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25 June 2025

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

27th meeting

Strasbourg, 13-15 May 2025

Meeting report

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. Sara Slana (Slovenia), Chair of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), opened the meeting and welcomed the new GEC members. She highlighted achievements since the 26th GEC plenary meeting (19-21 November 2024), in particular the progress of the work of the GEC/ADI-AI on the draft Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence and of the work GEC/PC-eVIO on the draft Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. She recalled the forthcoming deliverables under the GEC's Terms of Reference.

2. The Chair underlined that the GEC would be holding exchanges of views with Nicole Ameline, Rapporteur on General Recommendation No. 40 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on the equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making systems, with Nina Grmuša, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), and with Maria Andriani Kostopoulou, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). The Chair further noted that the GEC would be invited to review and adopt the draft 'Practical Guide for public authorities to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls' as well as the draft questionnaire and list of indicators to report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029. Other important thematic exchanges would be devoted to narrative building and value-based framing, as part of the GEC's work on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements and discussions during the event "Youth engagement in gender equality: A Dialogue for Inclusive Action".

3. The Chair reminded the GEC of the informal exchange, organised by Kateryna Levchenko (Ukraine), to be held in the margins of the final day of the meeting with Iryna Dovga and Liudmyla Huseinova, both former civilian detainees and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as Katrien Coppens, from the Foundation *Restoring Trust in People and Life*.

4. Roberto Olla, Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, commented on the GEC meeting's comprehensive and motivating agenda, noting that its activities closely align with the Secretary General's initiative of a New Democratic Pact, aiming to make democracy stronger, more adaptable and more inclusive. He informed the GEC of recent developments at the Council of Europe, including the opening for signature of the Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer at the 134th Session of the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 2025. He also noted that the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment was expected to be adopted during that session. He highlighted that the related Action Plan includes a deliverable under the GEC's responsibility: a study on the equal participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, due by the end of 2026, which will also examine decision-making in environmental matters.

5. He further informed the GEC of the appointment of Thórdís Kolbrún Reykþjard Gylfadóttir as the Secretary General's Special Envoy on the situation of children of Ukraine. Recalling the transformative power of new technologies and the importance of preventing them from reinforcing or exacerbating gender-based violence or sexism, he stressed the relevance of the GEC's upcoming discussions on the two draft recommendations under preparation, underlining the need to ensure their quality and relevance. He concluded by emphasising the importance of the new reporting tools to produce analytical reports on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029 by member States, and reaffirmed that the GEC's work remains essential to consolidating and advancing the progress it sets out to achieve.

6. The GEC adopted the agenda as it appears in Appendix I to this report, deciding to include, under agenda item 11.4 (Cooperation with other Council of Europe bodies), an

exchange of views with Aoife Nolan, President of the European Committee of Social Rights, on its review on 'Social Rights and the Cost of Living Crisis.'

2. Report from the Chair of the GEC

7. The GEC took note of the information provided by the Chair about her participation in the Third Meeting of the Secretary General with Presidents of the Intergovernmental Committees of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 24 April 2025). She explained that the meeting served as part of the consultation process on the New Democratic Pact for Europe, and that this process is expected to culminate in 2026 with the adoption of the Pact by the Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States at the ministerial session. She informed that the GEC's annual conference (Malta, 17–18 September 2025) on the theme "Ending sexism and violence against women in politics: an essential step towards equal participation" is listed as contributing to the New Democratic Pact process. She also recalled that, in 2026, the GEC would begin work on a Study on equal participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, which will support the objectives of the New Democratic Pact. During the meeting, it was underlined that gender equality is a cornerstone of a functioning democracy and essential to democratic resilience and, as such, should remain at the forefront of democratic renewal efforts in Europe. A key message was that real democracy cannot be achieved without addressing the persistent underrepresentation of women in politics and the violence and sexism they face, both online and offline. The Chair emphasised that the GEC's ongoing work - including on the draft recommendations on equality and artificial intelligence, and on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls - directly supports this agenda.

3. Mandate and workplan of the GEC

8. The Secretariat recalled the Terms of Reference of the GEC for 2024-2027, as well as the deliverables to be completed by the end of 2026 and the revised workplan of the GEC for 2025.

9. The GEC took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and Maria Ellul (Malta) on the 2025 annual conference of the GEC organised under the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (17-18 September 2025, Malta). The conference will address the pressing issue of violence and sexism against women in politics, with a specific focus on combating such challenges within political parties and institutions. It will concentrate on challenges to women's participation in politics and explore solutions to address them, including appropriate legislation and accountability mechanisms. The conference will contribute to Strategic Objective 4 of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 on "Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political, public, social and economic life" and support the preparation of the Study on equal participation of women and men in political decision-making, due by 31 December 2026.

10. The GEC took note of the revised workplan of the GEC for 2025 (GEC(2025)1).

4. Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029

11. The GEC took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the outcomes of the 1st and 2nd meetings of the Working Group on reporting on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 (25 February and 10 April 2025). The Working Group had stressed the significance of including measures taken by member States to address intersectionality and the specific needs of all women, men, girls, and boys in gender equality policies; acknowledged the need to raise awareness of Council of Europe tools - including conventions, recommendations, resolutions, case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, and other resources - across relevant ministries, as well as the importance of

assessing their use and effectiveness to identify gaps and better inform future Council of Europe work; and recognised the critical role of partnerships with civil society in advancing gender equality. At its final meeting, the Working Group approved a draft questionnaire and a draft list of indicators, covering all six strategic objectives to reflect the priorities of all member States and enable comprehensive gap analyses.

12. Following an examination of both documents, taking into account comments made by delegations in advance of and during the meeting, the GEC adopted the questionnaire and list of indicators. The GEC congratulated the Working Group on the successful completion of its workplan.

5. Appointments

13. The GEC appointed Andreia Lourenço Marques (Portugal) as rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, and Radan Šafařík (Czech Republic) as focal point on the work of the Drafting Group on Human Rights and Drug Policies (DH-PDA). The position of rapporteur on the rights of the child is vacant.

6. Preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism

6.1. Work of the Committee of Experts on Artificial Intelligence, Equality and Discrimination (GEC/ADI-AI)

14. The Vice-Chair of the GEC/ADI-AI, Radan Šafařík (Czech Republic), informed the GEC of the outcomes of the Committee's third meeting (Strasbourg, 26–27 February 2025). Participants discussed a revised draft of the Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence, taking into account written comments received from the Committee in advance of and during the meeting. The GEC/ADI-AI also held a general discussion on the first draft of the explanatory memorandum. Key outcomes included agreement on terminology; strengthening language on intersectional discrimination, including by using the non-exhaustive list of grounds from the Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029; and clarifying that proxy discrimination may be either direct or indirect. Other substantive changes included references, where relevant in the text, to a graduated and differentiated approach, and revisions to the section on oversight bodies to align with European Union (EU) standards.

15. In this regard, the Vice-Chair reminded the GEC that the GEC/ADI-AI needs to coordinate closely with EU member States and the EU Commission to ensure compatibility with the EU AI Act. He noted that this approach stems from the Commission's provisional assessment that, despite the non-binding nature of the future Recommendation, it may have legal effects in relation to the EU AI Act. He further noted that once the draft text reaches a more stable form, the EU Commission will make a proposal to the Council of the EU, which will then be able to adopt a formal position. In turn, EU member States will be able to position themselves with respect to the draft Recommendation. He underlined that this process may take over two months, but that the GEC/ADI-AI Secretariat is working closely with the EU Commission and the upcoming Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU to avoid undue delays. The Vice-Chair called on EU member States to ensure that this institutional positioning does not hinder progress in the work on the draft Recommendation or contributions on its substance.

16. The Vice-Chair of the GEC/ADI-AI noted that the public consultation on the revised draft Recommendation had closed on 28 April, with over 30 contributions received. He recalled that both responsible steering committees, the GEC and CDADI, were invited to provide written comments on the draft explanatory memorandum by 30 May 2025, and may also use this opportunity to raise outstanding observations on the draft Recommendation that have not yet been addressed by the GEC/ADI-AI. These comments, together with the consultation

feedback, will inform the revised drafts of both documents to be circulated in July. He concluded by reminding the GEC that the Committee will reconvene for a fourth and final meeting (7-9 October 2025), before the draft Recommendation and explanatory memorandum are submitted for joint approval by the GEC and CDADI extraordinary joint session in November 2025.

17. **Germany** thanked the GEC/ADI-AI for its substantial work on the draft Recommendation and draft Explanatory Memorandum, noting that many concerns previously raised had been addressed. It welcomed that the draft is now more clearly aligned with current EU law, especially reflecting the risk-based approach of the EU AI Act and alignment with relevant EU Directives on equality bodies and violence against women. Germany suggested further alignment in certain chapters and called for monitoring obligations to be clarified and, to prevent overly bureaucratic burdens, for reporting obligations to be discussed after the implementation of legally binding international obligations on AI, noting that these could be fulfilled through existing international AI law. It also appreciated the draft Recommendation's recognition of AI's potential benefits to tackle discrimination and inequality and the emphasis on attracting women to information and communication technology professions. **Italy** reaffirmed its preference for an additive approach treating different forms of discrimination distinctly, within a legal framework that addresses the discriminatory act itself. It stated its appreciation for the reference to multiple or cumulative discriminations in the draft Explanatory Memorandum. **Bulgaria** recalled its position around the concept of gender.

7. Preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence

7.1. *Work of the Committee of Experts on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (GEC/PC-eVIO)*

18. In the absence of the Vice-Chair of GEC/PC-eVIO, the Secretariat gave an update on the work of the Committee and the outcomes of its 2nd and 3rd meetings. At its 2nd meeting (22-23 January 2025), the Committee agreed to focus the draft Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. It discussed key elements such as the need for a broad definition of accountability and the importance of a trauma-informed and technology-neutral approach, and held an exchange with representatives of Meta and Google. At its 3rd meeting (3-4 April 2025), the Committee addressed the importance of grounding the Recommendation in all relevant human rights, of safeguarding freedom of expression of those at risk of being silenced by technology-facilitated violence, of recognising misogynistic narratives, and of fostering an environment of accountability. Following the consultation of the public (14 April-26 May 2025) and the steering committees (17 April-20 June 2025), the revised draft Recommendation and Explanatory Memorandum will be discussed at the 4th and final GEC/PC-eVIO meeting (30 September-2 October 2025). They will then be submitted to the GEC and CDPC for joint approval at their extraordinary joint session in November 2025.

