

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2018-2023



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# COUNCIL OF EUROPE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2018-2023

**Adopted  
by the Committee of Ministers  
of the Council of Europe  
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*Stratégie du Conseil de l'Europe  
pour l'égalité entre les femmes  
et les hommes 2018-2023*

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# INTRODUCTION: THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND GENDER EQUALITY

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1. Achieving gender equality is central to the fulfilment of the Council of Europe's mission: safeguarding human rights, upholding democracy and preserving the rule of law.
2. *Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life.* It also implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men.
3. Even if progress is visible and the legal status of women in Europe has undoubtedly improved during recent decades, effective equality between women and men is far from being a reality. Gender gaps and structural barriers persist in many areas, which limit women and men to their traditional roles, and constrain women's opportunities to benefit from their fundamental rights. Regular monitoring and research show that progress is very slow as regards women's political participation, access to justice and the elimination of harmful gender stereotypes and sexism. Violence against women remains one of the most pronounced expressions of the unequal power relations between women and men. It is both a violation of the human rights of women and a major obstacle to gender equality.

” Even if progress is visible, effective equality between women and men is far from being a reality.

4. In the current context of growing economic difficulties and subsequent austerity policies and measures, political uncertainties and raising inequalities at all levels of the society, it is important to recognise the essential contribution of women to communities, societies and economies, and address the high cost of gender inequalities. Factors such as rising nationalism and populism and their attacks on women's rights, the inflow of migrants and refugees, the decrease in resources for gender equality mechanisms and policies, and failure to implement agreed standards, have created new challenges and exacerbated some of the problems that persist in society's journey towards full respect for equal rights for women and men and gender equality. It is also the case that it is necessary to pay due attention to the establishment of social and economic conditions for the exercise of equal rights by women and men, including by the wider involvement of women in the economy and developing opportunities for them to raise their economic independence.

5. The Council of Europe's pioneering work in the fields of human rights and gender equality has resulted in a solid legal and policy framework. Gender equality is one of the priorities of the Organisation, which remains fully committed to addressing both current and emerging challenges and to removing barriers in order to achieve substantive and full gender equality.

6. In doing so, the Council of Europe will adopt a dual-track approach including:

- ▶ specific policies and actions, including positive action when appropriate, in critical areas for the advancement of women for the realisation of de facto gender equality, and
- ▶ the promotion, monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation of the process of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes,<sup>1</sup> whereby gender mainstreaming refers to the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making.<sup>2</sup>

7. Historically unequal power relations between women and men have led to domination over, and discrimination against, women by men, and to the prevention of the full advancement of women. However, both women and men are victims of stereotypes restricting their full capabilities.

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1. Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality standards and mechanisms.  
2. Council of Europe Group of Specialists in Gender Mainstreaming, 1998.

8. The involvement of men and boys is critical to the achievement of gender equality. Policies should also address gender-related inequalities that affect men and boys.

” The involvement of men and boys is critical to the achievement of gender equality.

## Council of Europe Legal Instruments

9. The Council of Europe’s work in the fields of human rights and gender equality has resulted in comprehensive legal instruments<sup>3</sup> and policy guidance<sup>4</sup> aimed at achieving the advancement and empowerment of women and the effective realisation of gender equality in member States and beyond.

10. An impressive number of conventions and recommendations have been adopted by the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, guiding and influencing gender equality developments in Europe and worldwide.

11. The European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) is Europe’s core human rights treaty: Article 1 of the Convention guarantees the rights and freedoms it includes to everyone in the jurisdiction of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe. The principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex is guaranteed by both Article 14 and Protocol 12 to the Convention. In addition, the European Social Charter establishes enjoyment of economic and social rights without discrimination. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) is widely recognised as the most comprehensive international instrument to tackle violence against women and domestic violence in its many forms. Furthermore, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against

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3. References in this strategy to international treaties and other instruments should not be considered as a commitment of member States, who supported this strategy, to implement the mentioned treaties unless they are parties to such treaties in accordance with international law.

4. The Resolution and Action Plan adopted at the 7th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Equality between Women and Men, “Bridging the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality to achieve real gender equality” (25 May 2010, Baku, Azerbaijan); and the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers “Making gender equality a reality”, adopted in Madrid, Spain, on 12 May 2009.



Trafficking in Human Beings aims at preventing and combating trafficking in women, men and children for the purpose of sexual, labour or other types of exploitation, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), is the first treaty to criminalise all forms of sexual offences against children.

12. The Committee of Ministers Recommendations and Parliamentary Assembly Resolutions<sup>5</sup> related to gender equality cover a diversity of issues, including combating sex-based discrimination, eliminating sexist language, protecting women against violence, achieving a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, mainstreaming gender in education, in sport, in the media and in the audiovisual sector, providing gender equality standards and mechanisms, protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities, ensuring gender equality in the media. They provide member States with crucial standards to develop legislation and put in place policies at the national level that comply with internationally agreed standards in the area of gender equality.

## **The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017**

13. The Council of Europe launched its first Transversal Programme on Gender Equality in 2012 with the aim of increasing the impact and visibility of gender equality instruments and supporting their implementation in member States and within the Organisation itself. The Programme mobilises all of the Council of Europe's institutions, sectors, intergovernmental structures, monitoring mechanisms and partial agreements as well as its external partners, and thus brings resources together for greater impact, energy and focus. The Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (GEC) is at the centre of this effort.

14. The most tangible result of the Transversal Programme was the first Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 (the Strategy) which was unanimously adopted by the Committee of Ministers in November 2013. The Strategy built upon the strengths, specificities and added value of the Council of Europe and set the vision and a framework for the Council of Europe's role and action in the area of gender equality. The Strategy promotes a holistic and integrated approach to gender equality and provides policy guidance and support to Council of Europe member States, as well as internal institutional bodies and mechanisms to tackle old and new challenges in implementing standards in the area of gender equality.

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5. See at: <https://pace.coe.int/en>.

15. The Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 set five priority areas:
- 1) combating gender stereotypes and sexism;
  - 2) preventing and combating violence against women;
  - 3) guaranteeing equal access of women to justice;
  - 4) achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
  - 5) achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

16. In the process of implementing the Strategy, the Council of Europe has engaged in the promotion, monitoring and evaluation of standards – in order to identify gaps and obstacles to their implementation – as well as in the development of activities, tools and co-operation programmes to address such gaps and support member States to apply relevant instruments. Another important element of the Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 was to build and strengthen strategic partnerships with other regional and international organisations, as well as with civil society, aimed at ensuring synergies, strengthening impact and increasing effectiveness, outreach and visibility.

