



Strasbourg, 17 July 2024

GEC (2024) Bureau 3

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)  
24<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting  
9 July 2024**

**REPORT**

**1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda**

The Secretariat informed the GEC Bureau of the election of the new Council of Europe Secretary General, Alain Berset (Switzerland), as of 18 September 2024.

The Bureau was informed of the departure of the GEC Secretary, Camille Gangloff, as of 1 August, to join the Directorate of Programming and Budget. The Chair thanked her for the valuable support to the GEC. The Secretariat explained that while the recruitment for her replacement was on-going, two temporary reinforcements were granted to the GEC Secretariat as of September for a few months to facilitate the transition. It was also reiterated that the call for secondments was still open until 23 July.

The Bureau thanked Camille Gangloff for the excellent work over the last months, especially in the context of the work on the Gender Equality Strategy. The Bureau wished her all the best for her new professional challenges in the Council of Europe.

The Bureau adopted the agenda.

**2. Developments since the 23<sup>rd</sup> GEC Bureau Meeting**

Reflecting on the 25<sup>th</sup> GEC plenary meeting, the Chair highlighted the productive exchanges of views with representatives from different bodies and international organisations as well as discussions on how to deflect anti-gender narratives. Guidance was provided for upcoming work. He recalled the concerns put forward by some GEC members regarding a delay in preparing the draft Recommendation on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. However, he remained confident that the deliverable could be completed by the end of 2025. The Secretariat affirmed the views of the Chair and also underlined the relevance of the exchange of promising practices on the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism.

The Chair reported on the ADI-SOGIESC meeting and IDAHOT Forum 2024 he attended on 14-16 May 2024 in The Hague as SOGI focal point. On this occasion he shared information about the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 and explained the role of Gender Equality Rapporteurs. Bureau member Sara Slana, who was also in attendance at the Forum, raised that work must be done to foster productive cooperation between the ADI-SOGIESC and GEC, whilst also keeping specific policy issues separate. The Vice Chair was inclined to agree,

however she insisted on the need to create a platform of discussion on issues of mutual concern, which would be conducive to effective collaboration.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the participation of Elena Grozdanova, GEC Rapporteur on Roma and Traveller issues, in the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ADI-ROM on 15-16 May 2024. She congratulated the Committee on the adoption of the [Recommendation on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls](#) by the Committee of Ministers and presented the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029. She highlighted the need for continuous co-operation between the GEC and the ADI-ROM, where mainstreaming of issues is required on both sides. The Bureau agreed to invite a representative of the ADI-ROM to one of the next GEC plenary meetings.

The Secretariat then presented the main outcomes of the GEC Annual Conference [“United around gender equality: making space for women and girls”](#) held in Strasbourg on 30 May 2024. It marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Istanbul Convention and launched the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029. More than 200 participants attended the event that was opened by the Lithuanian Vice-Minister and the Secretary General. The Bureau appreciated the collaboration between members of the GEC, GREVIO, representatives of the Committee of Parties and various NGOs. In particular, the Bureau took the view that the input of the youth delegates was very relevant and should serve as a basis for future work. The Secretariat confirmed that in line with the initiative of the Chair, a debriefing meeting with youth representatives and GEC Bureau members would take place online on 16 July.

The Secretariat also informed the Bureau of developments which occurred at the CDADI 9<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting on 18-20 June 2024. Their work on equality mainstreaming and their deliverable on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination, to be done in consultation with the GEC according to their terms of reference, were discussed. The format of the consultation was not yet defined, but the Bureau agreed to ask the GEC representative in the CDADI, Andreia Lourenço Marques, to follow this work with the Secretariat should she be available. The meeting took place during the ‘No Hate Speech Week’, during which a variety of workshops on combating hate speech, including sexist hate speech, and anti-rumour work under way were organised. This was recognised as being helpful for future work to counter anti-gender narratives, and the utilisation of AI to identify such speech was also discussed.

The Secretariat also informed the Bureau about its brief presentation of the revised concept note on the joint work on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls during the 85<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the CDPC on 20 June. The input of the members appointed by the CDPC would be essential to ensure adequate coverage of the criminal law aspect of the draft Recommendation to be prepared.

### **3. GEC terms of reference 2024-2027**

The Bureau agreed on the revised workplan, with the Secretariat ensuring that it would be continually updated and shared with the Bureau.