19. Member States thanked GEC/PC-eVIO for its important work and highlighted that it will serve as valuable guidance in addressing technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. **Germany** underlined the importance of using consistent terminology when referring to victims or survivors, noting a preference for the term "victim." It also expressed reservations on creating stand-alone criminal offences that include technology-related elements, as recommended in paragraph 10 of the draft Recommendation. **Denmark** regretted the absence of any reference to men and boys as victims of technology-facilitated violence in the draft Recommendation. **Germany** and **Denmark** called for keeping monitoring and reporting obligations to a minimum and, where possible, integrating them into existing frameworks. **Austria** suggested specifying in the preamble that the draft Recommendation address both individual and systemic accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and

girls, and that accountability is essential for fostering an environment free from violence. It also proposed highlighting the importance of primary prevention initiatives targeting boys and young men, and recommended explicitly referring to girls with disabilities when addressing child-friendly frameworks. Finally, Austria suggested explicitly referring to the need for gender-sensitive and unbiased artificial intelligence and machine learning to support effective content moderation.

7.2. Exchange of views with Maria Andriani Kostopoulou, President of GREVIO

20. Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), informed the GEC that the last general report on GREVIO's activities (January to December 2024) was published on 13 May 2025. She noted GREVIO's recent collaboration with the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) and the Pompidou Group, and further highlighted its participation in the work of the GEC/PC-eVIO on the draft Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women. GREVIO participated in over a hundred events in 2024 with a large range of stakeholders, demonstrating both the cross-cutting nature of gender-based violence and the growing relevance of this policy field. The President warned that recent evaluation reports show that policies addressing violence against women are increasingly being challenged, that advocates for women's rights are facing mounting pressure, and that numerous obstacles hinder the operation of support services grounded in feminist principles. Moreover, she highlighted that the reports underline the decline in tender and funding opportunities putting many initiatives on violence against women at risk, thereby jeopardising the expertise built over the years. She also presented the thematic focus section of the report, which examined the shrinking space for women's rights NGOs and the impact on women's rights defenders.

21. The President further drew attention to the growing exposure of young women and girls (aged 24 and under) to sexual violence perpetrated by peers, stressing the need to equip young people with the skills to recognise and respond to violence. She explained that the next GREVIO General Recommendation will focus on gender-related killings of women and girls, offering a reading of the Istanbul Convention through a gender lens to provide States with greater clarity and guidance. She concluded by referring to the evaluation work of her colleagues currently in Ukraine, underlining the impact of the war as regards violence against women.

7.3. Implementation of the Istanbul Convention

22. The **Chair** raised a question about the language (violence against women or gender-based violence) to address this phenomenon and about so-called gender equality fatigue. The GREVIO President recognised an overall human rights fatigue and explained that the language adopted by the Istanbul Convention is 'gender-based violence' as it focuses on a type of violence that disproportionately affects women and girls in a systemic way.

23. **Ukraine** referred to the GREVIO evaluation currently under way in in Ukraine and expressed concern that the Register of Damage for Ukraine does not cover victims of conflict-related sexual violence since the beginning of the Russian invasion in 2014. **Italy** explained that the government proposal (of 7 March 2025) to introduce femicide in the criminal code is currently being presented to Parliament, and that the next strategic plan on male violence against women is currently being adopted. Italy also informed the GEC of the publication in 2024 of a whitepaper on training professionals working with victims of violence against women. It is also preparing to work on issues faced by victims of violence against women with disabilities. The GREVIO President observed the importance of applying a gender lens to violence and recalled developments from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights that recognise suicide as a result of long-term gender-based violence.

24. **Georgia** informed the GEC that it had begun a new cycle of evaluation, paying specific attention to the issue of privacy on digital platforms regarding minors, who are particularly at risk of criminal offences such as sexual extortion. Following investigations on the issue, an amendment was proposed to make it an aggravated circumstance when the victim is a minor. The GREVIO President recalled Georgia's response to the GREVIO baseline evaluation report, which included an event with civil society organisations organised by the Government to discuss the findings of the report and to use it as the starting point of further work. She highlighted this as a good practice.

25. **Luxembourg** announced that a National Centre for Victims of Violence was recently inaugurated and that the next national action plan on gender-based violence, in line with GREVIO's recommendations, is expected to be adopted on 20 June 2025. **Germany** informed the GEC that it adopted a strategy to prevent and combating violence against women and domestic violence under the Istanbul Convention and established the national coordinating body pursuant to the Istanbul Convention in the Federal Ministry for Education Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. It also noted that the state report on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention will be submitted by October 2025. **Croatia** explained that following the publication of the first GREVIO report on Croatia in 2022, multiple steps were taken. The rights of victims were further incorporated into legislation, and several legislative reforms took place since 2019, including the revision of the criminal code to introduce the definitions of gender-based violence and femicide. Steps were also taken to encourage intersectoral cooperation and coordination, as well as to train professionals working with victims. A new national plan to prevent sexual violence and a plan to work with perpetrators are being prepared. The **Republic of Moldova** highlighted that it built new shelters designed to welcome persons with disabilities, that another one is being established, and that it is working both on opening more places and on ensuring that the shelters are staffed with the necessary specialists.

26. The **Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)** informed the GEC that the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination is preparing a report on promoting the Istanbul Convention and improving its implementation, with the aim to build on lessons learnt. It also informed the GEC that it created the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment, which rewards outstanding initiatives to promote the empowerment of women in all their diversity in Europe and beyond. **University Women Europe** asked whether parity could be an asset to prevent and end violence against women. In response, the GREVIO President expressed concern over the fact that women in position of government leadership are subjected to continuous violence and threats and stated that it is necessary to foster a safe environment for women to participate in public life. **EIGE** explained that the GREVIO reports feed into their work on the EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence as they represent an important source for indicators and related data and help ensure member States are not overburdened with monitoring. The GREVIO President stated her appreciation of the EU gender-based violence survey published by EIGE, FRA and Eurostat, and the rich data it contains.

7.4. Cooperation activities on violence against women and domestic violence

27. The Secretariat provided an overview of the 14 ongoing cooperation projects in the field of combatting violence against women and domestic violence as well as promoting gender equality, implemented in different Council of Europe member states and regions. These projects also tackle issues related to the rights of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women and girls; the digital dimension of violence against women and girls; supporting authorities through perpetrator programmes; and ongoing collaboration with civil society organisation as well as law faculties and students. The Secretariat informed the GEC that in 2025 a *Manual on gender-sensitive return of Ukrainian refugees* would be published, and the

pilot perpetrator programme developed in Kosovo*, leading to positive results, will be considered as a basis for further local adaptation in the context of Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine. Legislative amendments on digital violence against women and consent-based definition of rape have been supported in Bosnia and Herzegovina. New grants are being awarded to civil society organisations in Cyprus, Romania, Spain and Sweden until November 2025. The HELP course on violence against women has been translated into 28 languages and adapted to align with national contexts and legal frameworks. In addition, a new module on digital violence against women is being developed with the support of a cooperation project. The Secretariat reminded the GEC that a new cycle of the EEA Norway Grants started and encouraged them to reach out to their institutions to access this fund allowing for interesting opportunities of cooperation with the Council of Europe.

8. Ensuring equal access to justice for women and girls

8.1. Cooperation activities on women's access to justice

28. The Secretariat presented developments regarding cooperation projects on women's access to justice in the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership region and Türkiye. Among the positive and targeted achievements highlighted were a mentoring programme for legal professionals, which produced 22 mentors and 70 successful mentees (the second generation of mentors) under the Western Balkans programme, and the Eastern Partnership programme, which contributed to the training of approximately 300 legal professionals to remove barriers and obstacles to women's and girls' access to justice. Investing in next the generation of legal professionals and addressing gender data gaps are also in the focus under the regional projects. One of the good practice of established synergy between the regions of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership is the cross-regional meeting for legal professionals which took place in Tirana in November 2024, bringing together legal professionals to exchange on existing barriers, challenges and ways forward. In Türkiye, 134 women, including 40 Roma women, in earthquake-affected provinces, as well as 130 Roma women from other provinces throughout Türkiye, benefited from training on legal literacy. Finally, access to free legal aid in Türkiye was significantly increased with the support of the cooperation project, reaching a total of 352 women in vulnerable situations.

9. Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political, public, social and economic life

9.1. Exchange of views with Nicole Ameline, Rapporteur on CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making systems

29. Nicole Ameline, Rapporteur on CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making systems (GR No. 40) underlined the importance of the GEC and the CEDAW working more closely together in view of the current pushback against women's rights. She reminded the GEC that 2025 is a historic year, marking the anniversaries of several key instruments and events such as the Beijing Conference, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Sustainable Development Goals – in particular Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and the Mexico Conference. The latter is particularly relevant for GR No. 40, as it was during that conference that the concept of parity in governance was first established. She presented GR No. 40, which was designed as a roadmap to define parity in decision-making as a fundamental right. GR No. 40 is rooted in the preamble of the CEDAW Convention, which states that women must participate in decision-making processes in order to establish sustainable peace. Its goal is to tackle the

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

root causes of inequality, rather than merely addressing its effects. The expected outcome is to shift the current paradigm - one of hierarchical systems dominated by men that exclude women from decision-making - towards a more inclusive and balanced model. The GR No. 40 has been supported by 75 countries.

