstreaming tool tailored to monitoring bodies.

The Secretariat provided updated information about the draft Recommendation on Equality for Roma and Traveller Women and Girls to be presented to the ADI-ROM for approval at its 8th meeting on 17-18 October 2023. Elena Grozdanova, GEC member from North Macedonia, actively contributed to the work.

The Secretariat explained that the draft Recommendation on hate crime was finalised and would be discussed and adopted by both the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) and the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion (CDADI) by the end of the year. Andreia Lourenço Marques, GEC member from Portugal, actively contributed to the work.

The Bureau took note that Sara Slana, GEC member from Slovenia, would take part in the meeting of the Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE) on 11-12 October 2023 to contribute to their work on comprehensive sexuality education.

4. Update on the preparation of the 2023 Annual Report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023)

The Secretariat provided updated information about the preparation of the final annual report on the implementation of the GES (2018-2023). The links to an online survey were sent in September to GEC members with a deadline of 8 January 2024.

The Bureau took note that, as it is the final report of this GES, Council of Europe entities and member states were invited to highlight two examples of successful and impactful activities on gender equality which have taken place during the entire six-year period of the GES.

5. Update on the CSW68 side event and 2024 annual conference (launch of the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029))

The Bureau took note that, in the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 68, from 11 to 22 March 2024, a side-event to promote the Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women would be organised in cooperation with Liechtenstein under its CM Presidency. The Bureau also noted that discussions are under way with the Lithuanian authorities about co-organising the GEC's annual conference to launch the new Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029) in June 2024.

The Bureau took note of the possible participation of a GEC member or co-opted expert from the Committee of experts on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (to be appointed at the GEC 24) in the Octopus Conference 2023 on Cybercrime, in Bucharest on 13-15 Dec. 2023.

Participants:

Bureau: Ralph Kass (Chair), Maria Ellul (Vice-Chair)

Secretariat: Caterina Bolognese (Head of Division), Camille Gangloff, Cécile Gréboval, Valerie Poppe, Evrydiki Tseliou