

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

GEC-BU(2026)2

27 October 2026

BUREAU OF THE GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

30th meeting

19 August 2026

Meeting report

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda

1. The Bureau of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) held its 30th meeting online on 19 August 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 information provided by the Secretariat concerning relevant agenda items of the GR-H meetings of 10 September (GEC and CDADI Joint statement on the [fundamental importance of equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion for the New Democratic Pact for Europe](#) and abridged meeting report of the 29th GEC plenary meeting) and 8 October 2026 (First biennial report (2024-2025) on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029)).

4. The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the feedback received to date from members, participants and observers of the GEC on the draft Rome Declaration on Health Literacy and Human Rights including the Bureau's proposed modifications, which had been circulated on 10 August 2026. This document had originally been prepared by the Secretariat of the Health Division of the Council of Europe for a high-level conference taking place in Rome on 4 December 2026. Whilst acknowledging that further comments may be received until 26 August 2026 during the written procedure, the Bureau agreed in principle to submit a revised version to the GEC taking into account the feedback received, and thereafter instructed the Secretariat to submit the final version as the GEC's contribution to the Health Division of the Council of Europe by the deadline of 1 September 2026, noting any objections as relevant.

5. The Bureau took note of the decision of the Committee of Ministers, during its 1566th meeting of the Ministers Deputies on 8 July 2026, to communicate [Recommendation 2310 \(2026\) "Violent pornography: a test for human rights"](#) to the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), for information and possible comments by 23 October 2026. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to ensure the GEC's possible comments are prepared and submitted within the deadline, using the GEC's written procedure. The Bureau also took note of other relevant Resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly during its 3rd part-session in June, namely [Resolution 2661 \(2026\) Eliminating gender stereotypes in the media](#); [Resolution 2662 \(2026\) Protecting democracy from disruptions caused by artificial intelligence](#); [Resolution 2668 \(2026\) Women's access to justice](#) and [Resolution 2670 \(2026\) Violent pornography: a test for human rights](#).

6. The Bureau took note of an invitation to the Chair of the GEC to participate in an exchange on democratic security, trends and piloting foresight in the framework of the New Democratic Pact for Europe on 12 October 2026. The Chair would inform the GEC of the outcomes of this meeting during the 30th plenary meeting.

7. The Bureau took note of recent staff changes within the Secretariat. The Bureau welcomed Vasilis GIANNIAS, the new administrative assistant, to the Gender Equality Policy Unit.

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

8. 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 related disruptions. The Bureau approved the workplan.

9. The Bureau took note of information provided by the Secretariat regarding preliminary preparations for the GEC Annual Conference organised under the Dutch Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.

10. The Bureau invited the Secretariat to explore opportunities to contribute to the Council of Europe's 2027 No Hate Speech Week, which would take place during the week of the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, on 18 June.

4. Follow-up to the 29th meeting of the GEC

11. The Bureau reviewed a document prepared by the Secretariat summarising the *thematic debate on the role of women in democracy* which had taken place on Friday 12 June, and decided to submit it to the GEC for agreement by written procedure.

12. The Bureau welcomed the preparation of key takeaways of the 2026 GEC Annual Conference by the Secretariat in consultation with Monaco and took note that the full conference report would be available in due course.

5. Preparation of the 30th meeting of the GEC: main deliverables and activities

13. The Bureau examined and approved the draft agenda and annotated agenda for the 30th meeting of the GEC (17-19 November 2026).

14. The Bureau took note of progress made by the Secretariat in updating the compilation of existing standards of the GEC and in the preparation of one-page fact sheets on key standards, as well as further activities to ensure effective dissemination of relevant work at national level.

15. The Bureau took note of information provided by the Secretariat regarding progress made in the preparation of the *Thematic implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism*. A first draft review report would be sent to the GEC for written comments in due course and would be presented for adoption at the 30th plenary meeting of the GEC.

16. The Bureau took note of preparations for the *Collection of promising practices on the place 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 first meeting of the working group would take place online on 8 October. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to extend the deadline for GEC members, participants and observers to send written information – following up to the workshop which took place during the 29th plenary meeting – until 31 August 2026.

17. The Bureau took note of the state of play of preparation of a *Study on Equal participation in political and public decision-making*, to be reviewed by the Bureau before a written consultation of the GEC and prior to its examination and adoption during the 30th plenary meeting.

18. The Bureau took note of the short background document prepared by the Secretariat to support an exchange during the 30th plenary meeting to contribute to the implementation review of [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2008\)8 on the inclusion of gender differences in health policy](#). The Bureau invited the Secretariat to prioritise this Recommendation in the preparation of short overview fact-sheets of existing GEC standards. As the working group tasked with

undertaking the implementation review would be composed of members of the GEC and of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO), the Bureau instructed the Secretariat to make available a list of CDBIO members ahead of the 30th plenary meeting, during which nominations to the working group would take place, to facilitate exchanges between members of the two intergovernmental committees. The Bureau suggested that members of CDADI and the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics (ADI-SOGIESC) be invited to participate in the working group, as the topic also touches upon their fields of expertise.