30. She noted that GR No. 40 is intended as an operational tool offering practical guidance for States. Its three objectives are: accelerating parity, innovating mechanisms to increase parity, and driving normative change and influence. GR No. 40 is built around seven pillars: (1) 50-50 parity should be a starting point and seen as an opportunity rather than a constraint; (2) new generations must be taken into account; (3) intersectionality should be embraced as a principle of governance; (4) a holistic approach is essential; (5) the concept of power sharing must be redefined; (6) the integration of private and family responsibilities requires a renewed approach; and (7) civil society should be mobilised around the foundations of a new model of governance.

31. Nicole Ameline further noted that, in the current context, the next step would be to create an Intergovernmental Panel on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda to scientifically look at the impact of women in decision-making on sustainable peace. She noted that, even in Europe, women continue to face segregation and she emphasised the need for decision-making structures to be held accountable. She called on States to revise their WPS plans to include the nomination of women to decision-making positions, rather than limiting their roles to those of victims or members of the military. She concluded by highlighting that parity is a unique right, as it introduces new solutions by fostering a new culture. She added that feminist diplomacy should be developed to support the path towards parity, and that regional organisations have a key role to play in promoting this renewed vision of women's roles in governance.

32. The **Chair** underlined the importance of GR No. 40 and welcomed the inclusion of youth in its scope. She then asked the rapporteur whether a 50-50 parity was not too ambitious in this day and age. Nicole Ameline responded that parity is not about exact equivalence, but rather a conceptual benchmark. In the past, quotas were set at 30%, which implicitly legitimised inequality. Today, the objective is for States to recognise that women and men must be equal at all levels. The 50% target serves as a strong signal to prevent States from adopting a relativist stance. GR No. 40 seeks to instil a new mindset and to advance awareness-raising and legislative measures to ensure that women's underrepresentation does not persist.

33. The **Conference of INGOs** asked whether it was possible to change the laws, culture, and systems of governance historically shaped by men, and whether a revolution would be necessary. Nicole Ameline replied that the drafting of the CEDAW Convention itself was a revolutionary act and that such a document might be difficult to draft in today's context. She explained that GR No. 40's revolutionary approach challenges the status quo in areas such as the economy, sustainable development, and disarmament. She stressed that normative frameworks must be reviewed to ensure women have a seat at the table.

34. The **CCJ** thanked Nicole Ameline for including future generations and underlined the importance of investing both human and financial resources in the WPS agenda and on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, not only in times of war but also in times of peace. The CCJ also highlighted the need to fund grassroots initiatives and to promote good practices, as women are often confined to the grassroots level. Nicole Ameline stated that the younger generations must be included and heard in spaces that empower them and make them aware of their responsibilities. She added that peace is not merely the absence of war, but the construction of an inclusive State - a process in which women must be involved. Without a system that guarantees their participation, such involvement remains unpredictable / doubtful.

35. **University Women Europe** raised the point that the underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) may contribute to their absence in areas such as capital investment or algorithm development. Nicole Ameline noted that although many countries enshrine gender equality in their constitutions, the key issue lies in the effectiveness of implementation. The gap between law and lived reality is precisely why parity must be re-evaluated and strengthened. A critical mass of women in decision-making bodies is necessary; otherwise, they are unable to assert their vision and ideas. This is one reason why changing how algorithms reflect societal norms is so difficult.

36. **The PACE Secretariat** presented the work of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination on the Resolution “Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary life: gender equality, accessibility, and inclusive policies,” which includes a reference to GR 40. Nicole Ameline explained that GR No. 40 was designed to be global and to include international organisations and parliaments, including political parties. She stated that both UN Women and the Open Society Foundations fully support GR No. 40 and that endorsement from the Council of Europe, through diplomatic and normative influence, would strengthen cohesion to back it up.

37. **EIGE** underlined that a major component of its work is to examine the impact of unpaid care work performed by women on their access to employment. Nicole Ameline acknowledged the importance of this issue and expressed CEDAW’s interest in receiving a dedicated briefing.

10. Ensuring women’s empowerment and gender equality in relation to global and geopolitical challenges

10.1. Developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements

10.1.1. Work of the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements

38. Kateryna Levchenko (Ukraine), rapporteur of the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements provided information on the outcomes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group (11 February 2025) and its activities. She recalled that the broad objective of the Working Group is to “develop effective positive narratives and to make proposals regarding the development of communication tools to be used by the Council of Europe and member States to promote gender equality and to prevent and combat violence against women in the context of anti-gender movements.” The activities of the Working Group are supported by two experts specialised in narrative-building in the area of gender equality and women’s rights. The first meeting focused on introducing the concept of narrative-building, and a discussion on the Working Group’s future working methods.

39. The deliverable to be adopted by the GEC at its November 2025 plenary will be a methodology comprising possible positive narratives to counter the impacts of anti-gender movements, along with suggestions for suitable messengers and recommendations on appropriate means of dissemination, whether by interested member states and/or the Council of Europe as a whole. Following an examination of several thematic areas that could be addressed through positive narratives, it was proposed to the GEC that the overarching topic of “democracy” could be the focus of the narratives to be produced. This would involve, for example, highlighting the positive impacts of gender equality policies on overall wellbeing and on the preservation of inclusive societies. The aim would be to address the most common anti-gender narratives, such as claims that “gender equality has gone too far”, that gender equality policies are “elite-driven” or that they “create division,” for example between women and men or between social groups.

40. **Italy** intervened to underscore the need to ensure that the GEC's work on positive narratives is fully aligned with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 and emphasised that institutional political action must be clearly distinguished from activism carried out by civil society organisations. Italy further expressed its interest in taking part in the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements.

41. The GEC appointed Italy to take part in the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements.

10.1.2. Workshop on narrative building and value-based framing

42. The aims of the workshop, which combined a presentation with small group discussions, were to develop a shared understanding of the concepts of “narratives” and “framing” and to help the Working Group and experts in further shaping and advancing the work on positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements.

43. The expert-consultants supporting the Working Group in its work delivered a presentation on developing positive narratives around gender equality. They explored certain ways the human brain functions and how the choice of words and framing can influence thoughts and opinions. The presentation also addressed core human values and depicted how these can be engaged through framing, particularly in the context of political campaigns. It further highlighted how promoting positive core moral values, as well as drawing on shared stories and cultural touchstones can support effective narrative-building. The main conclusions of the presentation were the following:

- Lesson One: We are not rational - we often base our decisions and opinions on emotions and on perceptions rather than reasoning or logic.
- Lesson Two: Frames create meaning – opinions about a phenomenon or a person depend on the way it is presented or depicted (e.g. presenting the current climate situation as either “climate change” or “climate crisis”).
- Lesson Three: Frames beat facts and policy details.
- Lesson Four: Don't myth bust – it is counterproductive to go against or even to repeat anti-gender arguments (“when you negate a frame, you activate it, when you activate it, you strengthen it!”).
- Lesson Five: Frame on core moral values -speak to the best of people (safety, fairness, freedom).
- Lesson Six: Target – know who you want to reach and why – the “moveable middle” (even if it is itself very diverse) is the segment of the population that can adhere to positive narratives.
- Lesson Seven: Tell a coherent values-based story.

44. The experts presented an overview of some harmful narratives regarding gender equality and democracy, such as: “Gender equality is imposed by elites and powerful institutions”; “Gender equality is framed as a top-down agenda forced by a privileged, urban, educated elite - out of touch with “ordinary people” and “real women”; “Gender equality and feminism are a threat to free speech”; “Gender equality is socially divisive” or “Gender equality as a foreign “ideology” undermining national identity.”

45. After the presentation on value-based framing, participants in the meeting formed working groups to discuss four questions:

1. In your work or context, what are the most challenging narratives countering gender equality, particularly in relation to gender equality being ‘anti-democratic’ and/or an ‘elitist imposition’? Which audiences are being attracted to these narratives? What values are these narratives trying to appeal to?

2. What kinds of stories could we tell that show gender equality as something desirable, relevant to everyday life – that would speak directly to the values of these audiences?
3. What kinds of stories could we tell that show gender equality as something democratic and that would speak directly to the values of these audiences?
4. Do you think there are times when our own language or actions might unintentionally feed the idea that gender equality is being imposed? What might we be willing to modify or rethink in how we communicate, to open up more space for support for gender equality?

46. During the discussions in working groups, participants stressed that democracy-related anti-gender narratives were common in many countries and that many member States were trying to address them. Feminist narratives are portrayed as opposing free speech and imposing a “politically correct” way of thinking. Contributing to this is the absence of gender-sensitive terminology in some languages, which perpetuates a sense of patriarchy. A common problem that leads to resistance is the misunderstanding of what gender equality is. The concept is often reduced to women only, or rejected in some contexts, such as discussions around sexuality education, because it is seen as a threat to the traditional family. Complex debates around terminology were considered counterproductive as they can risk losing sight of the objectives and making it harder to translate them into concrete policies.

47. The significant role of social media in spreading these anti-gender narratives was underlined, as well as the need to involve and/or address men and boys in this context. Some participants also mentioned that these arguments are sometimes found in non-political social media feeds (such as lifestyle-oriented accounts targeted at young men), enabling them to spread widely and rapidly, in ways that obscure their anti-gender nature. The use of nostalgia rhetoric about the “good old days” was mentioned as a mechanism to support arguments about traditional gender roles, oppose sexuality education or resist measures to combat violence against women. It was also stressed that these arguments find fertile ground in socio-economic insecurities, in the fear of losing status or economic power, notably amongst men.

48. Participants identified different ways to counter the democracy-related narratives used by anti-gender movements. These included deconstructing the male breadwinner model and the “zero sum” notion that one side’s (e.g. women’s) gains come at the expense of the other (e.g. men’s). Such arguments link gender equality with security and economy-related issues about, for example, women’s participation in the army or the labour market, using health-related arguments to show the downsides of unwanted multiple pregnancies for women’s health or showing the benefits of gender equality policies for the family, and for children and their safety. One option noted was to emphasise that gender-equality and relevant supporting laws benefit all women regardless of where they find themselves on the political spectrum. Gender mainstreaming was also highlighted as a tool to ensure that men do not feel left behind as it is meant to consider the respective situations of women and men in all policy areas. Promoting gender equality and mutual respect from early childhood was mentioned as essential, given the gendered socialisation of children.

