

Strategies for inclusion in the fields under the responsibility of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI)

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



COMMITTEE ON
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, DIVERSITY,
AND INCLUSION (CDADI)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, DIVERSITY,
AND INCLUSION (CDADI)

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French edition:

*Document d'orientation sur les stratégies d'inclusion
dans les domaines relevant de la responsabilité
du Comité directeur sur l'anti-discrimination,
la diversité et l'inclusion (CDADI)*

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Executive Summary

1. The Council of Europe and its member states aim at ensuring inclusion for all, based on the principle of human rights, democracy, anti-discrimination and equality. The purpose of this document is to provide the Council of Europe member states with guidance

on how to strive for inclusion in a comprehensive way, notably through the adoption of a strategy that covers the recommended goals of inclusion and the policy fields as well as measures to be implemented to reach inclusion.



For the purpose of this document, inclusion is understood as a **holistic approach** that enables the full and active **participation** of all individuals and groups in society. It is characterised by valuing societal **diversity**, enabling meaningful **interaction** and participation, and ensuring that the specific needs of particular groups are addressed, including for those at the intersections of these groups. It is based on promoting and achieving **equality**, enabling the exercise of and enjoyment of **human rights and individual freedoms**, and effectively **eliminating all forms of discrimination**.

2. While inclusion should be mainstreamed throughout all policy fields and at various governance levels (national, regional or local), based on the Council of Europe standards and recommendations this document points to specific policy areas, including education, employment, social welfare and housing, healthcare and culture, which are fundamental for ensuring inclusion for all. It also lists approaches which should be adopted when designing and implementing inclusion strategies at a national, regional or local level with a view to achieving full

inclusion, effective equality and non-discrimination. These include: mainstreaming equality in all measures and policies, valuing diversity, enabling meaningful interaction between all societal groups, fostering active citizenship and enabling participation, applying an intersectional approach, implementing multi-level governance and ensuring a broad stakeholders' engagement. Those policy areas and approaches are summarised in the visual below. Gender mainstreaming should be an important element of any inclusion strategy.

3. The purpose of this document is to provide recommendations and considerations for the achievement of inclusion of all. In doing so, it focuses on the minority groups which fall under the mandate of the CDAD: ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minorities including Roma and Travellers,¹ migrants and persons with a migration background, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons.



1. The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

An inclusion strategy aims to create, through a whole of society approach, a more inclusive and cohesive society that values diversity, upholds equality, rejects discrimination, and shares a common sense of belonging, where everyone can contribute and thrive to the advantage of the entire society. It should benefit everybody, including ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious minorities, migrants, Roma and Travellers and LGBTI persons.

While it aims to be inclusive for everyone, it also caters to the specific needs of these groups, addressing their unique challenges and promoting their full participation in society..

The **key policy areas** to be covered in a strategy for inclusion include:

- ▶ **Education**, which is crucial for social inclusion, personal development and economic participation.
- ▶ **Employment**, as it provides for personal development, economic independence and participation.
- ▶ **Social welfare and housing**, which provides for dignity and security, easing poverty and social exclusion.
- ▶ **Healthcare** is essential for well-being and equality. It addresses health disparities and promotes public health.
- ▶ **Culture** fosters mutual understanding and respect, bridging divides and promoting unity.

- ▶ **Anti-discrimination, hate speech and hate crime policies** protect individuals from violence and attacks to their dignity, promoting equality and safety.

In addition to these policy areas, several **transversal approaches** should be implemented, such as:

- ▶ **Mainstreaming equality** to integrate equality and anti-discrimination considerations into all policies.
- ▶ **Valuing diversity** to embrace and leverage it as a valuable resource for innovation and growth.
- ▶ **Enabling meaningful interaction** through positive engagement, building trust and societal cohesion.
- ▶ **Fostering active citizenship and participation** in public life, promoting inclusive and stable societies.
- ▶ **Applying an intersectional approach** to address intersectionality and compounded forms of discrimination, including on the ground of gender.
- ▶ **Implementing multilevel governance and stakeholder engagement** for policy effectiveness and consistency.

Chapter 1

Introduction

a. Rationale and scope

4. The Council of Europe and its member states work in the areas of anti-discrimination, diversity, and inclusion with the aim to promote equality for all and build more inclusive societies that offer effective protection from discrimination, hate speech and hate crime, ensure equal participation in political and public life for all without discrimination on any ground, and where diversity is respected.