17. Annual reports by the GEC to the Committee of Ministers on the implementation of the Strategy have confirmed the leading role of the Council of Europe in the area of gender equality and its increasing authority both at European and global level. Gender equality remains a priority area for successive Chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers. Regular reporting and monitoring have also confirmed that member States engage in a proactive way in activities related to all five objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, and that national efforts have benefited from the initiatives and tools developed under the guidance of the GEC. Co-operation with member States is vital and has enabled the Strategy to harness the Council of Europe standards with innovative initiatives and lessons learnt from experience at the national level.

## **The new Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023**

18. The new Strategy 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. It links them to both the current economic context and the political leverage within the Council of Europe, including the overarching priorities of the Organisation. 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.

19. The challenges faced by the Council of Europe member States in the implementation of the Strategy 2014-2017 are related to developments in the wider global and regional context, including a backlash against the human rights of women, unequal power structures, the persistence of gender-based violence, threats to women's rights defenders, limited participation of women in political and decision-making processes, gender bias and stereotypes, sexism and discrimination against women including sexist hate speech online and offline, and in the political discourse, access to quality employment and financial resources, lack of social and economic infrastructure for the exercise of equal rights by men and women (such as available childcare facilities, sufficiently paid parental leave, parental payments, etc.). Last but not least, budgetary cuts and austerity measures applied to gender equality authorities and bodies. The implementation of gender equality laws and policies goes hand in hand with the financial and human resources dedicated to that task. The strengthening of institutional mechanisms for gender equality, at the national and local level, and the availability of resources at all levels, are therefore critical and will determine future progress to improve gender equality on the ground.

20. The Conference "Are we there yet? Assessing progress, inspiring action – the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017"<sup>6</sup> took stock of the implementation of the Strategy, and put forward a number of recommendations for the preparation of the next Council of Europe gender equality strategy, including the need to take account of progress and achievements, as well as of emerging issues – such as migration and refugee flows.

21. Women in particular and also men are often subjected to discrimination on several of the grounds listed in Article 14 of the European Convention for Human Rights and expanded through related case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. All forms of discrimination and identities need to be taken into account so that both gender equality policies and "generic policies" are

” The strengthening of institutional mechanisms for gender equality will determine future progress to improve gender equality.

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6. 30 June – 1 July 2016 in Tallinn (Estonia) <http://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/tallinn-conference>

fully effective for all: women and men, girls and boys, in their diversity. The new Strategy recognises the important challenge of ensuring that all women benefit from gender equality policies and the protection provided by relevant instruments, including disadvantaged groups of women (such as Roma women, women with disabilities, migrant and refugee women)<sup>7</sup>. To that end, the new Strategy also pays due attention to intersecting grounds of discrimination, which reflects a shift in the debate from focus on multiple discrimination<sup>8</sup> towards including multiple identities and intersectionality.<sup>9</sup> Intersectional discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, among others, disproportionately marginalises particular groups of women. Therefore, intersectionality is addressed as a transversal issue across the priority objectives of the new Strategy.

22. Furthermore, discrimination on the ground of sex has a structural and horizontal character that pervades all cultures and communities, at all levels. Gender inequalities also “add up” during the course of a life, so that certain disadvantages experienced in younger years accumulate throughout the life cycle and can cause subsequent difficulties later in life. A life cycle approach to gender equality policies is therefore necessary to capture this reality.

” Intersectionality is addressed as a transversal issue across the priority objectives of the new Strategy.

23. The importance of addressing persistent gender gaps in employment, pay, poverty, pensions and unbalanced share of household and care responsibilities between women and men is recognised as a key factor towards women’s economic independence in the new Strategy. Women’s economic

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7. Member States may identify at national level any further disadvantaged and specific groups of women which require targeted policies and measures.
  8. “Certain groups of women, due to the combination of their sex with other factors, such as their race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, are in an especially vulnerable position. In addition to discrimination on the grounds of sex, these women are often subjected simultaneously to one or several other types of discrimination” (paragraph 59 of Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms).
  9. “Multiple identity emphasises the existence of intersectional groups of people and the importance of responding to their specific situation, experience and identity” *Innovating at the Intersections. Equality bodies tackling Intersectional Discrimination*, Equinet, November 2016.

independence and empowerment are prerequisites for gender equality and for equitable and sustainable societies. Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, services, property and skills and as a result, their contribution to economic development and growth. Sustained policies and political commitment are crucial to advance women's economic opportunities and rights in accordance with the European Social Charter.

24. The new Strategy also addresses the implications of equality between women and men as regards dignity and rights, in public, private and family life. The social significance of maternity and paternity leave and the role of both parents in the upbringing of children and as carers of adult dependents must be taken into consideration to ensure that both women's and men's human rights are fully and equally respected. The equal sharing of unpaid household and care work should be promoted to break down gender stereotypes, ensure women's and men's work/life balance, and get closer to real gender equality.

25. The role of men, in both the public and private spheres, is critical to make progress towards real gender equality. Men's and boys' participation and responsibility as actors of change for gender equality are very important. Male gender stereotypes need to be overcome in order to free men and boys from the pressures of stereotyped expectations they face. As gender stereotypes are pervasive and operate throughout time, a life-cycle approach is needed to address the socialisation of men and boys in a wide range of social contexts: at home, throughout the education system, in the workplace and the wider economy, in the public space, in social media and networks, as well as in personal relationships. The inclusion of men is needed both as active partners in the promotion of the human rights of women, as well as beneficiaries of gender equality policies.

26. A strong commitment to *de facto* equality between women and men at all levels and in all areas, alongside women's empowerment and the elimination of sexism and gender stereotypes, will benefit future generations and society as a whole. Moving towards substantive gender equality also requires a change in the roles of both women and men, including equal sharing of household and care responsibilities.

27. The new Strategy will be implemented in a co-ordinated way with other Council of Europe strategies and action plans, in particular in the fields of children's rights, internet governance, rights of persons with disabilities, the inclusion of Roma and Travellers, and the protection of refugee and migrant children in Europe.

28. A biennial table indicating current, future and proposed activities (in line with the budget cycle of the Council of Europe) will be attached to the new Strategy to show the immediate link between the strategic objectives and the specific measures and means used to achieve them.

## **Council of Europe in the global context: UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

29. The Council of Europe comprehensive and extensive body of instruments and work provides important input towards the efforts of the member States to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The Council of Europe contributes to achieving the goals set in relevant international instruments, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. The Council of Europe has three ground-breaking, unique and comprehensive conventions in the area of human dignity that are all of relevance to the SDGs:

- ▶ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention);
- ▶ Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- ▶ Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention).

