

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

GEC-BU(2026)1

29 April 2026

BUREAU OF THE GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

29th meeting

26 March 2026

Meeting report

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda

1. The Bureau of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) held its 29th meeting online on 26 March 2026. The meeting was chaired by Sara SLANA (Slovenia).

2. The Bureau adopted the agenda of the meeting as it appears in the Appendix.

2. Information from the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat

3. The Bureau took note of the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of two new Recommendations prepared by the GEC and approved at the end of 2025: [CM/Rec\(2026\)1](#) on Equality and artificial intelligence and [CM/Rec\(2026\)2](#) on Accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. The Bureau took note of information provided by the Secretariat of recent presentations to promote these two new standards, including during: a launch event for the project [Active and Equal: Women's health in sport across generations](#), organised by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) on 5 March; a debate organised by the European Parliament at the Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire of Strasbourg on Women's rights and social justice on 10 March; a symposium on artificial intelligence and the rule of law organised by the Venice Commission to mark the 30th anniversary of Japan's observer status with the Council of Europe on 13 March; and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly's meeting of 20 March. Both recommendations were promoted on the [front page](#) of the Council of Europe's website, on the Gender Equality news [webpage](#) and on the Gender Equality [LinkedIn account](#) and [X account](#).

4. The Bureau took note of information provided by the Secretariat regarding the Council of Europe's participation in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting in New York, including the high-level side-event, [Policing the Pixel: Gender, Tech, and Justice](#), co-organised with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations, under the Moldovan Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. Bureau members who had attended the CSW shared very positive reactions to the side-event and also shared their reflections on the meeting overall. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to add an agenda item for discussion at the 29th plenary meeting on multilateral developments concerning gender equality.

5. The Bureau took note of recent staff changes within the Secretariat. The Bureau welcomed Irena GUIDIKOVA, the new Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, and bade temporary farewell to Cécile GREBOVAL, Senior Gender Equality Adviser, who would be seconded to the team working on the New Democratic Pact for Europe as of 1 April 2026.

3. Workplan for 2026-2027 and discussion on future activities

6. The Secretariat provided information to the Bureau about the workplan for 2026-2027 and gave an overview of the timeline. All deliverables were on track; however, plans for a Gender Mainstreaming Team meeting and Gender Equality Rapporteur Training in 2026 may have to be revisited due to staff changes and reduced capacity. The Bureau approved the workplan.

7. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the 31st meeting of the GEC would take place in May or June 2027, exact date to be confirmed during the 29th plenary meeting, and the annual conference would take place under the Dutch Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.

4. GEC Annual conference “Women forging lasting peace: Dismantling barriers to gender-inclusive conflict resolution and peacebuilding”

8. The Bureau took note of the state of play regarding the organisation of the GEC annual conference which would take place on 9 June 2026 in Strasbourg, under the aegis of the Monegasque presidency of the Committee of Ministers.

5. Preparation of the 29th meeting of the GEC: main deliverables and activities

9. The Bureau examined the draft agenda and the annotated agenda for the 29th meeting of the GEC (10-12 June 2026).

10. The Bureau took note of the information provided by the Secretariat regarding progress made on the preparation of the first biennial report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029. The first draft of the report would be sent to the GEC in early April 2026 for written comments from members, participants and observers. These comments would then be incorporated into a revised draft to be examined by the GEC during the 29th plenary meeting, with a view to the report's adoption. The Bureau welcomed the increase in member state responses this year compared to previous reporting years. The Bureau suggested that the questionnaire on the use of Council of Europe tools by member States could be further improved by including a question on how the member States share Council of Europe tools within and among different ministries. The Secretariat proposed updating the existing compilation of standards and tools on gender equality and developing further 'at a glance' or 'overview' documents with short explanations as a useful resource.

11. The Bureau welcomed the plan to include a separate agenda item on the implementation of existing Council of Europe standards at national level and asked the Secretariat to produce a background document to assist the GEC in its preparation for this session.

12. The Bureau approved the organisation of an event to launch Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 on Accountability for Technology facilitated violence against women and girls on the theme '*from standards to action*' during the plenary meeting. The event would be held jointly with the Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) which will be convening its plenary meeting during the same week as the GEC. The Bureau took note of information provided by the Secretariat concerning the preparation of an infographic booklet to ensure that the Recommendation was easily understandable and usable by different stakeholders.

13. The Bureau took note of the state of play regarding the thematic implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism which would focus on the justice sector. The independent consultant preparing the review, Shazia Choudhry, would give a presentation of the outcomes of the consultation of member States and the proposed outline of the review report during the 29th plenary meeting.

14. The Bureau approved the Secretariat's proposed methodology to prepare deliverable 11 of the Terms of Reference, namely *Collect information on best practices from member States on the involvement of men and boys in gender equality policies and more specifically in promoting and following up the Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women*. The Secretariat would draw up a discussion paper with open questions to help member States prepare in advance of the 29th plenary meeting. The plenary meeting discussion would take the form of a workshop to explore these questions and reflect on current practices among member States, participants and observers. Written information could also be provided after the plenary meeting. Members, participants and observers would be invited to express interest in joining a working group to

support the elaboration of the promising practices. The planned output for 2027 would be a collection of practices.

15. The Bureau agreed that the exchange with the Gender Equality Division Cooperation Unit could focus on Perpetrators' Programmes.