5. The Council of Europe has adopted a range of standards which offer guidance to member states about embedding these principles in public policies. A good number of Council of Europe member states have comprehensive strategies for the integration and inclusion that cover some specific or several minority groups, such as Roma and Travellers or LGBTI persons. In many cases, regional and local authorities have followed by setting up relevant standards at their level of authority or pioneered in adopting and implementing innovative standards that later served as an inspiration for the solutions implemented at a national level.

6. With regard to the implementation of these strategies, as pointed by some of the Council of Europe monitoring reports, oftentimes the coordination of the work between different ministerial departments or inter-ministerial structures is not effective and there are few opportunities for learning between these different fields of responsibility or exchanges between the relevant stakeholder networks. The level of implementation of the standards differs between member states, with some prioritising actions for a certain minority group (for example Roma, persons with a migration background, or LGBTI persons). Some states have equality policies/strategies but do not have strategies for protecting and promoting diversity, strategies for intercultural integration of migrants or for combatting racism. Very few states have strategies to combat hate speech. The equality bodies in different states have different mandates with respect to the groups exposed to discrimination or exclusion. All of this sometimes leads to competition for resources or for political attention, which can undermine the overall goal of inclusion.

7. Against this background, the Committee of Ministers entrusted the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion (ADI-INT) and the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) to develop a Guidance document

on strategies for inclusion for all,² in order to inspire the national, regional and local level authorities to adopt comprehensive and implementable solutions for achieving such inclusion.

8. The purpose of this document is to provide the Council of Europe member state authorities at the national, regional and local level with guidance on how to achieve inclusion through adopting a comprehensive inclusion strategy. It outlines the recommended goals of inclusion, the policy fields that should be covered and what measures should be implemented to achieve inclusion.

9. In the spirit of this Guidance document, inclusion and anti-discrimination within European society are issues that concern everyone, not just specific minorities, and require the development of a culture of inclusion and celebration of diversity. In this regard, it should be emphasised that all members of society have a responsibility to prevent and combat discrimination and intolerance and to foster an inclusive society.

10. The Guidance document is based on the relevant Council of Europe standards. It does not, however, aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the wealth of Council of Europe recommendations, but rather to outline the essential and transversal elements of inclusion indicated in the relevant Council of Europe documents.

11. In line with the focus of existing Council of Europe standards and CDADI's mandate, this document provides a more detailed example of the minority groups which fall under the mandate of the CDADI: ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minorities including Roma and Travellers, migrants and persons with a migration background, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. The measures and approaches applicable to these groups could, *mutatis mutandis*, be applicable also to other groups for which Council of Europe standards and tools exist but are not covered here as they fall beyond the mandate of the CDADI. This document also takes into account the mainstreamed perspectives of gender, youth, children's rights and rights of persons with disabilities.

2. See deliverable 1 of the Terms of Reference of the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion (ADI-INT) for the years 2024-2027 (Guidance document on strategies for inclusion in the fields under the responsibility of the CDADI, deadline: 31/12/2025), which corresponds to Deliverable 4 of the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI).

12. The document covers broadly migrants and persons with a migration background, among other groups. Nevertheless, it should be also noted that refugees, having been forcibly displaced from their home countries, face situations different to migrants and often require differential approach and tailored support. Also stateless persons face particular barriers and challenges in being fully and effectively included (see [Council of Europe work on statelessness](#)).

b. Structure

13. The Guidance document starts by analysing the existing definitions of inclusion enshrined in the documents of the Council of Europe but also of other relevant international organisations operating in Europe. It also reflects on the possible elements of such definitions which can be proposed as part of this Guidance document. In the next part, it lists the policy areas which are considered core and essential for preparing and implementing a holistic and comprehensive inclusion strategy. Later, it looks into the transversal approaches to inclusion as well as group-specific Council of Europe standards for the minority groups which fall under the mandate of the CDADI. Last but not least, it includes some general conclusions.

Chapter 2

Concepts and definitions used in this study

14. It is worth noting that thus far no Council of Europe document has provided a definition of the term “**inclusion**”, to which this Guidance document could refer.