31. These conventions have a global outreach. They were drafted with the understanding that measures to address the global problems related to gender-based violence, trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children should not be limited to a particular geographic area. Their provisions inspire normative and policy changes in all regions of the world and all States can become parties to these conventions. For non-state parties, they provide a comprehensive blueprint for action at both global and national level. They can be used as reference frameworks and provide platforms for international co-operation, review and exchange of experiences that offer unique guidance in the design of national policies and legislation. Through them, the Council of Europe and its member States can support and contribute to the implementation of Goal 5 (“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”) and Goal 16 (“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”).

32. The 14 indicators agreed upon at UN level to measure the implementation of the nine targets included in Goal 5 (gender equality) cover priority areas of the Council of Europe work to achieve gender equality. The Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 and the new Strategy directly address many of the targets of Goal 5, including human dignity and the fight against gender inequality; the promotion of the full participation of women in society; the need to guarantee access to fair justice systems for all and to work in partnerships.

33. Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) is also relevant to the Council of Europe's work on gender equality as it refers to providing "access to justice for all". The Council of Europe addresses this through its work to guarantee women's equal access to justice. Furthermore, Goal 16 includes targets to reduce physical, psychological and sexual violence and related deaths, and to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against girls and boys – areas covered by Council of Europe conventions and addressed through activities and co-operation with the 47 member States and the South-Mediterranean countries.

34. Finally, gender equality-related targets under other SDGs are also relevant for the new Strategy, in particular SDGs 1,<sup>10</sup> 3,<sup>11</sup> 4<sup>12</sup> and 8.<sup>13</sup>

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10. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

11. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

12. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

13. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

# GOAL AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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35. The overall goal of the new Strategy is to achieve the effective realisation of gender equality and to empower women and men in the Council of Europe member States, by supporting the implementation of existing instruments and strengthening the Council of Europe *acquis* in the field of gender equality, under the guidance of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC). The focus for the period 2018-2023 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.

36. These priority areas build on and further develop the existing body of work carried out by the Council of Europe and the member States, bringing added value to actions taken by other regional and international organisations. In addition, they will sustain the Council of Europe and member States' activities in the field of gender equality in order to achieve tangible results during the period covered by the new Strategy.

37. The beneficiaries of the new Strategy are women and men, girls and boys, living in the 47 Council of Europe member States and society as a whole. The governments of member States drive the implementation of the new Strategy at national and local levels, in close co-operation with gender equality institutions, equality bodies and civil society.





## **Strategic objective 1: Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism**

38. Gender stereotypes are preconceived social and cultural patterns or ideas whereby women and men are assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Gender stereotyping presents a serious obstacle to the achievement of real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination. Such stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of girls and boys, women and men, their educational and professional preferences and experiences, as well as life opportunities in general.

39. Gender stereotypes both result from and are the cause of deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices. They are used to justify and maintain the historical power relations of men over women, as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of gender equality.

40. Violent and degrading online content, including in pornography, normalisation of sexual violence, including rape, reinforce the idea of women's submissive role and contribute to treating women as subordinate members of the family and society. They feed into violence against women, sexist hate speech targeting women, particularly feminists, and contribute to maintaining and reinforcing gender stereotypes and sexism.

41. Gender stereotypes and patriarchy negatively affect men and boys too. Stereotypes about men and boys also result from, and are the cause of, deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices. Hegemonic masculinities are a contributing factor to maintaining and reinforcing gender stereotypes,

which in turn contribute to sexist hate speech and prejudice against men and boys who deviate from the predominant concepts of masculinity. Societal perceptions and media portrayal can feed into gender stereotypes. This includes perceptions about what both women and men should look like, how they should behave, what careers they should pursue and what household tasks they should take on.

” Both women and men are victims of stereotypes restricting their full capabilities.

42. Structural inequalities and persisting gender stereotypes affecting women and men, girls and boys continue to be present in the education and childcare system and extend all the way to the labour market. Horizontal segregation is evident in the labour market: certain occupations and fields of economic activity have a strong male presence (e.g. science and technology, heavy industry, construction, the army). Similarly, other areas of activity have a predominantly female workforce (e.g. care services, education, secretarial or office work, nursing or human resources— often with lower pay); a situation which does not appear to be changing. Occupational choices of women, often an extension of their traditional role as caretakers, can be influenced through incentives and positive policy and legislative measures such as paternal leave, thus creating opportunities for men to be(come) role models for other men regarding “traditional” female occupations. Vertical segregation in the labour market is also apparent. Within the same sector, even those dominated by women, usually the higher positions in terms of salary and hierarchy are occupied by men, while lower jobs on the hierarchical and salary scale are mostly fulfilled by women (e.g. education, retail industry). This is to a large extent due to the effects of the disproportionate weight of household and care responsibilities on women, gender biases and stereotypes about education and career choices, affecting both women and men.

43. Gender stereotypes perpetuate women’s economic and social marginalisation. They are disproportionately affected by unpaid household and care responsibilities and low paid or informal work. Furthermore, women’s average higher level of education in Europe, does not automatically translate into equal pay and pensions, high-quality employment and equal access to leading positions. Some groups of women (notably women with low levels of qualifications, single mothers, migrant, Roma and ethnic minority women, women with disabilities) face particular challenges, including enhanced difficulty to join the labour market, higher levels of precariousness and related risks

of poverty and social exclusion. Women's economic empowerment requires measures that support equal opportunities, equal pay for work of equal value, abolition of discriminatory legislation and economic disincentives for women to work, paid maternity and paternity leave, paid parental leave for women and men, access to quality and affordable child care and other social services and a change in the male-dominated working culture, attitudes and practices influenced by gender stereotypes.

44. Media and social media play an important role in our lives, particularly when used to share information and expand awareness of a wide range of issues. However, evidence also shows that social media in particular are subject to abusive use, and that women and girls are often confronted with violent and sexualised threats online. Particular platforms acting as conveyers of sexist hate speech include social media or video games. Freedom of expression is often abused as an excuse to cover unacceptable and offensive behaviour. In the same way as with other forms of violence against women, sexist hate speech remains under-reported, but its impact on women, whether emotional, psychological and/or physical can be devastating, especially for young girls and women. The same occurs with sexism.

45. Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:

- ▶ promote the implementation of Council of Europe instruments and recommendations that target the eradication of prejudices, customs, traditions based on stereotyped gender roles; develop tools to support member States in implementing relevant instruments, including the Istanbul Convention;
- ▶ promote the implementation of recommendations from the Helsinki Conference (2014) on "Combating Gender Stereotypes in and through Education";
- ▶ promote the implementation of recommendations from the Amsterdam Conference (2013) on "Media and the Image of Women";
- ▶ identify, compile and disseminate good practices to eradicate gender stereotypes for girls and boys, women and men in the education system, the labour market, family life – including equal sharing of household and care responsibilities between women and men – leave schemes and all areas in which women and men are under-represented;
- ▶ support data collection and research on sexism, gender stereotypes and sex-based discrimination;
- ▶ build partnerships with relevant stakeholders to curb violent and degrading internet pornography, given its negative influence on gender relations, harmful sexual practices and coercion;

- ▶ review the implementation of existing instruments by member States;
- ▶ strive to remove gender stereotypes affecting one or more particular group(s) of women (such as Roma women, women with disabilities, migrant and refugee women) in co-operation with relevant sectors and organisations;
- ▶ address gender stereotypes affecting men and boys by engaging them and working in specific sectors such as education, media and the private sector;
- ▶ continue to address sexist hate speech as a form of sexism, analyse and monitor its impact, in co-operation with other relevant sectors of the Council of Europe;
- ▶ prepare a draft recommendation to prevent and combat sexism, including guidelines to prevent and combat it online and offline, covering new forms of sexism affecting women and men in private and public spaces, and addressing sexist language (Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language), sexist hate speech, sexism in media and in advertising;
- ▶ review the implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R (96) 51 on reconciling work and family life, and consider updating it;
- ▶ support actions to promote equal economic independence for women and men and remove obstacles to women's labour market participation; encourage more men to take on caring responsibilities and to make use of flexible working arrangements and other family friendly measures.





## **Strategic objective 2: Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence**

46. Violence against women and domestic violence remains widespread in all member States of the Council of Europe, with devastating consequences for women, societies and economies. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) is widely recognised as the most comprehensive international treaty to tackle this serious violation of the human rights of women. Important safeguards are also set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and related case-law, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention,) and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

47. The Istanbul Convention has led to positive changes in legislation and in the development of strategies to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence in many member States. However, a number of significant challenges persist in developing policies and actions to address

” The Istanbul Convention has led to positive changes in legislation and in the development of strategies to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence in many member States.

violence against women and girls, including the limited resources available to provide specialist and dedicated support services to all women victims of violence.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups of women such as women migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, women drug users, women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, Roma women<sup>15</sup> require targeted policies and activities to address the violence they are confronted with.

” Significant challenges persist to properly address this violence.

48. Violence often has devastating short- and long-term mental and physical health consequences, at times persisting across generations. The Istanbul Convention defines “domestic violence” as all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim. Domestic violence affects women disproportionately, but also touches other victims, therefore the Istanbul Convention encourages parties to apply its provisions to all victims of domestic violence, including women and girls, men and boys and the elderly.

49. Violence against girls and boys constitutes a violation of their rights, compromising their social development and affecting the enjoyment of their other rights. Ending violence against children is therefore a legal, ethical and economic imperative. The gendered nature of risk and vulnerability among children at risk of violence needs to be acknowledged and addressed.<sup>16</sup>

50. Violence and sexual harassment of women in public space are strongly condemned by the Istanbul Convention. Violence in crowds represents another dimension of violence against women and is a wide-spread problem. The feeling of fear and insecurity in public spaces, as well as in public transport, has severe impacts on the daily lives of women. Often women do not dare to lodge a complaint for fear of the incident being trivialised. The tacit approval of sexual violence and harassment of women in public space restricts women’s freedom and contributes to perpetuating the attackers’ impunity. Therefore,

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14. See “Analytical study of the results of the 4th round of monitoring the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence in Council of Europe member States” (March 2014).

15. Member States may identify at national level any further disadvantaged and specific groups of women which require targeted policies and measures.

16. Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021).

attacks on women in public space should be reported and call for a comprehensive response.

51. Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:

- ▶ support member States to implement relevant international instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), taking into account the General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, as well as SDGs 5 and 16;
- ▶ support member States that request it in their preparation for signature, ratification and implementation of the Istanbul, Anti-Trafficking and Lanzarote Conventions, including through the provision of technical and legal expertise;
- ▶ develop tools to promote the knowledge of the Istanbul, Anti-Trafficking and Lanzarote Conventions among non-state actors in order to encourage their contribution to its implementation, highlighting the link between violence against women and the historic unequal power relations between women and men in society;
- ▶ in line with the Istanbul Convention, take action to:
  - address sexual violence and harassment of women in public space;
  - support member States to take measures that address all forms of violence;
  - address the ability of victims of domestic violence to seek shelter and housing as a protection measure;
  - support the development of data collection on violence against women and domestic violence;
  - support the setting up and development of co-ordinating bodies at the national level, and promote and support the development of national strategies to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence;
  - address violence against elderly women and men;
  - develop tools to address the need to prevent and combat domestic violence against men and boys;
  - address the role of men as perpetrators of gender-based violence and develop information tools on the role of men in preventing violence against women and girls;
- ▶ gather information and build knowledge about the specific forms of violence faced by certain groups of women in vulnerable situations (such as older women, women with diverse sexual orientations and gender



identities, marginalised women, migrant women, women with disabilities, young women and girls, homeless women, women drug users, or victims of human trafficking) through cooperation and exchange of information with relevant bodies and entities of the Council of Europe;

- ▶ develop activities to prevent and combat additional forms of violence against women such as political violence and social violence;
- ▶ promote the Istanbul, Anti-Trafficking and Lanzarote Conventions beyond the European continent, making available expertise and sharing good practices in the context of co-operation with non-member States and other regional and international organisations.







### Strategic objective 3: Ensure the equal access of women to justice

52. Access to justice is a human right and an integral element of promoting the rule of law and a well-functioning democracy. Respect for and protection of human rights can only be guaranteed by the availability of effective remedies (including the right to a fair trial), adequate reparation and/or compensation. While accessing justice may be difficult for everyone, it is even more so for women, due to gender inequality in society and in the justice system. Persistent economic and social inequalities between women and men, gender bias and gender stereotypes result in unequal access of women and men to justice. Evidence also points to the existence of a glass ceiling in the judiciary.<sup>17</sup>

” Respect for and protection of human rights can only be guaranteed by the availability of effective remedies.

53. Equal access to justice implies the right to an effective remedy, the right to a fair trial, the right to equal access to the courts, and the right to legal aid and legal representation. There are a multitude of obstacles that prevent women from having equal access to justice: taboos, prejudices, gender stereotypes, customs, poverty, lack of information, gaps in legislation and in their implementation, and sometimes even the laws themselves. This is particularly

17. Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, “European Judicial Systems - Efficiency and quality of justice” CEPEJ Studies No. 23, Edition 2016 (2014 data).

true for some groups of women, notably victims of gender-based violence, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, ethnic minority women, Roma women, women with disabilities and elderly women.