49. The importance was underlined of engaging in dialogue with individuals and groups holding opposing views, and of the need to listen carefully and understand the fears, needs and concerns that fuel resistance to gender equality. Participants emphasised that governments have a responsibility to promote gender equality. Promoting gender equality should not be perceived as activism as this would be counterproductive and would make dialogue more difficult. It was noted that beyond messages, messengers were important and that it was essential to tailor communication to different audiences and age groups. The capacity of public bodies to use social media effectively, particularly to reach younger generations, was identified as a critical area for development.

50. In conclusion of this agenda item, the GEC expressed its appreciation for the work of the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements and took note that its second and final meeting is scheduled for 11 June 2025.

10.2. Gender equality and the environment

51. The Chair recalled that, following a request made by the GEC at its last plenary meeting (19-22 November 2024), the Secretariat prepared a compilation of good practices in the intersection of gender equality and the environment. The Secretariat also provided an update on the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 2025. The Strategy includes a gender equality dimension by acknowledging the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on women and girls, recognising their role as agents of change, and highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming in environment-related standards, policies and programmes.

52. The **CCJ** highlighted Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on young people and climate action, adopted on 23 October 2024, which promotes gender equality and calls for removing gender barriers to decision-making.

10.3. Follow-up of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls

53. The Secretariat presented the “Practical Guide for national authorities to support the implementation of the Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.” This Guide is meant to be used as a practical awareness-raising tool to support policy makers in the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 and contains practical checklists to assist development and implementation of law and policy in accordance with the Recommendation.

54. The GEC adopted the “Practical Guide for national authorities to support the implementation of the Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls” and asked the Secretariat to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for note to be taken of it.

11. Achieving gender mainstreaming and including an intersectional approach in all policies and measures

11.1. Exchange of views with Nina Grmuša, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth

55. **Nina Grmuša, Chair of the CCJ**, explained that their ongoing plan adopts an intersectional perspective on all matters, including a gender lens. She noted that, in her experience, youth work tends to attract mostly young women, while direct political positions are more often taken up by young men. She highlighted that the Reykjavik Summit acknowledged the importance of including a youth perspective to build better policies and that the Secretary General reaffirmed the idea in Luxembourg. She further noted that the Joint Council on Youth adopted Elements for a Council of Europe reference framework for a youth perspective as a key tool to strengthen youth policy and youth participation in policymaking in general across the Organisation and member States. The Chair of the CCJ described the GEC’s work as one of the best examples of youth engagement and informed the GEC that the CCJ is considering pilot projects with the GEC, the Ad Hoc Multidisciplinary Group on Environment (GME), the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO), the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), and the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDM), to show other departments how to meaningfully integrate a youth perspective in the Council of Europe’s work.

56. She reminded the GEC that young people are often invisible in data, as there is no legal category for youth. This presents a challenge, as the transition from childhood to adulthood brings its own set of experiences that should involve learning from and with young people. She also noted that the Recommendation on youth and climate action and the Recommendation on the social, economic and political participation of rural youth both include references to gender and underline the importance of adopting gender-sensitive approaches. She presented the work of the European Youth Foundation, which funds projects related to the CCJ strategic priorities, including projects promoting gender equality, and explained that the CCJ had developed a toolkit to help organisations applying for these funds to consider gender equality when designing, implementing and reporting on their projects. Regarding Ukraine, she noted that due to the war, their activities there focus only on girls, and have been adapted to address the gendered impact of the conflict on youth.

57. The **CCJ Gender Equality Rapporteur** emphasised that a youth perspective should consider the specific challenges young women face today, noting that they are growing up in a hostile environment marked profoundly by anti-gender movements. She further noted that, as women become more educated and progressive, they are increasingly targeted online, particularly when expressing feminist views. Retreating from these online spaces often means being isolated or left vulnerable. She underlined that, therefore, safe spaces are essential. She also pointed out that LGBT-phobia reinforces heteronormativity, which ultimately weakens women's positions as well.

58. The **Chair** asked whether there is a sense of fatigue around gender equality among young people and what young men's perspectives are. The **Chair of the CCJ** observed that civic space is shrinking in many member States, leading to declining youth engagement in democratic processes. She also noted a discrepancy between how many young men and young women share feminist content on social media, with women being far more active. The **CCJ Bureau member** mentioned an upcoming recommendation on youth in peacebuilding, which addresses everyday violence, including gender-based violence, and explores preventive approaches.

59. **EIGE** stated that it had begun integrating a youth perspective into its work and will continue by involving young people in its consultations. EIGE asked how to better reach out to young men and involve them. The **Chair of the CCJ** acknowledged that this is challenging, as many young men are increasingly drawn to masculinist movements that offer them a sense of belonging. She noted that the narrative around gender equality often fails to appeal to them or make them feel included.

60. The **CCJ Gender Equality Rapporteur** added that some young men are becoming more progressive than previous generations. She suggested that these young men should be empowered and provided with tools to connect with others and initiate dialogue.

61. **Luxembourg** observed that the work done in international organisations is often disconnected from the daily realities of young people. He asked how to engage those who are not privileged enough to access these institutions. The **Chair of the CCJ** responded that this is precisely the role of the European Youth Foundation and the Youth Department's cooperation unit. She also mentioned that the 4th European Youth Work Convention will address how to reach a broader group of young people. Another key element is ensuring the existence of youth spaces where young people can meet, engage, and express themselves. At the policy level, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has reviewed the Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. She also noted that it is unrealistic to expect young people struggling to access basic rights to be actively engaged in democracy. The **CCJ Bureau member** underlined that framing matters: messages must use

language that connects with everyday life rather than abstract concepts like human rights, which may not resonate with everyone.

62. The **Chair** asked whether non-binary data is easily accessible. The **Chair of the CCJ** replied that it is not, as national statistical offices generally collect data only on men and women, which also limits shadow reporting. However, some youth organisations have managed to gather such data through their own consultations.

63. **North Macedonia** highlighted ongoing research in the Balkans on the radicalisation of young men, including those under the age of 18, and asked whether this phenomenon is being monitored and whether it extends to other regions. The **Chair of the CCJ** replied that youth organisations are working on this issue, though the CCJ itself has not focused on it yet. She mentioned related work underway on hate speech, violence prevention, and informal education. The **CCJ Bureau member** was further noted that the CCJ does not currently cooperate with the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT), but that this could be a useful avenue to explore. **Sweden** pointed at the fact that this problem is not limited to the Balkans.

64. **Slovenia** presented two studies showing that young women and girls are specifically targeted online, with particularly aggressive comments aimed at those involved in politics. The studies also show that many young men have regressed in their views on gender equality, with around half believing that men are better suited to political leadership than women.

65. **Norway** explained that its government had established an advisory body to examine men's issues in gender equality, resulting in a forthcoming white paper on men and equality, which will include a youth perspective. It noted the low participation of men, and especially young men, in gender equality work, as reflected also in the demographics of the GEC meeting room, and pointed to the enduring stereotypes that discourage men from engaging in this field.

11.2. Event on 'Youth Engagement in Gender Equality: A Dialogue for Inclusive Action'

66. The Chair and the Secretariat introduced the interactive session on youth engagement, designed to provide a structured platform to explore key gender equality issues affecting youth, facilitate the exchange of perspectives, and develop actionable recommendations. Group work focused on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls as well as on anti-gender movements.

67. The two groups addressing technology-facilitated violence against women and girls identified key challenges faced by young women and girls, including individual impacts such as deterioration of mental health, threats linked to specific uses of technology and the ease of access to victims, challenges related to the lack of effective regulation, and gaps in information, awareness, and knowledge. In response, they proposed strategies including targeted awareness-raising campaigns, collaboration with families and schools, age-appropriate support and protection services, stronger regulation of technology companies, and capacity building and education, including through non-formal and peer-to-peer methods.

68. The group working on anti-gender movements identified how these movements influence young people through simplified radical messaging on social media, the appeal of male-dominated online spaces, lack of media literacy, and pressure linked to traditional gender roles and values. These anti-rights / anti-gender narratives feed from fears and insecurities about changing gender roles, the lack of perspectives for some young people and the economic situation. They respond to a need for identity, security and belonging. In response, the group proposed strategies including promoting the participation of young women and men in decision-making, supporting comprehensive sexuality education and gender equality issues

in education, building media literacy, investing in gender sensitive language, providing accessible mental health support in particular to young men, designing relatable and clear messaging, and reaching young people by engaging directly in the spaces where they already exchange ideas and form communities.

11.3. Gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe activities

69. The GEC took note of the presentation by the Secretariat about ongoing gender mainstreaming in the Council of Europe activities. The Secretariat stressed the different gender equality-related contributions regarding the future New Democratic Pact and the gender mainstreaming efforts on the draft Council of Europe Action Plan on Migration. Other examples of gender mainstreaming include addressing the disengagement and reintegration programmes for women with links to terrorism by the Council of Europe Committee on Counterterrorism (CDCT) and plans for possible gender equality-related activities in the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO). The final report of the ALL-IN PLUS project on gender equality in sport (February 2025) was also mentioned, showing the urgent need for policy implementation, financial investment, and coordinated efforts across the sports sector. The GEC was informed that the full results of the project will be presented at its November 2025 plenary meeting.

70. The Secretariat reported on the participation of the GEC and the Gender Equality Division in various intergovernmental bodies, with a specific focus on monitoring activities in 2024, including the production of a Toolkit on gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms and the organisation of a briefing event on the Toolkit in December 2024. Council of Europe staff should be encouraged to complete the “HELP course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming” as it will facilitate mainstreaming gender in their work. The Secretariat informed the GEC about the different language versions of this course. It is currently available in English, French, Azerbaijani, and Georgian, and will soon be available in Armenian (June 2025) and Ukrainian (October 2025). Additional versions are planned in Belarusian and Turkish, largely supported through cooperation projects.