15. The Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level gives useful guidance on how to interpret inclusion at the local level: “Inclusion is the goal of intercultural integration policies that value diversity and aim to afford equal rights and opportunities by creating conditions for the full and active participation of every member of society based on a common set of values, a shared sense of belonging to the city/community, and a pluralist local identity.”

16. The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration defines by contrast “**intercultural integration**” of migrants as follows: “Intercultural integration is the outcome of a set of policies aiming to help society to benefit from the potential of diversity and manage its complexities, to take into account social, economic, and demographic situations alongside the overall goals of cohesion, stability and prosperity, and to create the conditions to ensure equal access to opportunities for migrants to integrate to the legal, social, economic and cultural contexts in their country of residence.” The same document also defines the “intercultural approach” as opposed to previously used paradigms for the management of cultural diversity, that is “assimilationism” and “multiculturalism”. It explains that assimilation was officially blind to the diversity of globalised and individualised societies, while multiculturalism bore the risk of fostering “parallel societies” (while genuinely seeking to valorise diversity). It also states that “neither was able to address successfully the emergent tensions of the new millennium, including xenophobic and fundamentalist violence”.

17. In the recent years the Council of Europe moved from the concept of “integration” towards the concept of “inclusion” which is defined by ECRI as “an approach that values diversity and aims to afford equal rights and opportunities by creating conditions which enable the full and active participation of every member of society.”³ Similarly, the organisation moved

3. See definition as per [ECRI Glossary](#).

from an intercultural approach, focused only on the integration of migrants, to a broader perspective of intercultural inclusion of all groups that shape the society’s diversity.

18. Certain underlying key principles of inclusion can be identified as a result of an analysis of fundamental Council of Europe documents. These key principles include:

19. **Human rights and democracy:** By emphasising the universality of human rights, the Council of Europe promotes an inclusive society where every person’s rights are respected and protected. Democratic values further support this vision, ensuring that governance is participatory, transparent, and accountable, thereby enabling all citizens and sometimes also residents without citizenship to contribute to and benefit from social, economic, and political life.

20. **Non-discrimination:** Non-discrimination is a pivotal element of inclusion, underscored in Council of Europe key documents. These instruments prohibit discrimination⁴ on any ground, such as sex, gender, “race”,⁵ colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics (SOGIESC), age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status. By combating discrimination, the Council of Europe aims to eliminate barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in society.

21. **Equality:** Understood as equality before the law, equality in providing opportunities and equality of outcomes. Equal treatment ensures that all individuals are treated equally before the law, while positive actions address the social and economic disparities that hinder full inclusion, and thus provide equal opportunities and should lead to equality of outcomes.

4. See definition as per Par. 1 [ECRI GPR No. 7](#).

5. Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Committee of Ministers rejects, as does the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), theories based on the existence of different “races”. However, in this document, the term “race” is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as “belonging to another race” are not excluded from the protection provided for by the legislation and the implementation of policies to promote gender equality.

22. **Valuing diversity and ensuring reciprocal recognition:** Valuing diversity means addressing diversity positively and putting policies and processes in place to maximise its potential and realise the diversity advantage (meaning that it is possible to achieve more positive results with diversity than without it, when diversity is managed correctly). Reciprocal and symmetrical recognition calls for mutual respect and acknowledgment of each individual's identity and contributions, and also adapting to the diversity. This reciprocal recognition fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity among diverse groups. The Council of Europe's approach to inclusion also involves promoting unity, stability, and prosperity. By valuing diversity, ensuring equal opportunities and implementing positive actions, the Council aims to build societies where diverse groups live harmoniously together and contribute to collective well-being. An inclusive society, where diversity is seen as an asset, is more likely to experience stability as well as economic and other forms of prosperity.

23. **Fostering meaningful interaction:** Meaningful interaction refers to the creation of spaces and opportunities for positive engagement between people from diverse backgrounds. This is essential for building trust and enabling coexistence, while also leveraging the benefits of diversity by fostering mixing, connections, as well as mutual understanding and trust which facilitates constructive dialogue and collaboration based on shared values.

24. **Participatory democracy and active participation:** This is grounded in the notion that everyone should be actively involved in public life and decision-making processes, not only for decisions by which they are concerned individually, but in any decision-making processes affecting society at large. The Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)9 on the active political participation of national minority youth as well as other Council of Europe documents emphasise the importance of educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities and fostering a culture of participation. The importance of promoting political participation of Roma and Traveller youth as well as balancing the participation of women and men in political and public decision-making is stressed in CM/Rec(2003)3 and CM/Rec(2023)4. By encouraging civic engagement and active participation, the Council of Europe promotes a vibrant democracy where every individual has a voice, can influence public policy and can feel part of society at large.