” Equal access to justice is fundamental to ensuring real equality between women and men.

54. Cultural barriers, fear and shame also impact women’s access to justice, as do discriminatory attitudes and the stereotypical roles of women as carers and men as providers, which still persist in civil and family law in many jurisdictions. These barriers may persist during investigations and trials, especially in cases of gender-based violence, and lead to high levels of attrition and even under-reporting. Their impact is even more significant on women exposed to multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination.

55. Taken together, all these barriers are pieces in a ‘justice jigsaw’ that exclude women. It is urgent that this gender imbalance is addressed, as equal access to justice is fundamental to ensuring real equality between women and men.

56. Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:

- ▶ support member States to implement Council of Europe and other relevant instruments, including SDG 16 and taking into account CEDAW’s General Recommendation No. 33 on women’s access to justice (2015);
- ▶ promote and support the implementation of the recommendations from the Bern Conference (2016) “Towards guaranteeing equal access of women to justice”;
- ▶ identify, compile and disseminate good practices from member States to reduce obstacles and facilitate women’s access to justice;
- ▶ encourage research and standardised data collection to tackle gaps and lack of data disaggregated by sex concerning women’s access to justice, including women’s participation in the judiciary;
- ▶ continue to address the harmful impact of gender stereotyping on judicial decision-making, in accordance with the Council of Europe Action Plan on Judicial Independence and Impartiality for 2016-2021 (Action 2.4) – through research, monitoring, training, education, capacity building and the promotion of good practices at the national level, in line with the instruments of the Council of Europe and international law, and in co-operation with other regional and international organisations;

- ▶ develop and disseminate training tools and materials on gender equality issues and the human rights of women, in the context of international conventions and legal frameworks including CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention and tailored to the needs of justice professionals and members of law enforcement bodies;
- ▶ monitor and follow up court decisions to raise awareness and ensure a better understanding among legal professionals of issues related to women's access to justice, including judicial stereotypes and the protection against gender-based violence and discrimination;
- ▶ promote the work and the strengthening of national equality bodies to combat sex-based discrimination and promote gender equality, including through litigation;
- ▶ identify and disseminate existing victim support tools and good practices to empower women in the process of accessing justice;
- ▶ develop information tools about the main Council of Europe instruments to promote women's access to justice taking into account the needs of women in particularly vulnerable situations, such as survivors of violence, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, targets of sexist hate speech, and Roma women.





#### **Strategic objective 4: Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**

57. Balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making is essential for a well-functioning democracy. Despite the adoption of new laws and policies in many member States and examples of good practice and supportive measures in some of the member States, women's under-representation in public and political life remains a critical issue which undermines the full functioning of democratic institutions and processes. Political activities and public decision-making remain male-dominated areas. Men set political priorities, and political culture continues to be structured around male behaviour and life experience.

58. A number of obstacles make it difficult for women to enter and ensure sustainability of their participation in the area of political and public decision-making. These include electoral systems, the functioning of political parties, gender stereotypes, roles and values conveyed by some family models, and the social and private division of work which leaves little space for the participation of women in the public arena. In most member States, the full and equal participation of women in political and public life, in legislative, executive, judicial, diplomatic and administrative bodies at the local, regional and

” Women's under-representation in public and political life undermines the functioning of democratic institutions and processes.

national level is still below the Council of Europe agreed standards and the governments' commitment for a "Planet 50-50 by 2030".<sup>18</sup>

59. Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, culture and stereotypes can refrain women from having full and equal access to all levels of management and decision-making processes, including corporate boards. The gender imbalance in economic decision-making both within the public and the private sectors is an obstacle to women's empowerment and a barrier for economic growth and sustainable development.

60. Women should have equal power and influence over the formulation of political agendas and priorities. To achieve the full participation of women in public, private and political life requires fundamental changes, policies, measures and targeted actions to remove both societal and structural obstacles.

” Full participation of women in public, private and political life requires fundamental changes.

61. Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:

- ▶ support member States in achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making including through the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies and policies;
- ▶ review the effectiveness of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
- ▶ continue the regular monitoring of the implementation by member States of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, and ensure the visibility and dissemination of data and good practices in member States;
- ▶ encourage and support actions to facilitate women's participation in elections at the national, regional and local levels as well as actions to empower both women candidates and elected officials – including women from marginalised groups – in co-operation with relevant bodies of the Council of Europe;

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18. "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality" was launched by the United Nations on the occasion of International Women's Day 2015. It showcases national actions pledged to achieve gender equality by 2030. See at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up>

- ▶ identify and support measures and good practices that promote gender equality in relation to: electoral systems, training of decision makers in both public institutions and political parties, gender-sensitive functioning of decision-making bodies, setting parity thresholds, adoption of effective quota laws and voluntary party quotas, and the regulation of political parties including public funding, in co-operation with relevant bodies of the Council of Europe and with a view to achieving gender balance in decision making, combating gender stereotypes and to improve the gender-sensitiveness of decision-making environments;
- ▶ achieve a balanced participation of women and men in all Council of Europe bodies, institutions and decision-making processes.



## **Strategic objective 5: Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls**

62. The growing number of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, and the precarious situation in which they are, raise concerns about their personal, physical and sexual safety and security – especially when they travel on their own, are pregnant, with small children, or are subject to intersectional discrimination. Many migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls have been exposed to various forms of gender-based violence, either in their country of origin, during the journey to Europe, or upon arrival. Due consideration should be given to their needs and circumstances and gender-responsive measures should be adopted to prevent discrimination, violence, harassment, trafficking and other forms of exploitation and abuse – including in times of crisis and natural disasters. In addition, measures need to be taken to ensure that migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women have access to their human and social rights in relation to individual freedom, employment, housing, health, education, social protection and welfare where applicable; and access to information about their rights and the services available.

63. Victims of trafficking and gender-based violence among migrant, refugee and asylum-seekers need to be promptly identified as such and provided with adequate and gender-sensitive protection, treatment and care. Particular attention needs to be provided to girls and boys in this context.

64. Council of Europe and other international instruments should serve as a blueprint for all efforts and measures undertaken by the member States to protect the human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women. In



” Due consideration should be given to the needs and circumstances migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

particular, the Istanbul Convention, the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Lanzarote Convention, and the 1951 International Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as relevant resolutions and reports of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on protecting refugee women and girls from gender-based violence and migration from a gender equality perspective, should be at the heart of efforts to protect and promote the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, girls and boys, including ensuring that culture, custom, tradition or so called ‘honour’ are not considered as justification for any acts of violence, negative social control, or any violation of their human rights, as provided by these conventions.

