

Strasbourg, 8 January 2021

**Observations of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion on
Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2180 (2020) on “The impact of the Covid-19
pandemic on human rights and the rule of law”**

1. The Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) welcomes the adoption of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2180 (2020) on “The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on human rights and the rule of law”; it is particularly pleased to note the recommendation made therein to engage in intergovernmental work on how to ensure an effective response to public health emergencies that respect human rights.
2. From the very beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the CDADI has followed the impact of this crisis on disadvantaged persons and groups that are exposed to discrimination on the grounds falling under its mandate. It notes with satisfaction that the Parliamentary Assembly underlines in this context (see Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2339 (2020)) that all interferences with human rights and fundamental freedoms must, under the European Convention on Human Rights, not only be proportionate but also non-discriminatory. The CDADI also kept in mind the statement that the Bureau of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) made on 19 May 2020 on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and related government responses on groups of concern to ECRI.
3. In order to initiate an exchange of promising and good practices on upholding equality and protecting disadvantaged persons and groups against discrimination and hate during times of crisis, the CDADI invited member States, the participants and observers of the CDADI and other stakeholders to respond to a questionnaire that focussed on the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged groups and what measures member States have taken to mitigate this impact.
4. Based on the answers to this questionnaire, the study “COVID-19: an analysis of the anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion dimensions in Council of Europe member States” has been carried out; it compiles information on the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged groups in various areas including access to services in the fields of health, education, housing and employment, the use of regional or minority languages as well as increasing hate speech and violence.
5. Building on this study, a working group of the CDADI has prepared draft Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the promotion of equality and the protection from discrimination and hate during the Covid-19 and similar crises. In addition, the CDADI is compiling a document with promising and good practices that the member States of the Council of Europe have developed in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

6. The CDADI is convinced that the discussion and adoption of these draft guidelines in the months to come will form an important contribution to the implementation of paragraph five of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2180 (2020) to pool knowledge and experience on how to ensure an effective response to public health emergencies that respect human rights and the rule of law.