25. Inclusion is a term used also in several international documents from the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and other international organisations (e.g. Organisation for Economic

Co-operation and Development).⁶ In most cases, it refers to the practices and policies that ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities and are not excluded or discriminated based on their identity, background or other grounds (inclusion referred to as the opposite to exclusion). The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals, with its central pledge to leave no one behind, points out that the development will only be sustainable if it is inclusive. Various other international documents refer to the necessity to introduce positive actions to include discriminated groups in society, and to ensure that equality is considered and mainstreamed from the start when governments design policies, rather than tackled afterwards through redistribution and other remedies ("ex-ante" approach by OECD).

26. To summarise, the different documents by the Council of Europe as well as other international organisations quoted herewith provide a varied approach to inclusion which can be defined in two ways:

27. **Defining inclusion as the opposite to exclusion:** stressing the importance of inclusive policies, legislation and practices that respect and promote equality, non-discrimination and diversity, and ensure that nobody is excluded or marginalised;

28. **Defining inclusion as a process of mainstreaming full and effective equality** in all policy-making processes, including legislation, policies, strategies and programmes, by fostering equal opportunities, reducing barriers, implementing specific measures or positive actions and promoting active participation in all societal sectors.

29. Taking into account all of the above-mentioned elements, the following definition of inclusion can be proposed to the Council of Europe member states:

Inclusion is a holistic approach that enables the full and active participation of all individuals and groups in society. It is characterised by valuing societal diversity, enabling meaningful interaction and participation, and ensuring that the specific needs of particular groups are addressed, including for those at the intersections of these groups. It is based on promoting and achieving equality, enabling the exercise of and enjoyment of human rights and individual freedoms, and effectively eliminating all forms of discrimination.

6. For example: *UNESCO's Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All*, *The United Nations Strategy on Disability Inclusion*, *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, *The European Union Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*, *OECD's Opportunities for All – A Framework for Policy Action on Inclusive Growth*.

Chapter 3

Core policy areas for inclusion

30. The general Council of Europe standards relevant to inclusion concern a variety of policy areas but a key group of such areas can be identified. Although inclusion should be mainstreamed through all policy fields that are in the area of responsibility of the respective authority, the areas of education, employment and economic inclusion, social welfare, housing, healthcare, culture and anti-discrimination (including combatting hate speech) can be identified as the key ones in many relevant standards and documents.

31. Relevant Council of Europe standards can be found in the Conventions, Committee of Ministers Recommendations, Strategies, PACE and Congress Resolutions, Guideline documents, ECRI General Policy Recommendations and factsheets.

a. Education

Education is crucial for social inclusion and integration as it provides individuals with knowledge, skills, and competencies for personal development and full societal and economic participation.

Key measures in this area include:

- ▶ **Ensuring, promoting and supporting non-discriminatory access** to all educational levels, also taking in consideration group-specific, and individual, needs.
- ▶ **Promoting diversity**, which can be achieved by promoting mixed environments, intercultural education, and plurilingual education, as well as revising curricula to avoid stereotypes.
- ▶ **Promoting equality**, by implementing positive actions to achieve equality of educational outcomes, including by promoting the involvement of parents in the education processes.
- ▶ **Preventing segregation** in schools, classrooms and other educational settings.
- ▶ **Fostering mutual understanding, interaction, mixing and respect**, including by providing language training, recognising foreign qualifications, enabling education in minority languages, promoting mutual cultural learning, ensuring representation based on factual information of all groups' history, cultures and identities, training educators on equality, anti-discrimination and intercultural competencies.

32. The education system is an important and cross-cutting policy area mentioned in a number of Council of Europe standards in two ways: 1. ensuring non-discriminatory access to quality education,⁷ and if needed adequate support measures for all, including adult and vocational education, 2. undertaking positive measures to promote the knowledge of each other's identity, needs, background, culture, history and language, including by ensuring mixed education environments and preventing educational segregation, thus valuing diversity. In the case of all groups falling under the mandate of CDADI, the Council of Europe standards also recommend the revision of educational curricula and textbooks with a view to ensuring that they do not perpetuate the stereotypes or isolation of these groups.