65. It is highly important to mainstream gender equality in all integration measures, so that both migrant women and men are aware of the need to respect and uphold gender equality law and policy, even if they do not correspond to the situation in their countries of origin. This would foster integration in European societies and labour markets and benefit all women and men, girls and boys. This work should be part of a general effort to make gender equality a norm accepted by both women and men in every society.

66. Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:

- ▶ support member States to implement Council of Europe and other relevant instruments, including the Organisation’s Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe, taking into account CEDAW’s General Recommendation No. 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, and the SDGs;
- ▶ support the systematic integration of a gender equality dimension in policies and measures regarding migration, asylum and integration, in order to secure the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, men and boys, regardless of traditional or cultural attitudes;
- ▶ support the implementation of existing standards aimed at preventing migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and children from falling victim to gender-based violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, exploitation and negative social control, including by addressing these risks through adequate identification, reporting and referral mechanisms at the national level. The vulnerability of women accompanying minors



should be acknowledged to ensure that appropriate care and support are available to these women and children;

- ▶ develop tools to support the appropriate treatment of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and children victims of violence, having regard to the measures included in the Istanbul, Anti-Trafficking and Lanzarote Conventions;
- ▶ encourage the economic empowerment and respect for the social rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, in particular with regards to employment, health, housing and education and address the multiple discrimination that they may be confronted with;
- ▶ update Recommendation No. R (79) 10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States concerning women migrants, and regularly review its implementation;
- ▶ support member States in the preparation and dissemination of information documents in different languages (such as factsheets) on the main Council of Europe instruments to protect the human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and men, including information on the support structures, services, NGOs and legal aid available in their residing country. Specific factsheets should be prepared for women victims of violence;
- ▶ encourage independent Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms to address the gender-specific needs of migrant, refugee and asylum-seekers, including girls and boys, into their monitoring work, where applicable, and to make recommendations in this regard;
- ▶ promote actions targeting men and boys in order to change stereotypical norms and practices for the advancement of gender equality benefiting both women and men.





## Strategic objective 6: Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures

67. Council of Europe instruments on gender mainstreaming laid the foundations for important work in this area in Europe and beyond, including the reference definition of the term. The Committee of Ministers has adopted a number of recommendations on gender mainstreaming in different fields, including education, the media, sport and the audiovisual sector.<sup>19</sup> By adopting a gender mainstreaming approach in all policies and measures, alongside specific policies for the advancement of women, the Council of Europe will ensure that new initiatives and standards are gender sensitive, and therefore result in better informed policy-making, better allocation of resources and better governance and ultimately contribute to the realisation of gender equality.

68. Many member States are also actively promoting the implementation of gender mainstreaming in their national policies and measures through action plans and institutional structures to co-ordinate gender mainstreaming efforts, gender budgeting policies, and relevant training for government

” Gender mainstreaming leads to better informed policy-making, better allocation of resources and better governance.

19. Recommendation No. R(98)14 on gender mainstreaming; Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education; Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)1 on the inclusion of gender differences in health policy; Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media; Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)2 on gender mainstreaming in sport; and Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)9 on gender equality in the audiovisual sector.

officials. An evaluation of the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities should be carried out on a regular basis at national level, to assess the remaining challenges in this area. Where available, ensure co-operation with Council of Europe country offices which play an important role in providing gender analysis and mainstreaming gender equality in the development of co-operation programmes, projects and activities.

69. In 2014-2017, co-operation and synergies were reinforced in the various Council of Europe institutions, steering committees, monitoring mechanisms and partial agreements to introduce a gender equality perspective in many Council of Europe policies and at all levels. Over 50 Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) have been appointed in steering committees, other institutional bodies, as well as monitoring mechanisms. They lead efforts to integrate a gender equality dimension into their work and activities.

70. The Council of Europe will continue to strive to achieve gender mainstreaming in all its policy areas:

- ▶ the development, implementation and evaluation of co-operation activities, based on country specific and thematic action plans and other co-operation documents, and, taking into account the recommendations of the evaluation on gender mainstreaming in co-operation undertaken by the Directorate of Internal Oversight;
- ▶ the policy, programming and budgetary processes and the functioning of the various bodies and institutions, in particular through the mobilisation and contribution of:
  - the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Court of Human Rights, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Conference of INGOs;
  - the steering committees and other intergovernmental bodies;
  - the monitoring mechanisms;
  - partial agreements.

by:

- ▶ supporting policy analysis that are grounded on the particular situation of different groups of women and men, girls and boys, and their gender

” The Council of Europe will continue to strive to achieve gender mainstreaming in all its policy areas.



specific needs, as well as on the estimated impact of new policies and measures on them, and taking account of the findings in policy making;

- ▶ providing targeted training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming and producing related materials and tools, in particular by providing Council of Europe staff with guidance and tools on how to mainstream gender equality in their work and activities, including in the development, implementation and evaluation of co-operation activities;
- ▶ encouraging the different Council of Europe sectors to address the need for sex-disaggregated data in standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation activities;
- ▶ taking due care to involve all relevant actors, including gender equality experts and civil society, as appropriate;
- ▶ compiling and reviewing information on national gender equality mechanisms and other institutional frameworks for gender mainstreaming;
- ▶ identifying and disseminating good practices from the member States, Council of Europe and other regional or international organisations, on gender mainstreaming, including gender budgeting.

71. Training and support for GERs and Secretariat members working with them will be continued, as well as the production of supporting policy tools, the development of indicators to assess progress, the provision of expertise, facilitating networking and the exchange of information and good practice

both within the Organisation and with relevant national and international partners.

72. The Council of Europe will also continue to actively promote strong and efficient gender equality mechanisms and gender mainstreaming in member States through the promotion of existing standards, and by gathering information and disseminating good practices from member States.

73. The Council of Europe will continue its work to mainstream gender equality in its staff policies, including tools and indicators to measure and assess progress.

# INSTITUTIONAL SETTING, RESOURCES AND WORKING METHODS

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74. The transversal nature of the gender equality programme presupposes that all Council of Europe institutions (the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Court of Human Rights), decision-making, advisory and monitoring bodies, as well as human resources policies, should support and actively contribute to the achievement of the goal and strategic objectives of the new gender equality Strategy. They are invited to take initiatives within their respective mandates and resources. To stimulate and facilitate this process, the following elements complete the Council of Europe institutional setting for gender equality:

75. The **Gender Equality Commission (GEC)** is a Council of Europe Steering Committee composed of representatives of the 47 member States. The mission of the GEC is to steer the Gender Equality Transversal Programme, advise and involve its various components, as well as liaise with relevant intergovernmental bodies, providing expertise and a forum for exchange on good practices and issues of concern.