19. The Bureau took note of an update regarding deliverable no. 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)*, which falls due by the end of 2027. The Gender Equality Scorecard in Education would enter a pilot-phase in early 2027, prior to its adoption by CDEDU only later in 2027. The Bureau would discuss at a subsequent meeting, on 7 October 2026, how the GEC could best support implementation of the Scorecard through deliverable no. 9.

20. The Bureau took note of information provided by the Secretariat regarding the preparation of a concept note towards the drafting of a *Study on effective access to sexual and reproductive health and rights* (SRHR), deliverable no. 10 of the Terms of Reference, due by the end of 2027. The Bureau agreed that the Study should both add clear value and be grounded in the Organisation's considerable acquis: the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights on effective access to SRHR and the existing framework of the Council of Europe, including the work of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). The Bureau agreed that the Study could be supported by a working group and an independent consultant. The Bureau acknowledged that there may be some useful overlap in membership in this working group with membership in the working group preparing the Implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)1 on the inclusion of gender differences in health.

21. The Bureau welcomed the planned exchange with representatives of the Luxembourg Red Cross National Centre for Victims of Violence and asked the Secretariat to prepare a background document establishing themes and questions to facilitate an active and productive discussion.

22. The Bureau welcomed the proposed World Café style exchange with the Gender Equality Division Cooperation Unit and its interactive format. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to communicate questions for consideration ahead of the plenary meeting to allow adequate preparation.

23. The Bureau took note of the planned Exchange of views with Maria Andriani Kostopoulou, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) and of the fact that GREVIO's 7th Activity Report, to be published in late September, would be one topic for this exchange.

24. The Bureau agreed that the agenda item on *Gender mainstreaming and including an intersectional approach in all policies and measures* could be revisited to encourage member states also to present their gender mainstreaming initiatives.

25. The Bureau decided to remove the agenda item postponed from the 29th plenary meeting on Gender Equality in international settings as it was not possible to identify an approach to the discussion that would, in its view, be an effective use of the GEC's time.

6. Elections and appointments

26. The Bureau took note that elections for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair would take place on Wednesday 18th November. The current Bureau member's mandate expires at the end of 2027.

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

27. The Bureau agreed to meet on 7 October to discuss the draft Terms of Reference and any other outstanding issues.

8. Request for observer status

28. The Bureau discussed a request for observer status from the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF), adopted a neutral stance to the substance of this request, and agreed that the GEC should decide whether to grant observer status by written procedure, ahead of the 30th plenary meeting.

9. Other business

29. None.

10. Date of the next meeting

30. The Bureau agreed to convene its next meeting on 7 October 2026.

31. The Bureau agreed to convene a meeting during the week of 22 March or 5 April 2027 to prepare the 31st plenary meeting.

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); Vasilis GIANNIAS (Administrative Assistant); Charlotte GILMARTIN (Head of the Gender Equality Policy Unit and Secretary to the GEC); Irena GUIDIKOVA (Head of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department); 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)OJ2	Draft agenda
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2. Information from members of the Bureau and the Secretariat on developments since the 29th GEC plenary meeting

2.1. Upcoming Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H) meetings:

2.1.1. GEC and CDADI Joint statement on the [fundamental importance of equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion for the New Democratic Pact for Europe](#)

2.1.2. First biennial report (2024-2025) on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029)

2.2. New Democratic Pact for Europe – invitation to the GEC Chair to participate in an exchange on democratic security: trends and piloting foresight on 12 October 2026

2.3. High-level conference on Health Literacy and Human Rights, Rome, 4 December 2026

3. Workplan for 2026-2027

3.1. GEC Annual Conference 2027

4. Follow-up to the 29th meeting of the GEC

4.1. Document summarising the thematic debate on the role of women in democracy

4.2. Key takeaways from the GEC annual conference and update on the full report

5. Preparation of the 30th meeting of the GEC: main deliverables and activities

GEC(2026)OJ2	Draft agenda of the 30 th meeting of the GEC
GEC(2026)OJ2ann	Draft annotated agenda and order of business

5.1. Follow-up to existing GEC standards and future activities

5.2. Thematic implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism

5.3. Collection of promising practices on the place 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

5.4. Study on equal participation of women and men in political and public decision-making

5.5. Implementation review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)1 on the inclusion of gender differences in health policy

5.6. Study on effective access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

5.7. Analysis of good practices on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in education, contributing to implementation of the Gender Equality Scoreboard in Education under preparation by the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)

5.8. Exchange of views with Maria Andriani Kostopoulou, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

5.9. Exchange with representatives of the Luxembourg Red Cross National Centre for Victims of Violence

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- 5.10. Gender equality in multilateral settings**
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- 5.11. World café with the Co-operation unit on projects on gender equality and combating violence against women and domestic violence**
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- 6. Elections and appointments**
- 6.1. Chair and Vice Chair**
- 6.2. Drafting Committee on Risks and Harms of Online and Digital Addictions**
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- 7. Discussion on future Terms of Reference (2028-2031)**
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- 8. Requests for observer status**
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- 9. Other business**
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- 10. Date of the next meeting**
- 10.1. TBD: 31st Bureau meeting (March 2027)**