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EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT

(EUR-OPA)

Gender Equality and EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

Achievements and Next Steps

Proposals to mainstream gender equality in the EUR-OPA programme

Gender Equality and EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

Achievements and Next Steps

and

Integration of Gender Equality into Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

and Climate Change Adaptation

"Promoting equality between women and men must be at the heart of everything we do"
Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

For the Council of Europe, gender equality must be achieved de facto, not only in words. In 2012, the Council of Europe launched its Transversal Programme on Gender Equality. It aims to increase the impact and visibility of gender equality standards. In November 2013, the Committee of Ministers adopted the first ever Gender Equality Strategy of the Council of Europe.

The new Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, adopted on 7 March 2018, builds upon the vast legal and policy *acquis* of the Council of Europe as regards gender equality, as well as the achievements of the first Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017. The new strategy outlines the goals and priorities of the Council of Europe on gender equality for the years 2018-2023, identifying working methods and main partners, as well as the measures required to increase the visibility of results. Achieving gender equality is central to the fulfillment of the Council of Europe's mission: safeguarding human rights, upholding democracy and preserving the rule of law.

The focus will be on six strategic areas:

1. Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism;
2. Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence;
3. Ensure the equal access of women to justice;
4. Achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
5. Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls
6. Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

Rationale for Gender Mainstreaming

Quick facts and figures:

• Women represent more than half of the European population.

• In Council of Europe member states, men still represent 74% of members of national parliaments and 77% of ministers.

• In most countries, women earn on average only 60% to 75% of men's wages.

• The average gender pension gap in the 28 European Union (EU) member states is as high as 39%.

• In 2015, women represented only 25% of news subjects and 17% of experts present in the media in Europe.

• Although conviction rates for rape cases vary significantly between member States, in several countries they are as low as 5%.

• One out of three women in the EU has experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15.

Gender inequality is not about biological differences but about the unequal position of women and men in society. It is about structural material, social and cultural differences between women and men in all areas of life, including decision making, paid and unpaid work, income, property, education, health, norms, habits, culture or roles attributed to women and men in society.

What is gender?

Since 1985, the concept of gender has appeared in international fora and since the 1990s it has been included in international policy documents, such as those of the United Nations and other international organizations.

Gender, as defined by the Council of Europe, shall mean:

"The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men"(Istanbul Convention).

Sex, by contrast, identifies the biological differences between women and men. Gender also carries a power system of inequalities between women and men (in the distribution of resources, wealth, paid and unpaid work, time, decision-making, political power, enjoyment of rights and entitlements withinthe family and in all aspects of social and public life).Working on issues related to sex and gender is difficult, since there are so many deeply set cultural conceptions and assumptions about gender. The concept of gender aims at putting looking at a context of inequalities between women and men, existing stereotypes, gender roles and discrimination against women in order to adequately respond to the complexity of the phenomenon. Linguistic challenges also play a role: in some languages (for example, Finnish) the same word is used for both sex and gender, while in other languages (for example, Dutch) there is no word for gender.

Born from the need for a new approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns, in order to design better policies, the concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced at the 1985 United Nations World Conference on Women in Nairobi. It was consequently introduced as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The Council of Europe was instrumental in developing the concept of gender mainstreaming from the 1990's onwards. This work led to the adoption of the definition of gender mainstreaming used within the Council of Europe and by many other organizations and countries:

"Gender mainstreaming is the (re) organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels at all stages, by the actors involved in policy making."

A number of GERs and their committees have initiated innovative gender equality activities, which have attracted attention and have had a positive impact on the work and visibility of the committee. Examples of successful gender mainstreaming activities include work in the areas of audio-visual, sport, media, fight against drug abuse, combating corruption or justice. More information: https://www.coe.int/fr/web/genderequality/gender-mainstreaming

The final aim of gender mainstreaming is to contribute to justice, democracy and gender equality and to fill the gap between de jure and de facto gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming is not about additional activities but about a change of approach and mindset, which questions the status quo and existing gender norms at work in an institution or in a policy field.

Gender mainstreaming in relation to natural resources and the environment

Women and men affect and are affected in different ways by issues related to the environment. Environmental policies impact directly on the health and living standards of individuals. While many women are present in ecological and environmental movements, they are largely absent from decision-making in this sector, including at the governmental level. Gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities in families and households, as well as gender-segregated labour market and income gap also cause differentiated vulnerabilities of women to the effects of climate change. They include more casualties among women during extreme weather events and stressful experiences of recovering from disasters. Economic disparities lead to differences in adaptive capacity. Care work may increase due to health impacts of climate change or due to natural disasters, putting additional burdens on women who are still mainly taking on care and household tasks. Women and men's capabilities to adapt to climate change are shaped by education, gender roles, division of labour in the household and

income. Taking into account the needs and situations of both women and men is therefore necessary for policies related to the environment, including natural disasters to be effective.

Gender Equality and DRR

Natural disasters affect women, men, girls and boys differently. The negative impact of risks depends on the characteristics and intensity of the threat and the vulnerability and capacities of those who are exposed to it. Gender differences and inequalities generate a strong positive or negative effect on the vulnerability and capacities of the people exposed to the threats.