76. The **Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs)** appointed within intergovernmental bodies and other Council of Europe structures (see above) work to identify ways to integrate a gender equality perspective in the functioning, policies, programmes and activities of their respective body or structure. In co-operation with the GEC, they identify opportunities to develop new measures and activities to promote gender equality.

77. The **Gender Mainstreaming Team (GMT)** is a group of Council of Europe staff members serving in the various sectors and bodies of the Organisation. Its task is to share information and expertise, provide visibility to results, identify opportunities for joint action and make proposals to facilitate the implementation of the Gender Equality Transversal Programme, including the new Strategy. The Gender Equality Unit convenes and chairs the meetings of the GMT.

78. In order to assess progress in the implementation of the Strategy, the GEC regularly takes stock of results achieved and prepares an **annual report** on its implementation, which is submitted to the Committee of Ministers. A final review of the implementation of the Strategy will be undertaken to assess its impact.

# PARTNERSHIPS

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79. The Council of Europe places great importance in maintaining strategic partnerships with other regional and international organisations and civil society working for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. All the main international partners of the Council of Europe (United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Organization of American States (OAS)) have adopted Gender Equality Strategies or Action Plans. This provides a sound basis for partnerships and institutionalised co-operation, enabling the identification of opportunities for joint action, complementarity and synergy.

80. The Council of Europe has a number of institutional agreements with other international organisations, including the EU,<sup>20</sup> the OSCE,<sup>21</sup> UN Women,<sup>22</sup> the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),<sup>23</sup> the OAS,<sup>24</sup> and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).<sup>25</sup> They are therefore invited to contribute to the implementation of this new Strategy, as appropriate, in particular by holding regular consultations with the Council of Europe, participating in meetings and events and co-operating in joint initiatives. The Council of Europe will seek to reinforce its co-operation with other UN agencies and bodies (in particular the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW), UN Global Compact, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) and other international organisations (such as the World Bank and the International Organisation of La Francophonie). Co-operation will in particular seek to support

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20. Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union (May 2007).
  21. Declaration on Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (May 2005).
  22. Exchange of letters between the Council of Europe and UN Women on the promotion of implementation of international standards on gender equality and violence against women (February 2012).
  23. Joint Declaration on the Reinforcement of Co-operation between the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (September 2013).
  24. Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (September 2011).
  25. Arrangement between the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, concluded by exchange of letters (September 1961 and January 1962).



member States and the international community at large in their efforts to implement both the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

81. The Gender Equality Transversal Programme also seeks to involve, engage and use the experience and expertise of civil society organisations, in particular those specialising in women's rights and gender equality issues, in the development, implementation and assessment of policies, programmes and activities.

82. Other natural partners in the implementation of the gender equality Strategy include:

- ▶ parliaments;
- ▶ national governments;
- ▶ local and regional authorities and their associations;
- ▶ gender equality bodies;
- ▶ human rights institutions;
- ▶ professional networks (in particular in the fields of justice, journalism, education, health and social services);
- ▶ trade unions and employers' associations;
- ▶ the media;
- ▶ the private sector.

# COMMUNICATION

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83. Work in this area will continue to seek to:
- ▶ increase the visibility of Council of Europe standards, studies, guidelines, projects, events and their results in the area of gender equality;
  - ▶ raise awareness on gender equality issues and contribute towards changing attitudes, mentalities and behaviours;
  - ▶ facilitate the exchange of information between the various components of the programme and with partners;
  - ▶ give visibility to good practices and data collected at national, regional and local level.



# APPENDIX I – RISK MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

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Numerous general challenges and barriers will continue to affect the realisation of *de facto* equality between women and men. Those are due to the current economic and political context, structural historically grounded barriers related to the unequal division of power and resources between women and men and persisting gender stereotypes embedded in the functioning of most public and private institutions, legal frameworks and mentalities. The lack of political commitment leading, *inter alia*, to the weak implementation of existing standards and to insufficient financial and human resources, is another general risk factor that applies to all priority areas.

In the 2018-2023 Strategy document, each priority area has a **risk analysis table** attached to it. The table states the **expected impact** or ultimate goal at beneficiary level for each priority area. This can be reached in many different ways, in accordance with developments and structures at national and local levels.

The risk analysis tables present **some general examples** of possible:

- ▶ **risk factors** that could negatively affect the achievement of the outcomes at the level of the member States,
- ▶ **mitigating actions** to counter such risk factors,
- ▶ **outcomes** as steps towards the expected impact.

The examples are indicative and do not cover all possible options available at national and local levels. Other examples, as well as specific actions and activities (**outputs**) will be examined in detail during the implementation of the Strategy **at national and local levels** on the basis of **strategies, action plans, indicators and other relevant policy documents and standards**.

In addition to the activities undertaken at national and local levels by the member States and other stakeholders, **a biennial work plan** with a selection of actions and activities (outputs) to be undertaken by the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the member States, will be prepared.

<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 1</b>		
<b>Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism</b>		
<b>Expected Impact</b>		
<b>Gender stereotypes and sexism are eliminated in all areas of life</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Gender stereotypes and sexism prevail and are reinforced by the current backlash on women's rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong positioning and networking towards the implementation of Council of Europe standards.</li> <li>- Adoption and dissemination of new standards to prevent and combat sexism.</li> <li>- Awareness raising on existing standards and on the situation regarding gender equality in the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition by all member states and relevant actors of the need and benefits to achieve <i>de facto</i> gender equality.</li> <li>- Full implementation of relevant standards in member states.</li> <li>- Changes in legislation and policies to implement relevant standards in member states.</li> </ul>
Gender stereotypes and sexism are reinforced by the inadequate portrayal of women in media, by the negative role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and by lack of action regarding education policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeting relevant actors, including the private sector for awareness raising activities.</li> <li>- Promotion of relevant standards regarding gender stereotypes in the media and in education.</li> <li>- Identification and promotion of good practices regarding the media, ICTs and education policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legislation and policies are changed to eliminate gender stereotypes and sexism in the education, media and ICT sectors.</li> <li>- Realistic portrayal of women and men in the media, including social media, in member states.</li> <li>- The media and ICTs contribute to gender equality outcomes and women and girls are empowered to make use of the full potential of these sectors.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 2</b>		
<b>Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence</b>		
<b>Expected Impact</b>		
<b>Women are free from violence, exploitation and abuse; women have full access to appropriate prevention, protection, prosecution and support services</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Violence against women and domestic violence remain invisible, taboo and under-reported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness raising and training on recognising, preventing and reporting different forms of violence against women and domestic violence.</li> <li>- Dissemination of information regarding the scale of the phenomena.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention by member States.</li> <li>- Member States revise policies and practices to fully comply with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.</li> <li>- Relevant actors are sensitised and contribute to the elimination of violence against women and domestic violence (media, private sector, education sector, justice sector).</li> <li>- Member States ratify and implement the Council of Europe Anti-trafficking and Lanzarote Conventions</li> </ul>