33. It should be noted that in many member states in regard to implementation of the education policies, regional and/or local authorities have important competences.

34. The Council of Europe points to the fact that social inclusion and societal integration depend on an understanding of, respect for and engagement with linguistic and cultural diversity in general and recommends promotion, development, and implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education (see CM/Rec(2022)1). It also provides useful guidance on the competences that should be promoted by the education system to ensure that each person is capable of defending and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law, acting as an active citizen and valuing the societal diversity (see the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture). Last but not least, gender mainstreaming should be ensured throughout formal and non-formal education to further eliminate excessive disparities between girls and boys, women and men, with respect to school and social practices (see CM/Rec(2007)13).

35. Formal and non-formal education is mentioned as an important factor for the active participation in the society of migrants and persons with a migration background. By investing in the development of skills, particularly in relation to learning a country's official language(s), by valorising the diversity of migrant languages as an asset to society, and by recognising

7. As defined by Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education, para. 6 of the Annex.

skills, qualifications and competences of those newly arrived (see CM/Rec(2022)10), society can stimulate such participation. Special attention should be paid to the situation of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls (see CM/Rec(2022)17).

36. Similarly for Roma and Travellers, existing standards recommend non-discriminatory access to education, fighting antigypsyism in educational system, termination of school segregation, guaranteed access to pre-school education and increased awareness among Roma parents about the availability of pre-school education. Policies should also include positive measures ensuring inclusion of Roma children by promoting mutual understanding, including through awareness raising among non-Roma parents and ensuring teacher training, promoting learning about the Roma language, history and culture at schools among Roma and non-Roma pupils, adequate educational support to children (e.g. moving from segregated to mainstream schools), as well as recruiting school mediators and Roma teachers. Educational policies should be broadly consulted with the Roma and Travellers communities and should take into account the gender dimension (see ECRI GPR No.13, CM/Rec(2020)2, Feasibility study CDADI(2024)19rev, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC) Thematic Commentary No. 1 on Education).

37. For national minorities and regional or minority language users, it is important that the education system enables education not only in the language of the majority, but also in regional or minority languages. Similarly, existing standards recommend that national minorities and the societal majority should be given the opportunity to learn about each other's culture and history. In addition, the pupils from the societal majority should be provided with opportunities to learn a regional or minority language, should they wish to. States are requested to secure teachers' training and access to quality educational materials in regional or minority languages, and to facilitate teacher and student exchanges between different communities. States should also enable the creation of private educational and training establishments providing education in regional or minority languages (see the FCNM art. 12, 13 and 14 and Thematic Commentaries No. 1, 2, 3 and 4, and ECRML). In this area, knowledge of the local situation and needs for action and involvement of local and regional authorities will be particularly important to implement effective inclusion strategies.

38. LGBTI pupils should benefit from education which is sensitive, age-appropriate and represents an open and non-discriminatory approach to gender and sexuality. A safe learning environment should be ensured and a mutual tolerance and respect in schools

promoted. One way of achieving this is designing and implementing national school equality, diversity and safety policies, strategies and action plans inclusive of SOGIESC grounds. Pupils should be provided with factual, age-appropriate information regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, including through extracurricular activities, while school curricula should be reviewed and adjusted where needed. Educators should have access to anti-discrimination training and the knowledge and skills required to address SOGIESC issues appropriately. School psychosocial services should also be competent in supporting LGBTI students and their parents (see CM/Rec(2010)5 and ECRI GPR No.17, PACE Resolutions No. 2543, 2048 and 2417).

39. Overall, offering inclusive education is vital because it means that all children, without discriminating any, benefit from quality education and the opportunity to succeed. It values diversity in the classroom, creating an environment where all students, including those from minority groups such as migrants and persons with a migration background, Roma and Travellers, national minorities and LGBTI persons, can thrive. Gender mainstreaming is an important element of inclusive education since the educational sector is one where sexism is often perpetuated and experienced. Inclusive education should benefit not just individual students but the broader educational environment by fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration among diverse groups and society in general. By catering to the varied needs of all students, inclusive education challenges discrimination and promotes equality, which is fundamental to building a just and inclusive society.