The number of women who die from natural threats is greater than that of men. This is a consequence of women's unequal socioeconomic status. Additionally, women face different levels of risk and have different coping vulnerabilities and capacities, originated by a series of gender-based political, cultural, and socioeconomic inequalities and differences.

Women and girls are more likely to be disproportionately affected by disasters, including through loss of life during and in the aftermath of disasters, loss of livelihoods and productive assets, and increased gender-based violence. Women and girls from vulnerable groups (women and girls with disabilities, migrant and refugee women, women and girls living in poverty) face heightened risks in situations of natural or technological disasters.

In many cases, women also have limited access to formal disaster management mechanisms or to any kind of information and resources related to disaster preparedness and prevention.

Likewise, women are not adequately represented in the decision-making authorities and their accumulated skills, experiences and capabilities in times of natural catastrophes are often not adequately identified, recognized and promoted, as women's participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) decision-making processes at all levels throughout the world is particularly low.

The Relevant Standards and Policy Documents

Hence, an effective gender-sensitive DRR strategy should both help take better into account women's situations and vulnerabilities and promote their participation, potential and capabilities in all aspects of DRR decision-making, policies and programmes.

In 1998, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe also adopted a Recommendation on Gender mainstreaming. Since then, the gender mainstreaming strategy has been an integral part of the work and activities of the Council of Europe to promote the full realization of gender equality. This is part of the "dual approach" generally used in both national gender equality policies and in international organisations, which combines a) specific policies and actions for the advancement of women, including positive action, and b) gender mainstreaming.

The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms gives detailed instructions to member states, which are required to "give priority to the development, adoption and enforcement of effective national gender equality legislation, and to the integration of a gender perspective into all areas of governance, both in laws and policies."

Relevant Council of Europe conventions give additional impetus to gender mainstreaming and provide guidance for its implementation in different fields. Article 6 of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011) specifically requires parties "to include a gender perspective in the implementation and evaluation of the impact of the provisions of this convention and to promote and effectively implement policies of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women." Similarly, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005) recognises that trafficking in human beings is a heavily gendered phenomenon and the convention therefore contains strong references to gender equality and gender mainstreaming including in Article 1 (Purpose), Articles 5 and 6, and Chapter III (Measures to protect and promote the rights of victims, guaranteeing gender equality).

Gender mainstreaming was reinforced at the Council of Europe with the launching of the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality (2012) and the adoption of the Council of Europe gender equality strategy for 2014-2017 and for 2018-2023, which both include the realisation of gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures as one of its five strategic objectives. Furthermore, the appointment of 50 Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs), in the Organisation's intergovernmental and institutional bodies (including in nine monitoring mechanisms), has led to more sustained efforts to introduce a gender equality perspective in all policies and at all levels of the Council of Europe.

At the normative level the international community has committed to a strong focus on gender equality and women's rights in disaster risk reduction. These commitments are grounded in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as other international agreements such as HFA, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) resolutions 56/2 and resolution 58/2 on gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters.

The CEDAW Committee has also noted that 'sexual violence is common in humanitarian crises and may become acute in the wake of a national disaster. In a time of heightened stress, lawlessness and homelessness, women face an increased threat of violence, and will find it harder to support themselves, the children, the elderly, the injured, the disabled and other survivors who are in their care'.

Article 14 of the CEDAW Convention identifies the specific needs of rural women who frequently face barriers in equal access to land, financial resources, education, technology, health care and participation in development and decision-making. Situations of disaster and climate change make these barriers even more acute and women in rural areas should be a priority in policymaking and strategies to prevent, mitigate and monitor the impact of climate change and disasters.

Access to justice: Article 15 of the CEDAW Convention guarantees women equality before the law, which is extremely important in situations of disaster and climate change, particularly when women, who often face barriers to accessing justice, wish to claim reparations to cover their losses and to enable them to adapt to change. The recognition of an equal legal capacity with men and equality in access to justice are therefore essential elements in disaster mitigation and recovery policies and strategies.

The 2017 European Open Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction outcome document (March 2017) includes a stand-alone reference, reaffirming that women and girls are disproportionally affected by disasters and have important roles to play in advancing DRR strategies.

UNISDR adopted a Gender Policy in 2011 for gender mainstreaming in DRR to provide guidance to stakeholders and to promote gender equality and empowerment of women internally.

For some years now, the international community has recognized the need for, and has committed to, focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in DRR.

For instance, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), the global blueprint for DRR which came out of the 2005 World Disaster reduction Conference held in Japan, acknowledged the importance of the constructive role played by women in DRR. More recently, recommendations on gender-sensitive DRR and the promotion of a stronger role of women in building resilience were presented at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan (14-18 March 2015) and incorporated into the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted by UN Member States on 18 March 2015.

Furthermore, Sendai Framework emphasized that "women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes; and adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as build their capacity for alternate livelihood means in post-disaster situations."

The equal and active participation of women and men in DRR will make it possible to achieve the overarching goals of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are crosscutting issues and prerequisites for achieving many other SDGs, including SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 13 (climate action).