<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 2</b>		
<b>Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence</b>		
<b>Expected Impact</b>		
<b>Women are free from violence, exploitation and abuse; women have full access to appropriate prevention, protection, prosecution and support services</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Claims of violence against women and domestic violence are not taken seriously or understood by law enforcement authorities, the media and family members and victims are not protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender-sensitive awareness raising activities on prevention and protection.</li> <li>- Preparation and dissemination of training tools targeted at relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>- Training of relevant stakeholders</li> <li>- Dissemination of information regarding good and promising practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevant stakeholders are aware of obstacles, processes and legislation related to violence against women and domestic violence and able to act accordingly to protect.</li> <li>- Adequate support services, protection and redress are guaranteed to women confronted with violence in member states.</li> </ul>
Some groups confronted with gender-based violence, such as for example, older women or men, migrant women and girls, men and boys, persons with disabilities, are not duly taken into account in relevant policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness raising about the specific forms of violence by which different groups are confronted.</li> <li>- Development of specific tools, training and policy documents adapted to the needs of different groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced protection from violence for groups of women and girls in vulnerable situations, and for men and boys.</li> <li>- Uniform enjoyment of rights guaranteed by the Istanbul Convention.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 3 Ensure the equal access of women to justice</b>		
<b>Expected Impact Women enjoy equal access to justice</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Lack of knowledge and resistance to action on the issue of women's access to justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness raising on the importance of ensuring equal access of women to justice to promote human rights and the rule of law.</li> <li>- Encouraging the collection and dissemination of data and of information regarding women's access to justice and women in the judiciary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better knowledge of the situation regarding women's access to justice, including for groups of women in vulnerable situations.</li> <li>- Changes in legislation and practices in member states to better respond to women's needs and situations.</li> </ul>
Persistence of discrimination against women and of gender stereotypes in the justice system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation and dissemination of training tools regarding women's access to justice adapted to the needs of relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>- Identification and dissemination of good practice and promising policies on women's equal access to justice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women's rights to equal access to justice and to a fair trial are ensured, including for groups of women in vulnerable situations.</li> <li>- Legislation, policies and practices are changed in member states to ensure gender friendly justice systems.</li> <li>- Justice systems in member states are free from gender bias and from judicial stereotyping.</li> </ul>



<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 4</b> <b>Achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making</b>		
<b>Expected Impact</b> <b>Women and men participate equally in political and public decision-making</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Insufficient steps are taken to move beyond the current level of progress in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of existing standards and monitoring their implementation.</li> <li>- Awareness raising and information campaigns about successful policies and implementation of standards.</li> <li>- Identification and dissemination of good and promising practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted measures are taken in member states to address particular levels or areas where progress is slow.</li> <li>- Relevant standards are implemented in member States.</li> <li>- Stronger legislation and policies are implemented in member states aiming at achieving parity.</li> </ul>
Resistance to change prevents progress towards the gender sensitiveness of institutions and decision-making bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness raising and information activities regarding the need for and benefits of gender balance in decision-making.</li> <li>- Promotion of measures targeting different actors who play a role in promoting gender balance in decision making in different areas (the judiciary, political parties, training men).</li> <li>- Stronger focus on supporting measures related to balance in decision-making (e.g. conciliation of family and working life, role of media).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steps are taken to better integrate the issue of balanced participation of women and men in all aspects of policies related to democratic governance in member States.</li> <li>- A comprehensive approach combining policy and legislative measures with data collection, awareness raising, good practice examples and education, to facilitate gender balance in decision making is implemented in member States.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 5</b> <b>Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls</b>		
<b>Expected Impact</b> <b>The rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls are protected</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Policies related to migration, integration and asylum continue to be gender blind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and improve standards related to the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women.</li> <li>- Provide advice regarding the definition and implementation of gender-sensitive migration, integration and asylum.</li> <li>- Identify and disseminate good and promising practices regarding the integration and economic empowerment of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in legislation and policies to include the needs and situation of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women are made in member States.</li> <li>- Processes and policies pertaining to migration, integration and asylum include a gender equality perspective in member States.</li> <li>- Migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women are economically independent in member states and fully enjoy their social rights.</li> </ul>
Lack of adequate and effective means of protection and assistance for migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls confronted with different forms of violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop tools (such as guidelines) to ensure appropriate protection of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls victims of violence.</li> <li>- Develop awareness-raising tools (such as factsheets) on the standards promoting the human rights of migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevant instruments in particular the Istanbul Convention as well as the Anti-trafficking and Lanzarote Conventions are ratified and implemented by member States.</li> <li>- Migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls confronted with violence have access to appropriate prevention, protection, prosecution and support services.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk Analysis</b>		
<b>Strategic Objective 6</b> <b>Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures</b>		
<b>Expected Impact</b> <b>A gender equality perspective is integrated in all policies and measures</b>		
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Lack of full understanding and knowledge of gender mainstreaming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dissemination of information and of training tools on gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- Provision of training on gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- Identification of good and promising practices regarding gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- Encouraging and supporting networking between relevant actors working in different sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevant policy makers in member states possess the knowledge and expertise to mainstream gender equality in their work.</li> <li>- Gender equality aspects become part of day-to-day policy making in member states and at the level of the Council of Europe.</li> </ul>
Insufficient steps are taken by stakeholders to mainstream gender equality in their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide advice to different sectors in order to support gender mainstreaming, including in relation to standard setting and implementation.</li> <li>- Support targeted policy analysis to facilitate gender mainstreaming in different policy areas.</li> <li>- Encourage and support gender equality-related research and sex-disaggregated data collection in different policy areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A wide spectrum of policy areas fully integrate a gender equality perspective and therefore fit better to the needs of all citizens in member States.</li> <li>- Improved gender specific knowledge and improved availability of data allows for a systematic use of gender analysis in all policy areas in member States.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX II – LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CEDAW</b>	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>(The) Convention</b>	European Convention on Human Rights
<b>CSW</b>	Commission for the Status of Women
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GEC</b>	Gender Equality Commission
<b>GER</b>	Gender Equality Rapporteur
<b>GMT</b>	Gender Mainstreaming Team
<b>INGO</b>	International non-governmental organisations
<b>Istanbul Convention</b>	Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
<b>Lanzarote Convention</b>	Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organisations
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>Strategy</b>	Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UN SDGs</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life.

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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