40. When certain groups of children are unable to access quality education, this has a negative impact on society as a whole. Exclusion from education deprives learners of essential skills, knowledge, and opportunities, leading to lifelong disadvantages and perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalisation. This exclusion also reinforces societal divisions, as the absence of interaction between people with different backgrounds, identities and viewpoints in the classroom perpetuates stereotypes and biases. Moreover, an education system that fails to be inclusive of all misses out on the full range of talents and perspectives that are critical for innovation, social progress, and economic growth.

41. To achieve inclusive societies, education systems should enable the societal majority and minorities to interact and to learn about each other's culture, history, and language. Such mutual understanding is crucial for dismantling prejudices and fostering a sense of shared identity and purpose. By incorporating this content into the curriculum and encouraging intercultural dialogue, schools should help students

appreciate the rich diversity of their society and understand the value of inclusion. This can include providing for plurilingualism for better communication and personal empowerment while fostering critical thinking and multiperspectivity in history. Integrating intercultural education as core values and approaches, as well as taking positive actions, can enable education institutions in socially disadvantaged areas to achieve excellence and act as agents of inclusion. This approach not only benefits minority groups by affirming their identities and contributions but also enriches the educational experience of all students, preparing them to participate in a diverse and interconnected world. School segregation and other forms of discrimination in education should be strictly forbidden and tackled. Ultimately, inclusive education is key to building a society where everyone feels valued and can contribute to collective well-being. Civic education should have an important role in the education system, promoting effective participation in the decision-making processes by all (see CM/Rec(2022)1, FCNM Thematic Commentary No. 1 on Education, Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Feasibility study CDADI(2024)19rev).

b. Employment

Employment is essential for economic independence, personal development, and social inclusion. It also enables individuals to contribute to and benefit from economic growth.

Key measures in this area include:

- ▶ **Prohibiting discrimination** by implementing anti-discrimination laws, combating stereotypes, and ensuring protection from discrimination.
- ▶ **Promoting equality**, through positive actions and by eliminating employment barriers. This can be achieved through (vocational) training programmes and by raising employers' awareness about diversity benefits as well as by promoting public sector employment for all groups and providing anti-discrimination training.
- ▶ **Ensuring equal opportunities and equal treatment**, including by addressing employment challenges and barriers such as, for example, non-recognition of foreign qualifications.

42. In relation to employment, the Council of Europe standards and guidance provide for a twofold approach: 1. forbidding and combatting discrimination in the labour market, both in the private and public sector, including strengthening the mandates of the public bodies responsible for enforcing this, 2. promoting positive action to bring people exposed

to discrimination into dignified and paid work and raising awareness among employers of the positive outcomes of engaging employees of diverse background, such as enhancing innovation and adaptability of the organisation.

43. In this area, the Council of Europe strongly recommends to member states to implement anti-discrimination laws that protect on all grounds and to ensure their effective enforcement. This includes prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination in all aspects of employment, from recruitment to promotion and employment termination. Positive measures are encouraged, such as targeted and non-biased recruitment, and training and career development programmes, to support underrepresented groups and rectify existing inequalities. The need for awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes for employers, employees and the general public to combat stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory practices in the workplace is emphasised. Regular monitoring of employment practices and collecting disaggregated data is recommended to allow for assessing the impact of anti-discrimination measures and identifying areas for improvement. Access of victims of discrimination to justice should be improved and accessible, legal or administrative processes providing prompt and effective remedies should be available (see ECRI GPR No. 14). In this context, gender mainstreaming is crucial, as unpaid work disproportionately affects women leading to exclusion from social benefits and limiting women's active participation in economic life (see Recommendations R(96)5, CM/Rec(2019)1 and CM/Rec(2007)17).

44. Migrants and persons with a migration background should have their access to employment protected through policies ensuring equal opportunities, positive action and non-discrimination in the labour market. The Council of Europe standards emphasize the need to eliminate barriers preventing migrants from obtaining jobs, advocating for fair recruitment processes, equal treatment in the workplace and the promotion of diversity. Member states are encouraged to combat discrimination, provide language training and facilitate access to employment-related services. Migrants' qualifications and skills acquired abroad should be recognized, ensuring that they are not unfairly disadvantaged in the labour market. Member states should remove unnecessary restrictions that limit employment in the public sector. The rights of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women and girls should be protected, acknowledging the multiple and intersecting barriers they face in accessing employment (see CM/Rec(2008)10, CM/Rec(2011)2, Rec(2004)2 and CM/Rec(2022)17).