71. Andreia Lourenço Marques (Portugal) reported on the 10th meeting of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) (27-28 November 2025). She highlighted the support for the GEC’s proposal to align the list of grounds of discrimination with those outlined in the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029. This alignment would ensure coherence in terminology across Council of Europe instruments. She noted that the first draft of the Feasibility study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination was discussed by the working group on intersectional discrimination in January 2025 and that the GEC Secretariat was able to submit comments. She highlighted the importance of the adoption of the Feasibility study on desegregation and inclusion policies and practices in the field of education for Roma and Traveller children and underscored the importance of including a gender-lens in the forthcoming draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on the topic, to address the specific needs of Roma girls. In her messages to the CDADI, she also recalled that gender-based hate, particularly online, disproportionately affected women and girls and tackling hate speech without a gender lens risked overlooking its most widespread and insidious forms. Furthermore, she stressed the need to incorporate a gender perspective in the comprehensive review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Finally, the work to map and further develop elements of equality mainstreaming at national and European levels could be pertinent for the GEC’s activities and could strengthen collaboration between intergovernmental committees.

72. Elena Grozdanova (North Macedonia) reported on the 11th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) (1-2 April 2025). She highlighted that the current outline of the draft Recommendation on desegregation and inclusion policies and

practices in the field of education of Roma and Traveller children specifies that educational needs should include a gender dimension, considering the specific needs of Roma and Traveller girls from socially marginalised backgrounds. It also foresees measures to tackle early marriages, as well as counselling and empowerment of young Roma women and girls, to be included in social inclusion policies. She noted that the ADI-ROM is currently working on its final evaluation report on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Travellers Inclusion (2020–2025), but that the gender perspective could be strengthened. She reiterated that the ADI-ROM has started drafting the new Council of Europe Strategy for Roma and Traveller inclusion 2026–2030 and that it will be open for written consultation from 10 June to 15 July 2025.

73. Maria Ellul (Malta) reported on the recent work of the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (ADI-SOGIESC), notably on the draft Recommendation on equal rights for intersex persons. The Recommendation addresses systemic discrimination and human rights violations against intersex individuals, with guidance on legal recognition, bodily autonomy, healthcare, awareness-raising, anti-discrimination measures, and access to justice. She also informed the GEC about the ADI-SOGIESC's thematic priorities for 2025, including the fight against hate speech on grounds of SOGIESC, and the development of a new Council of Europe Strategy for LGBTI rights (2027–2032), structured around three draft strategic objectives: promoting inclusion, countering disinformation, and combating violence and hatred.

11.4. Cooperation with other Council of Europe sectors

- ***Steering Committee on the Rights of the Child (CDENF)***

74. Anne Kayser, Secretary of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), spoke of the growing concern about widespread but often hidden sexual abuse of children, the rise in sexual violence among adolescents, the dominant role of online pornography in shaping their understanding of sexuality, and the lack of tools for children to recognise or prevent abusive behaviour among peers. The CDENF is therefore preparing a draft Recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for inter alia preventing and combatting violence against children. The GEC Bureau contributed comments to the draft in April. The draft Recommendation is informed by two studies commissioned by the CDENF: a 2024 Feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for – inter alia – preventing and combating violence, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour by children, which compiles research and promising practices from member States; and a Study on sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children.

75. Maree Crabbe, Director of the Organisation *It's time we talked*, presented a thematic guidance note on safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content, which was commissioned by the CDENF. The guidance note is primarily aimed at member States, with the purpose of enhancing understanding of the harms associated with children's exposure and access to online pornographic content. It provides guidance on key measures that member States can take to safeguard children from these risks, and an overview of the relevant legal, regulatory and policy context that can inform and support these efforts. The guidance note highlights children's widespread and early exposure to pornography, often unintentional, and the predominantly aggressive and gendered nature of mainstream content. It stresses the harmful impact such exposure has on young people's understanding of sexuality and gender relations, normalising risky and harmful behaviours. The key measures recommended for member States include providing proactive, coordinated and considered leadership; establishing an appropriate legislative and regulatory framework; educating and equipping parents and caregivers; educating and equipping professionals; educating and supporting children; and supporting research and innovation.

76. **Italy** thanked the CDENF for its work and highlighted Italy's multifaceted approach to preventing violence, including age verification laws, parental control tools, digital literacy initiatives, and efforts to promote gender equality through youth engagement, such as a national school competition on combating violence against women through video content. The presenters expressed appreciation for Italy's initiative and highlighted the value of ongoing collaboration. The **United Kingdom** outlined its new online safety legislation – coming into effect in July – which mandates effective age checks, safer content feeds, rapid removal of harmful material, user empowerment tools, and platform accountability measures to better protect children online. The presenters highlighted the importance of such measures, while noting that informal and peer-generated pornography remains a concern, underscoring the need for complementary action including through education on consent and respect.

77. **University Women of Europe** expressed concern about the increasing normalisation of prostitution among young girls in state-funded institutions. The **CCJ** inquired whether the guidance note also addresses the issue of revenge pornography involving underage children, particularly girls. The presenters acknowledged that the prostitution of girls and revenge pornography are serious concerns. They pointed out that these issues fall outside the scope of the current guidance, which primarily addresses children's exposure to legal pornography and its effects on attitudes.

- ***Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI)***

78. Käthlin Sander, member of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its Gender Equality Rapporteur, introduced the feasibility study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination, which is currently being prepared by a CDADI working group. She highlighted that the concept of intersectional discrimination has been recognised in Council of Europe work for over a decade, notably by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and increasingly CDADI's own standards, including recent recommendations. In this context, Käthlin Sander commended the important work already undertaken by the GEC on intersectionality, including its integration in the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 and its specific mention in various Recommendations. At the same time, challenges remain in translating the concept of intersectional discrimination into actionable law and policy. The feasibility study aims to support member States with the necessary knowledge and guidance to operationalise intersectional discrimination approaches at the national level.

79. Dr Shreya Atrey, the independent expert drafting the study, presented the structure and methodology of the study. The study highlights that intersectional discrimination arises from grounds that are co-constituted – that is, disadvantage is shaped jointly by multiple grounds in ways that cannot be disentangled. It is divided into three parts: a conceptual section on the meaning of intersectionality and intersectional discrimination, an overview of law, policy and practice across the Council of Europe's member States, and a final section proposing an eight-part model for change. The model for change proposes: streamlining terminology to "intersectional discrimination"; adopting a clear conceptual definition reflecting qualitatively distinct patterns of disadvantage; taking positive measures to address and prevent it; ensuring coordination across grounds of discrimination; issuing adjudicative guidance; improving disaggregated data collection; promoting awareness through education, art and culture; and centering the right to participation of those affected. The study draws on existing Council of Europe instruments and national examples to formulate its recommendations. Written consultations with the GEC are scheduled to begin on 10 June 2025, with a view to finalising the study by autumn and adopting it at the November CDADI meeting.

80. In response to a question by **Luxembourg** about the timeline for this work, Käthlin Sander confirmed that the plan is to open a written consultation in June 2025, review the feedback in October 2025, and finalise and adopt the study by November 2025. **Denmark** recalled that men can also suffer from intersectional discrimination and noted that, while a recommendation is a possible tool, other options for action should also be considered. **Belgium** expressed support for the ongoing work and noted its 2023 law recognising multiple discriminations, including cumulative and intersectional discrimination. It requested that the Secretariat take into account all gender- and sex-related discriminations in legislation and institutions. Furthermore, Belgium sought clarification that the study's adoption in November will be by CDADI, not formally by the GEC, which the presenters confirmed.

- ***European Committee of Social Rights***

81. Aoife Nolan, President of the European Committee of Social Rights, and Kristine Dupate, General Rapporteur of the European Committee of Social Rights, provided an overview of the work of the Committee in the intersection of social rights and gender equality. Kristine Dupate presented the gender equality framework under the European Social Charter, and in this regard, noted that Article E prohibits discrimination, including on the basis of sex, across all Charter rights, while specific provisions guarantee equal pay (Article 4(3)), maternity protection (Article 8), equal opportunities in employment (Article 20), dignity at work including protection from sexual harassment (Article 26), and support for workers with family responsibilities (Article 27). The European Committee of Social Rights has interpreted the European Social Charter to include non-discriminatory access to healthcare, protection against dismissal, and effective remedies, with Committee decisions addressing issues such as gender-based violence, unequal pay, and segregation in maternity care.

82. Aoife Nolan presented the European Committee of Social Rights' review which focused on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on social rights. She highlighted how rising essential costs are outpacing incomes, with women disproportionately affected due to lower earnings, unpaid care burdens, and increased exposure to poverty and energy insecurity. Although the review did not include gender-specific questions, it found that States often failed to address the distinct impact of cost-of-living crisis on women, including single mothers and women in precarious jobs. The review underscored the need for gender-sensitive, rights-based, and participatory measures, with disaggregated data to ensure that policies address both immediate and long-term effects.

83. In response to **Luxembourg's** question whether the European Social Charter creates individual rights, Aoife Nolan explained that it does, but that the collective complaints mechanism addresses systemic violations rather than individual cases. The **Conference of INGOs** asked how more countries can be encouraged to accept the collective complaints procedure. Aoife Nolan responded that national-level advocacy is key, as it can help States identify opportunities to strengthen their commitment to social rights. **Sweden** asked whether the review considered measures such as tax cuts and fuel price reductions. Aoife Nolan confirmed that the review covered a wide range of such measures, though it found that while many had positive short-term impacts, they often failed to address underlying structural inequalities.

12. Gender equality activities in multilateral settings

12.1. Gender equality activities of the Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers

84. The GEC took note of the information provided by representatives of Luxembourg, Malta and the Republic of Moldova about the gender equality programme of their respective and forthcoming presidencies of the Committee of Ministers.

