

Strasbourg, 21 March 2024

GEC (2024) Bureau 2

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)
23rd Bureau meeting
20 March 2024

REPORT

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda

The Bureau adopted the agenda.

2. Developments since the 22nd GEC bureau meeting

The Chair reported on the 2nd meeting of the Presidents of Intergovernmental Committees with the Secretary General (SG) indicating the need and usefulness of having such meetings to better coordinate and create synergies in the work of committees through exchanges between their Presidents and to take into account the importance of the SG in their work. He supported the proposal made by participants that such meetings should take place more often, if possible on an annual or biennial basis.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the successful organisation of the CSW68 side-event with the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein at the UN entitled “Catalysts for change: breaking down gender stereotypes in media and advertising” which took place in New York on 11 March 2024. The Bureau took note of some key messages expressed by panelists: co-regulation (state regulations and self-regulations) is needed to make gender equality progress in the media industry; there is a shift towards non-stereotyped advertising in some industries through quality cooperation with civil society organisations such as EQUIMUNDO; industry relies on the research provided by civil society as they do not always have the reflex or capacity of carrying out that type of research themselves; a promising practice in the advertising industry is peer review to debunk unconscious bias and stereotypes in advertising campaigns before they are launched. The recording of the event and other related documents and links are available [online](#).

The discussion turned to an exchange about CSW68, which was still under way. Sara Slana mentioned a side-event she attended organised by Czechia on “Boys don’t cry : the role of men and masculinity in prevention of gender-based violence” and proposed that information on the campaign in Mexico to combat violence against women through the lens of men be shared with GEC members and possibly shown to members at the 25th GEC plenary meeting.

The Secretariat provided brief information to the Bureau members on the meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies of 6 March 2024, at which they adopted the Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2024-2029.

3. GEC terms of reference 2024-2027

The Bureau agreed on the revised GEC workplan 2024 and on the revised timeline for the work of the GEC/PC-eVIO. The Bureau took note that the 1st meeting of the GEC/PC-eVIO would take place in September 2024 and that preparatory work would be ensured by the Secretariat with the support from an external consultant.

The Bureau took note of the report on the 1st meeting of the GEC/ADI-AI (20-21 February 2024) and that a first draft of the recommendation will be discussed and revised at the 2nd meeting of the GEC/ADI-AI, on 25-26 September 2024.

4. Elections, appointments and working methods

The Bureau took note that no GEC member had volunteered to act as focal point on SOGI issues within the 15 March deadline. The Chair expressed his interest to step in, being now responsible also for SOGI issues within his ministry. The Bureau agreed that the Chair would take on this position and that the Vice-Chair would act as substitute.

The Bureau was informed that the first meeting of the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics (ADI-SOGIESC) would take place in The Hague on 14 May and would be followed by the IDAHOT + Forum on 15 May. The Bureau agreed that the GEC would be represented by the Chair as SOGI focal point.

5. Preparation of the GEC 25th plenary meeting (16-18 April 2024)

- Draft agenda

The Bureau took note of the draft annotated agenda of the 25th GEC plenary meeting and of the following confirmed exchanges:

- with Ana Peláez Narváez, Chair of CEDAW, on CEDAW work with a particular focus on equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems;
- with Bertil Cottier, Chair of ECRI, on the on-going work and priorities of ECRI, with a particular focus on intersectionality;
- with Saša Gavrić, Associate Gender Officer, and Yulia Netesova, Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit (ODIHR) on gender equality in political and public life.

The Bureau was informed of the unavailability of the GREVIO President during the forthcoming plenary meeting. She confirmed, however, that she would participate in the 26th GEC plenary meeting. The Bureau aims to have the GREVIO Vice-President at the meeting in April.

The Bureau took note that Cyprus and Denmark have expressed interest to present promising practices on combating sexism as a follow-up to the report on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, and that France would confirm shortly. The Bureau agreed on the format of the presentations, namely a description of the initiative, the timeline and stakeholders involved, what worked well and what were the conditions contributing to the success and the limits identified and possible improvement.

The Bureau agreed to hold a preliminary discussion on the awareness-raising campaign deflecting anti-gender narratives to be prepared by the GEC by the end of 2025, to give guidance to the Secretariat on the preparatory steps to be taken.

- 2023 Annual report on the GES (2018-2023)

The Secretariat provided an update on the preparation of the 2023 Annual Report on the Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023) and the benefits and challenges of the data collection system used. The draft report will be discussed and adopted during the next plenary.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that it would prepare an evaluation survey on the data collection method for the attention of the GEC; the Secretariat proposed to establish a Working Group on the review of the data collection method and the format of future biennial reports on implementation of the new Strategy.

6. Gender mainstreaming and work of other bodies/ committees

The Secretariat provided information about the launch of the HELP [course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming](#) ahead of 8th March for International Women's Day. The course is freely available to all on the HELP platform and GEC members are encouraged to contact the Secretariat should they be interested in translating it into national languages and in promoting it. The GEC members are invited to provide feedback on the course. The course will also be used by Gender Equality Rapporteurs.

7. Future events

The Chair presented the first elements of the priorities of the upcoming Luxembourg Presidency of the Committee of Ministers: Culture and Living Together. He informed the Bureau that Yuriko Backes, Minister of Defence, Minister for Mobility and Public Works and Minister for Gender Equality and Diversity of Luxembourg would have a working visit to the Council of Europe on 20 November 2024. An exchange of views with the Minister could thus be foreseen during the GEC 26th plenary meeting. At the occasion of the launch of the Luxembourg Presidency, an opening concert will be organised at the Palais du Rhin on November 20th in the evening, followed by an official reception to which all the GEC members and Division staff members will be invited.

The Secretariat provided an update on the concept of the 2024 GEC annual conference to launch of the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029), to be held in Strasbourg under the auspices of the Lithuanian Committee of Ministers' Presidency on 30 May 2024. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to share with the Bureau members the revised concept note.

The Bureau took note of information regarding the conference in Budapest (11-12 July 2024) which will gather, among other stakeholders, the NGOs which received Council of Europe grants to raise awareness on the Istanbul Convention and counter disinformation. The GED budget could finance up to three GEC members to take part in the conference. Bureau member Sara Slana expressed her interest in attending.

8. Any other business

No point was raised.

9. Proposed date of the next Bureau meeting

The Bureau agreed to hold their next online meeting on 9 July 2024 from 10h-12h.

Participants:

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

Secretariat: Caterina Bolognese, Camille Gangloff, Valerie Poppe, Evrydiki Tseliou, Roza Cseby