45. For Roma and Travellers, combating antigypsyism in the sphere of employment is recommended through adopting adequate legislation, training civil

servants and promoting employment in the public sector, as well as investigating and prosecuting cases of discrimination in employment (see ECRI GPR No.13). Introducing positive action for promoting employment of Roma women is encouraged (see CM/Rec(2024)1). It is also important to provide anti-discrimination training for legal professionals and to carry out awareness campaigns for employers to emphasise their responsibilities regarding non-discrimination (see PACE Resolution 2153(2017)).

46. For national minorities, discrimination in employment should be forbidden and adequate measures should be put in place to promote, in all areas of economic life, full and effective equality. States should create the conditions necessary for the effective participation in economic life. Positive action can be put in place to guarantee this, for instance, to increase the employment opportunities for persons belonging to minorities living in peripheral and/or economically depressed areas or to enhance socio-economic participation of persons belonging to disadvantaged national minorities, such as Roma and Travellers or indigenous peoples (see FCNM art. 4 and 15, Thematic Commentary No. 2).

47. Protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics in employment in both the private and public sectors should be ensured. Discrimination in employment is a particular concern for transgender and intersex persons who are more likely to experience unemployment and homelessness. Transgender persons should be protected from the unnecessary disclosure of their gender history through the adoption of appropriate legislation, including access to legal gender recognition, employment policies and practices (see CM/Rec(2010)5 and ECRI GPR No. 17).

48. Overall, inclusive policies in employment are essential because they ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background or identity, have equal opportunities to join and thrive in the workforce. These policies should promote diversity and create a more dynamic, innovative, and competitive labour market and economy at large. Inclusive employment policies and practices not only benefit the individuals involved by providing them with economic independence and a sense of belonging, but they also benefit the employers by enhancing creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability.

49. Excluding certain groups or minorities from equal participation in employment has profound negative effects at individual and societal level and it should be tackled at the policy level. Discrimination in the labour market perpetuates cycles of poverty and social exclusion. This exclusion exacerbates inequality, potentially leading to increased social tensions, and

undermines efforts to promote economic growth. Moreover, when large segments of the population are marginalised, the economy as a whole suffers from underutilised potential and reduced productivity. The lack of inclusion also reinforces systemic discrimination, making it harder for future generations from these groups to break free from the cycle of exclusion, ultimately leading to persistent social and economic disparities that hinder societal progress.

c. Social welfare and housing

Social welfare and housing are fundamental for living in dignity and security as well as to reduce poverty and prevent social exclusion.

Key measures in this area include:

- ▶ **Ensuring equal access to social services and housing**, including by providing access to social benefits and services in different and minority languages, making housing market information widely available, ensuring non-discriminatory housing access and preventing homelessness while considering specific needs.
- ▶ **Preventing segregation** by securing adequate housing and providing appropriate, tailored and flexible housing solutions. This includes respecting the nomadic lifestyle and respecting the legal framework for evictions.
- ▶ **Promoting diversity and cohesion** by promoting mixing and creating opportunities for meaningful interactions through social policies and spatial planning.

50. The Council of Europe recommendations call on the member states for the provision of social services and social welfare to all four groups (migrants and persons with a migration background, Roma and Travellers, national minorities and LGBTI persons) on an equal footing with others, including securing a safe and adequate housing, as far as possible.

51. Long-term solutions should be prioritised for persons and groups exposed to discrimination. Those with housing, employment and their basic needs covered can break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion, not only for themselves but also for future generations, by gaining financial independence and the ability to participate fully in society and local community life.

52. With regard to housing and housing policies, it should be noted that in many member states regional and/or local authorities have important, if not the main, competences. At the local level, authorities observe a number of principles related to housing, as stipulated in the European Urban Charter. These

include for instance that every person and family is entitled to secure and decent housing, that local authorities should ensure diversity, choice and mobility in housing, and acknowledge that the right to adequate housing of persons and families in the most disadvantaged categories cannot be safeguarded by market forces alone.

53. At the nation level, member states are encouraged to implement measures designed to promote access to housing of an adequate standard, to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination and to make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources (see Revised European Social Charter). Housing policies should be designed to promote mixing and meaningful interaction in the public space and social housing should be of high quality and accessible to all (see the Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level). Gender should also be mainstreamed in the policy-making process as victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and of human trafficking as well as women who experience precarious housing conditions are at heightened risks of homelessness (see Istanbul Convention and Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings).