The standalone Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was conceived to focus attention on, and accelerate efforts to achieve gender parity in many other SDGs by 2030.

UNISDR programmatic work over the past 5 years has focused on mainstreaming gender aspects in planning and implementing DRR policies, advocacy campaigns and awareness raising products. Taking the outcomes of the consultations forward, UNISDR organized a High Level Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogue on "Mobilizing Women's Leadership for Disaster Risk Reduction" as part of the official intergovernmental segment of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan.

UNISDR, UN Women and IFRC have jointly launched a *Global Programme Towards a Gender-responsive Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Implementation: Addressing Gender Inequalities of Risk.* This programme will provide an effective mechanism to support countries in operationalizing their gender commitments and accelerating efforts towards a gender-sensitive implementation of the Sendai Framework and the SDGs by 2030. It will address core gender gaps and barriers, advance gender parity and women's empowerment and secure space for women's leadership in disaster risk reduction and resilience-building.

UNISDR, UN Women and IFRC will work closely with Governments to take a gender-responsive approach when developing national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction by 2020, as well as in supporting integration with national climate change adaptation policies and plans, pursuant to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

UNESCO's programme on disaster preparedness and prevention emphasizes the needs and roles of women in building a culture of disaster resilience. The programme ensures gender mainstreaming in DRR efforts at all levels of action. To support governments and partners efforts on promoting gender in DRR, UNISDR developed a Twenty-Point Checklist on Gender-Sensitive DRR. The checklist provides priority areas to make disaster risk reduction gender sensitive in technical, political, social, developmental and humanitarian processes.

Mainstreaming of Gender equality into the Future Activities and Projects of EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

Specialised centres/MS that propose and implement Projects that are co-financed by the EUR-OPA Agreement should to the best of their ability ensure

a. that experts of both genders are included in the design and conduct of projects
b. that the content of the projects takes into account the following nuances of gender equality inclusion:

- To ensure balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making related to disaster risk reduction.
- To support women's participation in disaster risk reduction policy-making at all levels in the area of disaster risk reduction, including at local level.
- To enhance national and local early warning systems from a gender equality perspective, taking the different needs and different access between men and women to early warning messages on potential and devastating hazards.
- To mainstream gender-sensitive DRR in land use and urban planning policies.
- To enhance women's leadership and role in integrating DRR in natural resource management, environment protection, and health education where women have demonstrated themselves to be leaders and agents for change.
- To develop a disaster contingency plan based on the results of a gender sensitive vulnerability analysis and risk assessment.
- To mainstream gender needs and concerns into disaster preparedness planning.
- To secure increased women's participation in disaster recovery and reconstruction planning and programmes to change the situation that women often do not have enough voice in the disaster recovery process.

Good Examples

Consistent advocacy over the past years has resulted in significant progress in recognizing the need for gender equality and parity and in empowering and acknowledging women's and girls' role and leadership in disaster risk reduction. Good examples include Vietnam, where the contribution of women has been recognized through a Government decree that gives the Women's Union an official space in decision-making bodies. Lives were saved in the 2013 storm season by involving women in disaster planning and the identification of dangerous areas through local flood risk mapping.

In Nepal in 2016, over 100 women from 14 earthquake-affected districts jointly issued a 15-point *Kathmandu Declaration* that calls for a gender-responsive reconstruction approach. It includes programmes that offer economic empowerment opportunities to women affected by the earthquake, a special package for women with disabilities and those from marginalized communities, and a 50% representation of women in the National Authority.

In the Philippines, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 emphasizes a whole-of-society approach to all aspects of disaster risk reduction, including decision-making. It outlines climate change measures that are gender-responsive and sensitive to indigenous knowledge.

To secure greater financial support for programmes that benefit women, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed a Gender Marker in 2007 to track expenditures for gender equality programming in development. Following this, the IASC created its Gender Marker to strengthen gender in humanitarian action, and the ECHO Gender-Age Marker was designed to assess the extent to which humanitarian projects take into account the needs and capacities of different population groups: young children, adolescent boys, women-headed households, or the elderly.

The following gender sensitive publications have been developed:

- "Six Principles for Engendered Relief And Reconstruction" by Gender and Disaster Network
- Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Emergencies: Focusing on Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence by UNFPA and IASC in 2005 (https://www.unfpa.org/publications/guidelines-gender-based-violence-interventions-humanitarian-settings)
- Gender and disaster risk reduction in Europe and Central Asia – Workshop guide for facilitators by UNDP and UN Woman (http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/gender-equality/gender-and-disaster-risk-reduction-workshop-guide-for-facilitato.html)

Gender Sensitive Initiatives of EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

Publications:

- Migrants in Disaster Risk Reduction Practices for Inclusion *(May 2017)*
- Ethical Principles on Disaster Risk Reduction and People's Resilience *(February 2012)*
- Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Europe: a review of risk governance *(2011)*
- Implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action in Europe: advances and challenges 2009-2011

Resolutions:

- Resolution 2010 – 2 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on ethical values and resilience to disasters, adopted at the 12th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, 28 September 2010