85. **Luxembourg** placed gender equality at the top of its priorities during its Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, as illustrated by the exchange held with Yuriko Backes, Minister for Gender Equality, Minister of Defence and Minister for Mobility and Public Works, at the GEC's 26th meeting (19-21 November 2024). The overarching theme of violence against women in public, political, social and economic life was the focus of the side-event co-organised with the Council of Europe during the 69th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on "Threats and Opportunities of Digital Technologies: Women in the Public Eye," which attracted significant attention.

86. **Malta** presented the priorities for its Presidency of the Committee of Ministers: engaging and empowering young people in democratic life, enhancing and promoting the protection of children, combating violence and discrimination in all its forms while promoting equality, safeguarding the European Convention on Human Rights, safeguarding democracy and the rule of law principles, seeking justice and accountability for Ukraine, and promoting cultural heritage and a shared European identity. Malta will kick off its presidency with the IDAHOT+ Forum. It will then host a high-level conference on combatting human trafficking in June and the GEC annual conference on "Ending sexism and violence against women in politics: an essential step towards equal participation" in September.

87. The **Republic of Moldova** informed the GEC of several upcoming events: a parliamentary dialogue on the implementation of Istanbul Convention in November; a roundtable on the role of parliamentarians to combat violence against women and to implement the Istanbul Convention on 21 November; a '16 days of activism' campaign with a set of thematic events, supported by the Council of Europe office in Chisinau from 25 November to 10 December; and a thematic event on enhancing women's participation in local and regional elections, which will address the challenges and best practices on women engaged in electoral processes. The Republic of Moldova will co-organise with the Council of Europe side-event at the 70th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2026 and host a national conference on the intersectional response to gender-based violence to create a meaningful platform for cooperation, coordination and dialogue in line with the values of the Council of Europe.

12.2. United Nations - Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69)

88. The GEC took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and the representative of Luxembourg regarding the successful side-event "Threats and Opportunities of Digital Technologies: Women in the Public Eye," organised by the Council of Europe and the Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the UN during Luxembourg's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. The discussions focused on how international regulations, research and advocacy, and measures by the technology industry can contribute to combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. There was broad agreement on the need for bold, coordinated, and complementary international and national regulations, as well as stronger partnerships between NGOs and tech platforms - and among platforms themselves - to develop evidence-based measures to fight this violence. Key takeaways from the event included the recognition that women in the public eye should be heard by law enforcement agencies when seeking protection not only of their physical integrity but also of their reputation and dignity. It was also emphasised that tech platforms must be held accountable, given their capacity to take effective action to combat technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.

89. The GEC took note of the information on their CSW side-events provided by the representatives of **Armenia, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine**. The GEC also took note of the information provided by the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Team on the side-event organised by the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (GFOD) with UN Women.

12.3. Gender equality activities of the Presidencies of the Council of the European Union

90. The GEC took note of the information provided by representatives of Hungary and Denmark about the gender equality programme of their respective presidencies of the Council of the European Union.

91. **Hungary** informed the GEC that its Presidency focused on promoting equal opportunities and advancing negotiations on the draft directive on equal treatment. It aimed to support the reconciliation of work and family life, with an emphasis on intergenerational cooperation and solidarity in the context of a shrinking population, an ageing society, and other demographic challenges affecting families. The Hungarian Presidency also paid particular attention to mental health issues, especially those affecting women. Several side events on these topics were organised during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

92. **Denmark** noted that, under the Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality (Poland, Denmark, and Cyprus), which covers the period from January 2025 to June 2026, it will focus on combating gender-based violence, with a particular emphasis on prevention, early detection, and intervention. This includes tackling gender stereotypes that contribute to or justify violence. Denmark will propose draft EU Council conclusions on the prevention, detection, and early intervention in cases of gender-based violence for approval by the EPSCO Council. The Danish Presidency will also focus on the human rights of women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights. It will aim to strengthen the involvement of men and boys as allies and beneficiaries of gender equality, and to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTI+ persons.

13. Preparation of the next meeting

93. The Chair reminded members that the 28th meeting of the GEC will take place from 18 to 20 November 2025 in Strasbourg, as previously agreed. She noted that the agenda would be particularly full, with the GEC expected to approve three key deliverables: two draft Committee of Ministers recommendations and the GEC's deliverable on positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements. She provided information on the joint adoption process for the two draft recommendations. The CDADI will meet on the same dates as the GEC and this will enable joint adoption of the draft Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence. As the CDPC will meet the following week, GEC members will be asked to participate in an online session during the CDPC meeting to adopt the draft Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. The Chair explained that the logistical arrangements for both adoptions are being coordinated by the Secretariats of the three committees and that further details will be communicated in due course.

94. The Chair also informed the GEC that, as the 2024–2025 biennium progresses, the Commission will need to begin evaluating its work and considering possible future activities. While its Terms of Reference for 2026–2027 are already approved and no changes are expected, the GEC will be invited in 2026 to make proposals in relation to its Terms of Reference for the next four-year cycle (2028–2031). She further noted that an agenda item on the “Evaluation of activities” would be included in the next meeting and she encouraged members to begin reflecting on this.

14. Other business

95. The Secretariat informed the GEC about the outcomes of the Committee of Ministers' Session at ministerial level held earlier in the week. In the context of the follow-up to the Reykjavik Declaration, two decisions on gender equality were adopted. The first strongly encourages all member States to contribute actively to the implementation of the new Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029 and to uphold the Council of Europe's long-standing commitment to gender equality. The second encourages member States to continue adopting and implementing comprehensive measures to harness the positive potential of digital technologies to advance gender equality and prevent technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, while ensuring that such technologies do not perpetuate or amplify gender-based violence, online sexual exploitation, or sexism.

15. Adoption of the abridged report of the 27th meeting

96. The GEC adopted the abridged report of the meeting and instructed the Secretariat to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for note to be taken of it.

APPENDIX I

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

GEC(2025)OJ1rev	Draft agenda
GEC(2025)OJ1ann rev	Draft annotated agenda and order of business

2. Report from the Chair of the GEC

GEC-BU(2025)2	Report of the 26th meeting of the Bureau
GEC-BU(2025)3	Report of the 27th meeting of the Bureau

3. Mandate and workplan of the GEC

CM(2023)131-addfinal	Terms of reference of the GEC
GEC(2025)1	Workplan of the GEC

4. Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029***4.1. Work of the Working Group on reporting on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029***

GEC(2024)6	Workplan of the Working Group on reporting on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029
GEC/WG-GES(2025)1rev2	Draft questionnaire to report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029
GEC/WG-GES(2025)2rev2	Draft indicators to report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029
GEC/WG-GES(2025)3	Report of the 1st meeting of the Working Group
GEC/WG-GES(2025)4	Report of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group
GE(2025)8	Compilation of comments on the draft questionnaire on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029

5. Appointments

GEC(2025)2	List of rapporteurs and focal points appointed by the GEC
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6. Preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism***6.1. Work of the Committee of Experts on Artificial Intelligence, Equality and Discrimination (GEC/ADI-AI)***

GEC/ADI-AI(2024)7rev4	Draft Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence
GEC/ADI-AI(2024)7Addrev2	Draft Explanatory Memorandum to the Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence

7. Preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence

7.1. Work of the Committee of Experts on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (GEC/PC-eVIO)

GEC/PC-eVIO(2025)1rev3	Draft Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls
GEC/PC-eVIO(2025)8rev	Draft Explanatory Memorandum to the Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls
GEC/PC-eVIO(2025)2	Report of the 2nd meeting of the GEC/PC-eVIO
GEC/PC-eVIO(2025)9	Report of the 3rd meeting of the GEC/PC-eVIO

7.2. Exchange of views with Maria Andriani Kostopoulou, President of GREVIO

7.3. Implementation of the Istanbul Convention

7.4. Cooperation activities on violence against women and domestic violence

8. Ensuring equal access to justice for women and girls

8.1. Cooperation activities on women's access to justice

9. Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political, public, social and economic life

9.1. Exchange of views with Nicole Ameline, Rapporteur on CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making systems

10. Ensuring women's empowerment and gender equality in relation to global and geopolitical challenges

10.1. Developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements

10.1.1. Work of the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements

GEC(2024)7	Workplan of the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements
GEC/WG-PN(2025)1	Report of the 1st meeting of the Working Group

10.1.2. Workshop on narrative building and value-based framing

10.2. Gender equality and the environment

GEC(2024)8	Background document on gender equality and the environment
GEC(2025)4	Compilation of good practices in the field of gender equality and the environment

10.3. Follow-up of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women girls

GEC(2025)5	Draft Practical Guide for public authorities to support the implementation of the Council of Europe recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls
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11. Achieving gender mainstreaming and including an intersectional approach in all policies and measures

11.1. Exchange of views with Nina Grmuša, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth

11.2. Event on ‘Youth Engagement in Gender Equality: A Dialogue for Inclusive Action’

GEC(2025)6	Concept note of the event on “Youth Engagement in Gender Equality: A Dialogue for Inclusive Action”
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11.3. Gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe activities

11.4. Cooperation with other Council of Europe sectors

GEC(2025)7	Discussion paper on the draft Study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination under preparation by the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) Background document concerning the draft Study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination (prepared by the CDADI Secretariat)
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12. Gender equality activities in multilateral settings

