

Strasbourg, 7 December 2018

GEC (2018) Abridged Report

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION
(GEC)**

*14th meeting
Strasbourg, 5-7 December 2018*

**List of items discussed and decisions taken
Abridged Report**

The Gender Equality Commission (GEC), chaired by Vice-Chairperson Charles Ramsden (United Kingdom):

1. adopted its agenda as set out in Appendix I to the present abridged report.
2. elected Charles Ramsden (United Kingdom) as Chairperson and Kira Appel (Denmark) as Vice-Chairperson for one year from 1 January 2019.
3. held an exchange of views with Ambassador Keith McBean, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the Council of Europe, Chair of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights, who confirmed the priority given to gender equality issues at the political level.
4. took note of the draft report of the conference “Gender Equality: Paving the Way” to launch the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 (Copenhagen, 3-4 May 2018), instructed the Secretariat to disseminate it and agreed to promote the recommendations contained in it at the national level.
5. took note of the draft 2018 annual report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and instructed the Secretariat to amend it on the basis of additions to be proposed by members by 14 December 2018 and to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers.
6. discussed proposals as regards the format for future annual strategy implementation reports, and instructed the Secretariat to proceed as from 2019 to prepare the reports on the basis of those discussions.
7. took note of the preparations for the Conference “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism” which will take place in Helsinki on 28 and 29 March 2019 and asked members to provide feedback about the proposed thematic panels and to provide proposals for potential speakers on sexism and gender stereotypes by 20 December 2018.
8. thanked the Drafting Committee and all those involved in the preparation of the draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation to prevent and combat sexism; adopted the draft text; agreed to include, in the report of the 14th GEC meeting, the dissenting opinion of the Russian Federation regarding the use of certain terms (“gender” instead of “sex”; “intersex” and “trans persons”) and the scope of the forms of intersectional discrimination (beyond those listed in the ECHR) (see Appendix II); and instructed the Secretariat to transmit the draft recommendation to the Committee of Ministers.
9. took note of the presentation by the representative of the Media Division of the joint questionnaire of the GEC and the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) to monitor the implementation of Recommendation (2013)1 on gender equality and media and agreed to provide comments on it to the Secretariat by 31 December 2018.
10. took note of developments in the member States in relation to the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention and held an exchange with the Executive Secretary of GREVIO/Committee of the Parties.

11. took note that the meeting of international and regional mechanisms to combat violence against women would take place in Strasbourg on 23 and 24 May 2019, agreed that the meeting on 24 May would form part of the next GEC meeting, and asked members to send to the Secretariat, by 20 December 2018, any proposals they might have for a keynote speaker on the subject of "Ending violence against women and girls: a condition and accelerator towards the achievement of sustainable development goals and the 2030 Agenda".
12. took note of the presentation about the Regional Conference on Women's Access to Justice and the Istanbul Convention, which took place in Strasbourg in October 2018.
13. took note of the report from the Belgian, Georgian and INGO Conference representatives and the Secretariat about the discussions during the 2018 World Forum for Democracy on "Gender Equality: Whose Battle?" (Strasbourg, 19-21 November).
14. took note of the preliminary draft factsheet on the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls and instructed the Secretariat to continue consultations on it in order to produce a draft for discussion and adoption at the next meeting.
15. took note of the presentation made by the Secretariat on progress on gender mainstreaming in the different sectors of the Council of Europe.
16. took note of the presentations made during the thematic discussions: GenMob mobile phone tool (Portugal); work with perpetrators of violence against women (Georgia and Luxembourg); and gender-responsive budgeting (Republic of Moldova and Serbia).
17. held an exchange with the Executive Secretary of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) about efforts to integrate a gender perspective in their country-monitoring and thematic work. In particular, the GEC looked forward to the results of a study commissioned by GRECO/Moneyval for 2019 on the impact (if any) of gender on corruptibility.
18. held an exchange with the Head of the Secretariat to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe about activities of the Committee, including the planned CSW63 side-event organised jointly by PACE/IPU and the GEC.
19. held an exchange with Dalia Leinarte, Chairperson, United Nations Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women (CEDAW), on issues of common concern.
20. took note of the information provided by the Romanian representative about Romania's gender equality agenda during its presidency of the Council of the European Union.

21. took note of information concerning events at which members of the GEC and the Secretariat participated since the previous GEC meeting.
22. took note of the reports by the representatives of Croatia, Finland and France about the gender equality agenda during their respective chairs of the Committee of Ministers.
23. instructed the GEC members to send further proposals for thematic discussions and items for the agenda to the Secretariat by Friday 14 December 2018; and agreed that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson would decide on the topics for the next meeting's thematic discussions. Proposals made during the meeting: Iceland: sexist hate speech; artificial intelligence, big data and algorithms; Finland: report of the 7th international Roma women's conference; Belgium: sexual violence in intimate relationships of young people; Serbia: gender equality and women with disabilities; gender equality backlash; Cyprus: women and peace and security (UN Security Council Resolution 1325); gender mainstreaming.
24. agreed to discuss its terms of reference for 2020-2021 at its next meeting.
25. agreed on the dates of the next GEC meetings: 15th meeting, 22-23-24 May 2019; 16th meeting, 13-14-15 November 2019.
26. adopted the abridged report of the 14th GEC meeting (5-7 December 2018) and agreed to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers.

Appendix I**Agenda**

- I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**
- II. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (January to December 2019)**
- III. Exchange with Ambassador Keith McBean, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the Council of Europe, Chair of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights**
- IV. Council of Europe Transversal Programme on Gender Equality**
- V. Thematic discussions**
- VI. Co-operation with other Council of Europe sectors**
- VII. Co-operation with international/regional organisations**
- VIII. Events attended by GEC members, experts and the Secretariat**
- IX. Current and future activities at national level and at international level**
- X. Other business**
- XI. Proposals for the agenda of the next meeting**
- XII. Dates of forthcoming meetings**
- XIII. Adoption of the abridged report of the 14th GEC meeting (5-7 December 2018)**

Appendix II

Dissenting opinion of the Russian Federation on the draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation to prevent and combat sexism

While the Russian Federation supports main ideas reflected in the recommendation, there are still some of the provisions which are of deep concern and require additional elaboration and concrete amendments.

The Russian delegation actively supported the elaboration of the recommendation hoping to see it as an efficient Council of Europe instrument in the field of combating sexism.

Unfortunately the final text of its Draft contains some points that the Russian delegation cannot agree with:

1. The Russian delegation cannot agree with the presence in the text of the Recommendation of the word "gender", where it replaces the agreed concept of "sex" in the meaning of being male or female. It is a principal point for the Russian delegation. As the concept of "gender", which is much wider than the concept of "sex", does not exist in the legal system of the Russian Federation this Recommendation will contravene its national legislation.
2. The Russian delegation sticks to the opinion that the recommendation shouldn't include mentioning of intersex and trans persons as this goes beyond the scope of the Recommendation. It should be stressed that the terms of reference of GEC do not include these categories of people. It should also be reminded that the Council of Europe has already elaborated a special document aimed at increasing protection of LGBT persons - the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (CM/Rec(2010)5).
3. The Russian delegation still keeps the opinion that in the 1st paragraph of Chapter "Intersectionality, Situational Vulnerabilities and Aggravating Circumstances" we should use the agreed wording of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.