The Bureau also discussed potential contributions by the GEC in relation to climate change and its impact on gender equality. The Secretariat highlighted that no deliverable was included in the GEC terms of reference. However, the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 provides a framework for such work under Strategic Objective 5. The Secretariat informed the GEC about ongoing discussions regarding the creation of a new intergovernmental committee, an ad hoc multidisciplinary group on the environment, to develop a Council of Europe Strategy on the environment, in which it is important a gender perspective is included. The Bureau agreed with

the proposal of the Secretariat to organise a first discussion during the next plenary meeting, noting that it would be interesting to ascertain whether any national good practices exist which address gender equality and climate change as an interlinked issue. References to exchanges at the EU level about some projects and initiatives were made, as well to the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Following the panel discussion on this issue during the GEC annual conference, it would also be important to involve youth representatives in this work.

The Secretariat provided an update regarding preparations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the GEC/ADI-AI, taking place on 25-26 September 2024. The convocation was sent to the members, and the first draft of the Recommendation would be circulated before the end of July. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, the Committee may need guidance on some items, and one would therefore need to foresee sufficient time for a discussion during the next GEC plenary meeting.

The final update from the Secretariat concerned the preparation of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GEC/PC-eVIO, taking place on 1-2 October 2024. The process was still ongoing to identify 2 of the 6 independent experts.

#### **4. Working methods**

The Secretariat gave an update regarding the survey about the reporting on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 and the preparation of the biennial report. A short survey would be prepared during the summer to collect general information about expectations from GEC members. It was also suggested to set up a working group of 3 GEC members during the next plenary meeting to provide support on the development of the questionnaire for the first biennial report.

#### **5. Preparation of the GEC's 26<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting (19-21 November 2024)**

- Draft agenda

The Bureau took note of the draft annotated agenda of the 26<sup>th</sup> GEC plenary meeting. The Secretariat highlighted that elections would take place to renew the Bureau, and that members should be appointed in the working groups on positive messaging to deflect anti-gender narratives and on reporting on the Strategy.

- Thematic Exchanges

The Bureau and Secretariat discussed thematic exchanges proposed for the next plenary meeting, as follows:

- exchange of views with the new Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, on the afternoon of 19 November;
- exchange of views on women in the defence sector with the Minister of Gender Equality and Diversity and Minister for Defence from Luxembourg, Yuriko Backes, on the afternoon of 20 November;
- exchange of views with the President of GREVIO, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, on the morning of 21 November;
- a first tour de table on gender equality and climate change, including with youth representatives.

Regarding the possible exchange of views with the Chair of the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, it was proposed to check whether it could take place in May 2025.

- Workshop

Following the GEC discussion in April, the Secretariat proposed a structure for a workshop - to be organised during the next plenary meeting - on positive messaging to deflect anti-gender rhetoric and creating a new narrative. It would begin with a presentation by an expert, followed by a plenary discussion, culminating in small group discussions to produce ideas for GEC action. It was agreed that these should take place on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of November.

- Other

The Bureau was also informed about the Council of Europe work with the Democratic Forces of Belarus and their interest in gender equality issues. A possible exchange with some representatives could take place in the margins of the next plenary meeting (or just before/ after). The Bureau agreed that this was a viable suggestion and instructed the Secretariat to plan this further.

## **6. Gender mainstreaming and work of other bodies/committees**

The Bureau was given a brief update in regards to the HELP course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a French version of the course was nearly completed, and a Spanish version was also in progress. There have also been requests for translations into Georgian and Ukrainian. Work to disseminate the course has also been instigated, targeted at networks and participants in gender studies and legal education. The Bureau was informed by the Secretariat about the GMT meeting on 4 June 2024 and of the finalisation of the toolkit on Gender Mainstreaming in Monitoring. Finally, the ENF-VAE and Children's Rights Division has begun work on the effect of pornography on children.

## **7. Future Events**

The Bureau briefly mentioned the upcoming conference "Synergy for change - Civil society raising awareness on violence against women in a context of global challenges" in Budapest, taking place on 11-12 July 2024. Bureau member Sara Slana and GEC member Samra Filipović-Hadžiabdić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) would represent the GEC. Its outcomes shall be discussed at the next Bureau meeting.

## **8. Any other business**

The Chair informed the Bureau of a letter he had received from the 'Voice of Survivors' association based in Luxembourg. The person in question had written to him as Chair of GEC about an individual case of violence against women. As the GEC is not competent to receive individual complaints, the Chair had asked the Secretariat to prepare an answer clarifying this.

## **9. Proposed date of the next Bureau meeting**

The Bureau set a provisional date for the next meeting the week of 7 October 2024.

### **Participants:**

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

Secretariat: Caterina Bolognese, Camille Gangloff, Cécile Gréboval, Evrydiki Tseliou, Roza Cseby, Anna Pritchard.