12.1. Gender equality activities of the Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers

12.2. United Nations - Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69)

12.3. Gender equality activities of the Presidencies of the Council of the European Union

13. Preparation of the next meeting

14. Other business

15. Adoption of the abridged report

APPENDIX II

List of participants

MEMBERS/MEMBRES	
Albania Albanie	Etleva Sheshi Director of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Policies General Directorate of Social Protection Ministry of Health and Social Protection <i>Directrice des politiques d'inclusion sociale et d'égalité de genre</i> <i>Direction générale de la protection sociale</i> <i>Ministère de la santé et de la protection sociale</i>
Andorra Andorre	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Armenia Arménie	Sofya Margaryan Head of Division of Cooperation with International Monitoring Bodies Department of Human Rights Ministry of Foreign Affairs <i>Cheffe de la Division de la coopération avec les organismes internationaux de surveillance</i> <i>Département des droits humains</i> <i>Ministère des Affaires étrangères</i>
Austria Autriche	Miriam Putz Policy Officer, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection <i>Chargée de mission, ministère fédéral du Travail, des Affaires sociales, de la Santé, des Soins et de la Protection des consommateurs et consommatrices</i>
Azerbaijan Azerbaïdjan	Sadagat Rahimova Leading adviser, Gender and Women Issues Department State Committee for Family, Women, and Children's Affairs <i>Conseillère principale, Département des questions de genre et des femmes</i> <i>Comité d'État pour les affaires familiales, les femmes et les enfants</i>
Belgium Belgique	Carine Joly Adviser, Institute for Gender Equality <i>Conseillère, Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina Bosnie-Herzégovine	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Bulgaria Bulgarie	Irina Ivanova Head of Unit, Equal Opportunities, Antidiscrimination and Social Assistance Benefits Ministry of Labour and Social Policy <i>Cheffe d'unité, Égalité des chances, lutte contre la discrimination et prestations d'assistance sociale</i> <i>Ministère du travail et de la politique sociale</i>
Croatia Croatie	Irena Sarta Senior Advisor, Office for Gender Equality <i>Conseillère principale, Bureau pour l'égalité de genre</i>

Cyprus Chypre	Niovi Georgiade Officer, Office of Commissioner for Gender Equality <i>Agente, Bureau de la Commissaire de l'égalité de genre</i>
Czech Republic République tchèque	Radan Šafařík Director of Gender Equality Department Office of the Government of Czechia <i>Directeur du département de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes</i> <i>Bureau du gouvernement de la Tchéquie</i> Kateřina Šabatová Clerk, Office of the Government of Czechia <i>Employée, Bureau du gouvernement de la Tchéquie</i>
Denmark Danemark	Kira Appel Deputy Head of Department/Chief Consultant Department for Gender Equality Ministry of Digital Government and Gender Equality <i>Cheffe de service adjointe/ Consultante en chef</i> <i>Département de l'égalité de genre</i> <i>Ministère du gouvernement numérique et de l'égalité de genre</i>
Estonia Estonie	Lee Maripuu Head of Gender Equality Policy Ministry of Social Affairs <i>Responsable de la politique d'égalité de genre</i> <i>Ministère des affaires sociales</i>
Finland Finlande	Anttoni Saarinen Specialist, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health <i>Spécialiste, Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé</i>
France	Jeanne Jezierski Office for European and International Affairs General Directorate for Social Cohesion Ministry of Solidarity/Ministry in charge of equality between women and men <i>Bureau des affaires européennes et internationales</i> <i>Direction générale de la cohésion sociale</i> <i>Ministère des solidarités/Ministère délégué chargé de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes</i>
Georgia Géorgie	Eliso Shonia Deputy Head of the Human Rights Department Administration of the Government of Georgia <i>Directrice adjointe du Département des droits humains</i> <i>Administration du gouvernement de Géorgie</i>
Germany Allemagne	Lea Spörcke Policy Officer Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth <i>Chargée de mission</i> <i>Ministère fédéral de l'éducation, de la famille, des personnes âgées, des femmes et de la jeunesse</i>

Greece Grèce	Georgia Papageorgiou Senior official, Head of department of European and international cooperation General Secretariat for equality and human rights Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family <i>Haute fonctionnaire, Cheffe du département de la coopération européenne et internationale</i> <i>Secrétariat général pour l'égalité et les droits humains</i> <i>Ministère de la cohésion sociale et de la famille</i>
Hungary Hongrie	Lilla Miklos Government Representative <i>Représentante du gouvernement</i>
Iceland Islande	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Ireland Irlande	Brendan Scally Administrative Officer, Equality and Gender Equality Unit Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth <i>Responsable administratif, Unité de l'égalité et de l'égalité de genre</i> <i>Département de l'enfance, de l'égalité, du handicap, de l'intégration et de la jeunesse</i>
Italy Italie	Elena Palloni Senior officer of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of Council of Ministers <i>Haute fonctionnaire du département de l'égalité des chances de la présidence du Conseil des ministres</i>
Latvia Lettonie	Agnese Gaile Senior Expert, Department of Social Policy Planning and Development Ministry of Welfare <i>Experte principale, Département de la planification et du développement de la politique sociale</i> <i>Ministère de l'aide sociale</i>
Liechtenstein	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Lithuania Lituanie	Ramunė Vitartaitė Advisor Equal Opportunities and Women and Men Equality Group Ministry of Social Security and Labour Conseillère <i>Groupe Egalité des Chances et Egalité femmes/hommes</i> <i>Ministère de la sécurité sociale et du travail</i>
Luxembourg	Ralph Kass Senior Advisor 1st Class Ministry of Gender Equality and Diversity <i>Conseiller de Direction 1e Classe</i> <i>Ministère de l'Égalité des genres et de la Diversité</i>

Malta Malte	<p>Maria Ellul Head - Gender Mainstreaming Unit Human Rights Directorate Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance <i>Cheffe - Unité sur l'approche intégrée de l'égalité de genre</i> <i>Direction des droits humains</i> <i>Ministère de la justice, de l'égalité et de la gouvernance</i></p> <p>Abigail Brooke Manager, Human Rights Directorate Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance <i>Responsable, Direction des droits humains</i> <i>Ministère de la justice, de l'égalité et de la gouvernance</i></p>
Republic of Moldova République de Moldova	<p>Daniela Palii Senior Consultant, Department for Gender Equality Policies Ministry of Labour and Social Protection <i>Consultante principale, Département des politiques d'égalité de genre</i> <i>Ministère du travail et de la protection sociale</i></p>
Monaco	<p>Margaux Girardin Third Secretary, Permanent Representation of Monaco to the Council of Europe <i>Troisième Secrétaire, Représentation Permanente de Monaco auprès du Conseil de l'Europe</i></p> <p>Nathan Mangenot Trainee <i>Stagiaire</i></p>
The Netherlands Pays-Bas	<p>Lisanne Post Senior Policy Officer Directorate for gender equality and LGBTI equality Ministry of Education, Culture and Science <i>Agente principale des questions politiques</i> <i>Direction de l'égalité de genre et de l'égalité LGBTI</i> <i>Ministère de l'éducation, de la culture et des sciences</i></p>
North Macedonia Macédoine du Nord	<p>Elena Grozdanova Expert and Consultant Ministry of Labour and Social Policy <i>Experte et consultante</i> <i>Ministère du Travail et de la Politique sociale</i></p>
Norway Norvège	<p>Petter Sørlien Senior Adviser, Ministry of Culture and Equality Department for Equality, Non-discrimination and International Affairs <i>Conseiller principal, Ministère de la Culture et de l'Egalité</i> <i>Service de l'égalité, de la non-discrimination et des affaires internationales</i></p>
Poland Pologne	<p>Excused <i>Excusé-e</i></p>
Portugal	<p>Andreia Lourenço Marques International Relations Adviser Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality <i>Conseillère en relations internationales</i> <i>Commission pour la citoyenneté et l'égalité de genre</i></p>

Romania <i>Roumanie</i>	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
San Marino <i>Saint-Marin</i>	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Serbia <i>Serbie</i>	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Slovak Republic <i>République slovaque</i>	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Slovenia <i>Slovénie</i>	<p>Sara Slana (Chair / Présidente) Secretary, Equal Opportunities Department Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities <i>Secrétaire, Service de l'égalité des chances</i> <i>Ministère du travail, de la famille, des affaires sociales et de l'égalité des chances</i></p> <p>Jasna Jeram Undersecretary, Equal Opportunities Department Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities <i>Sous-Secrétaire, Service de l'égalité des chances</i> <i>Ministère du travail, de la famille, des affaires sociales et de l'égalité des chances</i></p>
Spain <i>Espagne</i>	Excused <i>Excusé·e</i>
Sweden <i>Suède</i>	<p>Ewa Wiberg Deputy Director, Division for Gender Equality Ministry of Employment <i>Directrice adjointe, Division de l'égalité de genre</i> <i>Ministère de l'emploi</i></p>
Switzerland <i>Suisse</i>	<p>Sandra Lengwiler International Affairs Officer, Federal Office for Gender Equality FOGE Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA <i>Agente des affaires internationales, Bureau fédéral de l'égalité entre femmes et hommes (BFEG)</i> <i>Département fédéral de l'intérieur (FDI)</i></p>
Türkiye	<p>Ipek Cicekdag Ayhan Head of the International Organisations Department Directorate General on the Status of Women <i>Cheffe du département des organisations internationales</i> <i>Direction générale de la condition des femmes</i></p>
Ukraine	<p>Kateryna Levchenko Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy <i>Commissaire du gouvernement pour les politiques d'égalité de genre</i></p>
United Kingdom <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	<p>Charles Ramsden Head, International Policy Government Equalities Office <i>Chef, Politiques internationales</i> <i>Bureau gouvernemental pour l'égalité</i></p>
PARTICIPANTS/PARTICIPANT·ES	

Holy See Saint-Siège	Paola Suffia Official of the Section for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Secretariat of State <i>Fonctionnaire de la Section des relations avec les États et les organisations internationales du Secrétariat d'État</i>
Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Groupe d'expert-es sur la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et la violence domestique (GREVIO)	Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou President of GREVIO <i>Présidente du GREVIO</i> Francesca Montagna Programme manager, Violence against Women Division <i>Responsable de programmes, Division Violence à l'égard des femmes</i>
Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion Comité directeur sur l'anti-discrimination, la diversité et l'inclusion (CDADI)	Käthlin Sander Member of the CDADI, Chair of the GEC/ADI-AI <i>Membre du CDADI, Présidente du GEC/ADI-AI</i> Charlotte Gilmartin Co-Secretary of the CDADI <i>Co-secrétaire du CDADI</i> Professor Shreya Atrey Associate Professor of International Human Rights Law University of Oxford, consultant tasked with preparing the draft Study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination <i>Professeure associée en droit international des droits humains Université d'Oxford, consultante chargée de la préparation du projet d'étude sur la prévention et la lutte contre la discrimination intersectionnelle</i>
Conference of INGOs Conférence des OINGs	Bettina Hahne Co-Chair of CINGO's equality committee <i>Co-présidente du comité pour l'égalité de CINGO</i> Anita Schnetzer-Spranger Co-Chair of CINGO's equality committee <i>Co-présidente du comité pour l'égalité de CINGO</i>
Advisory Council on Youth Conseil consultative sur la jeunesse (CCJ)	Nina Grmuša Chairperson <i>Présidente</i> Stanislava Stefanova Gender Equality Rapporteur <i>Rapporteure pour l'égalité de genre</i> Anja Jokić Bureau member <i>Membre du Bureau</i>