16. The Bureau took note of the preparation of an outline for the Study on equal participation of women and men in political and public decision-making which would be presented to the GEC by the independent consultant preparing this deliverable, Susana Pavlou. Feedback from members, participants and observers during the meeting, together with written feedback, would be incorporated into the final draft of the Study which would be examined at the 30th plenary meeting.

17. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Guidance for the development of positive narratives to deflect anti-gender rhetoric would shortly be published together with infographics. A training package was being prepared. This training would be delivered during the No Hate Speech Week in June 2026 at the Council of Europe, as well as internally, and the Bureau asked for it to be open to GEC members and potentially a wider audience in an online format.

18. The Secretariat presented the concept behind the proposed *Discussion on the role of women in democracy* during the 29th meeting. This would feed into the New Democratic Pact for Europe by identifying practical initiatives and innovative ideas to improve women's meaningful participation in democratic institutions and political debate. The exchange would take place under Chatham House rules. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to draw up a background document in advance to prepare the discussion. This should clarify the expected output.

19. The Bureau approved the preparation of a statement on the fundamental importance of equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion to democracy, together with the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). This statement would contribute to the New Democratic Pact for Europe. It would be circulated with GEC members, participants and observers for comments and could be adopted by written procedure in advance of the ministerial meeting in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, from 14-15 May 2026.

The Bureau took note of the Secretariat's presentation of the ongoing work on a Gender Equality Scorecard in Education, under preparation by the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), and supported by Tryggvi Hallgrímsson, GEC member from Iceland, and the GEC Secretariat. The Secretariat recalled that, for 2027, the GEC's terms of reference foresee an analysis of good practices on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in education, contributing to implementation of the new Gender Equality Scorecard in Education.

20. The Bureau approved the draft agenda and the annotated agenda of the 29th meeting of the GEC (10-12 June 2026).

6. Discussion on future Terms of Reference (2028-2031)

21. The GEC Bureau examined the background document prepared by the Secretariat to assist the GEC's reflections on the future Term of Reference (2028-2031). The GEC Bureau discussed the importance of ensuring that tools to support the implementation of CM/Rec(2026)1 and CM/Rec(2026)2 feature early in the new quadrennium, as should work on current challenges to gender equality and gender-equal relationships. The Bureau stressed that longstanding challenges to gender equality, including lack of economic autonomy and its underlying systemic causes, should be given equal importance in the future Terms of Reference alongside new and emerging challenges.

7. Requests for observer status

22. The GEC Bureau discussed two requests for observer status which had been received and agreed that these should be discussed during the 29th plenary meeting of the GEC.

8. Other business

23. The Bureau requested that detailed meeting timings be included in the body of the agenda rather than as an appendix.

9. Date of the next meeting

24. The Bureau agreed to convene its next meeting on 19 August 2026 in the morning and, if necessary, to hold an informal meeting in the autumn before the 30th meeting of the GEC on 17-19 November 2026.

Participants:

Bureau: Sara SLANA (Slovenia), Chair of the GEC; Sandra LENGWILER (Switzerland), Vice-Chair of the GEC; and Lea SPÖRCKE, Bureau member (Germany).

Secretariat: Caterina BOLOGNESE (Head of the Gender Equality Division); Flurina FREI (Policy Adviser); Charlotte GILMARTIN (Head of the Gender Equality Policy Unit and Secretary to the GEC); Cécile GREBOVAL (Senior Gender Equality Advisor); Irena GUIDIKOVA (Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department); Dajana MARINKOVIC-PAVLOSKI (Administrative Assistant); Krista ORAMA (Policy Adviser) and Valerie POPPE (Principal Administrative Assistant and Co-Secretary to the GEC).

APPENDIX

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda	
GEC-BU(2026)OJ1	Draft agenda
2. Information from the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat on developments since the 28th GEC plenary meeting	
3. Workplan for 2026-2027	
4. GEC Annual conference 9 June 2026 - <i>Women forging lasting peace: dismantling barriers to gender-inclusive conflict resolution and peacebuilding</i>	
5. Preparation of the 29th meeting of the GEC: main deliverables and activities	
GEC(2026)OJ1	Draft agenda of the 29 th meeting of the GEC
GEC(2026)OJ1ann	Draft annotated agenda and order of business
<i>5.1. Biennial report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029)</i>	
<i>5.2. Event to launch Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 on Accountability for Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls</i>	
<i>5.3. Thematic implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism</i>	
<i>5.4. Collecting information on best practices from member States on the involvement of men and boys in gender equality policies and more specifically in promoting and following up the Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women</i>	
<i>5.5. Study on equal participation of women and men in political and public decision-making</i>	
<i>5.6. Implementation of the Guidance for the development of positive narratives to deflect anti-gender rhetoric</i>	
<i>5.7. Discussion on the role of women in democracy</i>	
<i>5.8. Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) Briefing on Equality and Democracy and future Statement on Equality and Democracy in the framework of the New Democratic Pact for Europe</i>	
<i>5.9. Analysis of good practices on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in education, contributing to implementation of the Gender Equality Scorecard in Education under preparation by the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)</i>	
6. Discussion on future Terms of Reference (2028-2031)	
7. Requests for observer status	
8. Other business	
9. Date of the next meeting	