European Committee of Social Rights Comité européen des Droits sociaux (CEDS)	Aoife Nolan President of the CEDS <i>Présidente du CEDS</i> Kristine Dupate General Rapporteur <i>Rapporteure générale</i>
European Institute for Gender Equality Institut Européen pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes (EIGE)	Nicole Jansen Seconded National Expert Stakeholder Relations <i>Experte nationale en détachement chargée des relations avec les parties prenantes</i>
Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination Assemblée Parlementaire (ACPE) Commission sur l'égalité et sur la non-discrimination	Carolina Lásen Diaz Secretary <i>Secrétaire</i> Martina Tardanico Trainee <i>Stagiaire</i>
Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child Comité directeur pour les droits de l'enfant (CDENF)	Anne Kayser Secretary <i>Secrétaire</i> Maree Crabbe Director of <i>It's time we talked</i> , consultant tasked with preparing the Guidance Note on Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content Directrice de <i>It's time we talked</i> , consultante chargée de la préparation de la Note d'orientation « Protéger les enfants des risques liés à l'accès à des contenus pornographiques en ligne »
OBSERVERS/OBSERVATEURS	
University Women Europe (UWE)	Anne Bergheim-Nègre President <i>Présidente</i>
INVITEES/PERSONNES INVITEES	
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes (CEDAW)	Nicole Ameline Rapporteur on General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making systems <i>Rapporteure sur la Recommandation générale n° 40 sur la participation égale et inclusive des femmes dans les systèmes de prise de décision</i>

EXPERTS-CONSULTANTS/EXPERTES-CONSULTANTES	
Bridge to impact consulting	Caroline Hickson Evelyne Paradis
	Justyna Hejman-Mancewicz
SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE/SECRETARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE	
Directorate of Human Rights/Direction des droits humains	
Department of Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standard Setting activities Département des activités normatives en matière de droits humains, justice et coopération juridique	Julie Devys Programme Manager, Legal Cooperation Division <i>Responsable de programme, Division de la coopération juridique</i>
Directorate of Social Rights, Health and Environment/Direction des droits sociaux, de la santé et de l'environnement	
Department of the Reykjavik Process and Environment Département du processus de Reykjavik et Environnement	Nino Latsasbidze Policy Advisor <i>Conseillère en politiques</i>
Department of Social Rights Département des droits sociaux	Henrik Kristensen Head of Department, Executive Secretary of the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) <i>Chef de service, Secrétaire exécutif du Comité européen des Droits sociaux (CEDS)</i> Gioia Scappucci Head of Division, Collective Complaints <i>Cheffe de division, Réclamations Collectives</i> Diana Balanescu Legal Advisor, Division of collective complaints <i>Conseillère juridique,</i>

Directorate of Equal Rights and Dignity/Direction de l'égalité en droits et en dignité	
Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department <i>Service de la dignité humaine et de l'égalité de genre</i>	Roberto Olla Head of Department <i>Chef de service</i>
Gender Equality Division <i>Division de l'égalité de genre</i>	Caterina Bolognese Head of Division <i>Cheffe de division</i> Cécile Gréboval Programme Manager, Senior Gender Equality Adviser <i>Responsable de programme, conseillère principale en matière d'égalité de genre</i>
Co-operation Unit, Gender Equality Division <i>Unité de la coopération, Division de l'égalité de genre</i>	Elena Jovanovska-Brezoska Head of Unit <i>Cheffe d'unité</i> Arezo Banafsheh Project Manager <i>Responsable de projets</i> Larissa Kireeva Project Manager <i>Responsable de projets</i> Anna Lungu Project Manager <i>Responsable de projets</i> Anca Sandescu Project Manager <i>Responsable de projets</i> Gaia Grippa Project Assistant <i>Assistante de projets</i>
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics, Anti-Discrimination Department <i>Unité sur l'orientation sexuelle, l'identité et l'expression de genre et les caractéristiques sexuelles, service de l'anti-discrimination</i>	Giulia Bianchini Project Officer <i>Responsable de projets</i>

Roma and Travellers Roms et Gens du Voyage	Oana-Luiza Taba Co-Secretary to the ADI-ROM <i>Co-Secrétaire de l'ADI-ROM</i>
Secretariat of the GEC/Secrétariat de la GEC	
	<p>Yanna Parnin Head of the Gender Equality Policy Unit and Secretary to the GEC <i>Cheffe de l'unité des politiques d'égalité de genre et Secrétaire de la GEC</i></p> <p>Valerie Poppe Principal Administrative Assistant and Co-Secretary to the GEC <i>Assistante administrative principale et co-Secrétaire de la GEC</i></p> <p>Flurina Frei Policy Advisor <i>Conseillère en politiques</i></p> <p>Mathilde Barlow Administrative Assistant <i>Assistante administrative</i></p>
Interpreters/Interprètes	
	<p>Remy Jain</p> <p>Lisa Wojciechowicz</p> <p>Michael Hill</p>

APPENDIX III

Abridged report

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Gender Equality Commission (GEC) held its 27th meeting in Strasbourg from 13 to 15 May 2025, with Sara Slana (Slovenia) as Chair.

The agenda of the meeting appears in Appendix 1.

List of items for decision by the Committee of Ministers

The GEC adopted the following text and decided to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers to take note of:

- Practical Guide for public authorities to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

List of items for information of the Committee of Ministers

The GEC:

- adopted a questionnaire and a list of indicators to report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029;

As regards the other items on its agenda, the GEC:

- took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and the representative of Malta on the preparation of the Annual GEC Conference “*Ending sexism and violence against women in politics: an essential step towards equal participation*” organised under the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (Malta, 17-18 September 2025);
- took note of the information provided by Radan Šafařík (Czechia), Vice-Chair of the GEC/ADI-AI, on the outcomes of the 3rd meeting of the GEC/ADI-AI (26-27 February 2025), and gave guidance to the GEC/ADI-AI on the preparation of the draft Recommendation on equality and artificial intelligence;
- took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the outcomes of the 2nd and 3rd meetings of the GEC/PC-eVIO (22-23 January 2025 and 3-4 April 2025) and gave guidance to the GEC/PC-e-VIO on the preparation of the draft Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls;
- took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the outcomes of the 1st and 2nd meetings of the Working Group on reporting on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029;
- took note of the information provided by Kateryna Levchenko (Ukraine) on the outcomes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements, as well as the presentations of the Secretariat and expert consultants on this topic;

- appointed Italy to take part in the Working Group on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements;
- held a Workshop on narrative-building and value-based framing as part of its work on developing positive narratives in the context of anti-gender movements;
- held an exchange of views with Nicole Ameline, Rapporteur on General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making systems of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- held an exchange of views with Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Chair of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO);
- held an exchange of views with Nina Grmuša, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ);
- held an event on “Youth Engagement in Gender Equality: A Dialogue for Inclusive Action”, co-organised with members of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ);
- held an exchange with the Secretariat of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), Kätlin Sanders (Estonia, member of the CDADI) and an expert consultant, as part of the process of consulting the GEC on the ongoing work of the CDADI on a Feasibility study and possible draft Recommendation on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination;
- appointed Andreia Lourenço Marquez (Portugal) as rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and Radan Šafařík (Czechia) as focal point on the work of the Drafting Group on Human Rights and Drug Policies (DH-PDA);
- took note of the information provided by member States regarding national developments in relation to the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention;
- took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on co-operation projects undertaken in the fields of violence against women and domestic violence, and of women's access to justice;
- took note of the document prepared by the Secretariat on good practices in the field of gender equality and the environment and of the information provided by the Secretariat in relation to the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment;
- took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on gender mainstreaming activities undertaken by the various structures and bodies of the Council of Europe;
- took note of the information provided by its representatives in other Council of Europe bodies on ongoing work related to equality and non-discrimination, in particular issues concerning Roma and Traveller women and girls, as well as on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics;
- held an exchange with the Secretariat of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) and an expert consultant on its work, in particular on the recently adopted Guidance Note on Safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content and the ongoing preparation of a draft Recommendation on age-

appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses for *inter alia* preventing and combatting violence against children;

- held an exchange with Aoife Nolan (Ireland), Chair and Kristine Dupate (Latvia), General Rapporteur of the European Committee of Social Rights on its review focused on “Social rights and the cost-of-living crisis”, with a particular focus on the impact on women;
- took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and Ralph Kass (Luxembourg) about the side-event, organised by the Council of Europe and the Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations, during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), and by member States about the side-events they organised at the CSW69;
- took note of the information provided by the representatives of Luxembourg, Malta and the Republic of Moldova about the gender equality programmes of their presidencies of the Committee of Ministers;
- took note of information provided by the representatives of Hungary and Denmark regarding their gender equality agendas during their presidencies of the Council of the European Union;
- took note that its 28th meeting will take place from 18 to 20 November 2025, as agreed at its 26th meeting;
- adopted the present abridged report of its 27th meeting.

Resource implications

The financing of the activities described in this report is assured.

Evaluation of completed activities

The GEC took note of the completion of the following deliverable: Practical Guide for public authorities to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

The GEC welcomed and underlined the quality of the new reporting methodology on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029, and noted with appreciation the active participation of member State representatives, along with GEC participants and observers, in the development of these tools.

Other observations

None.