54. National policies on housing should set out measures to generate supply of affordable housing and combat discrimination in accessing accommodation for migrants, with particular emphasis being placed on the needs of groups in situations of vulnerability and of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women. Accommodation should be verified in terms of suitability, with particular attention paid to children, and illegal forced evictions of migrants should be prevented. The importance of providing information and assistance to migrants to help them understand and navigate housing markets in host countries is also highlighted (see Recommendation No. R(88)14 and ECRI Factsheet on Integration and inclusion of migrants, 2024).

55. For Roma and Travellers, the existing standards related to housing policies recommend combatting segregation and promoting coexistence in neighbourhoods, ensuring decent housing and preventing forced evictions. Some of the Roma and Travellers decided to maintain the nomadic way of life and the member states should respect and facilitate this, for instance through providing adequate encampment areas with the necessary infrastructures, such as access to running water, sewerage systems, electricity, gas, and adequate roads, while also ensuring access to public services, including schooling, healthcare, and public transport. In particular, Roma and Traveller women and girls should benefit from social assistance, including social housing or adequate encampment areas, which are hygienic, safe and culturally

appropriate (including mobile accommodation or halting sites). Priority should be given to persons in situations of vulnerability, such as homeless and evicted Roma and Traveller women and girls (see ECRI GPR No. 13, FCNM art. 4 and 5, CM/Rec(2024)1 and PACE Resolution 2413 (2021)).

56. Access for national minorities and regional or minority languages users to social benefits and to public services and utilities must not be hampered by undue language or residency requirements. Information and advice about public services and welfare institutions should be made easily accessible and available, where appropriate, in the languages of national minorities. Specific social and economic measures are often required for persons belonging to disadvantaged minority groups to ensure their effective equality, and ensuring their participation in the social life of the country is encouraged (see FCNM art. 4 and 15 and ECRML art. 13).

57. The absence of formal recognition and protection for same-sex couples and LGBTI family ties can lead to social and financial vulnerability and a lack of access to even basic social benefits. Access and enjoyment to housing without discrimination should be ensured at the national level for LGBTI persons. National policies should take into account the heightened risks of homelessness of LGBTI persons, particularly LGBTI youth and intersex persons (see CM/Rec(2010)5 and ECRI GPR No.17). The housing needs of LGBTI migrants and the reception conditions of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees should also take into consideration the additional safety risks they may face from members of their own communities in the collective housing.

58. Overall, inclusive policies for access to social welfare and housing are essential for ensuring societal cohesion at the national level in order to provide all individuals, particularly those from marginalised groups, with the basic necessities to live in dignity and security. When everyone, regardless of their origin or background, benefits in an equal manner from social welfare and housing, it helps to reduce poverty, prevent social exclusion, and phase out inequalities that can lead to marginalisation, segregation and possibly to social tensions. These policies foster a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, which is crucial for maintaining a harmonious and unified society, where all citizens have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from collective prosperity.

d. Health

Healthcare is essential for well-being and equality. It also addresses health disparities and promotes public health.

Key measures in this area include:

- ▶ **Ensuring the highest attainable standard of health**, including by addressing healthcare barriers, preventing non-consensual medical interventions, and addressing mental health needs.
- ▶ **Providing for equal and non-discriminatory access** to necessary healthcare for all, including by eliminating service obstacles and removing access barriers.
- ▶ **Considering specific needs**, including by providing multilingual health information and considering specific health needs.
- ▶ **Providing culturally sensitive services** capable of addressing specific health risks, including by providing relevant training for health professionals, hiring health mediators, and involving minorities in healthcare policy formulation.

59. In line with the Council of Europe standards, everyone has the right to benefit from any measures enabling them to enjoy the highest possible standard of health attainable. The general prohibition of discrimination in Council of Europe standards (Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights) forbids discrimination with regard to healthcare. At the same time, Council of Europe standards recommend that member states duly consider the special needs and circumstances of persons of different background or origins, including sex, gender, “race”, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status when planning and delivering healthcare services. It is also recommended to prevent discrimination in healthcare by providing relevant training on equality issues and in intercultural skills for health professionals and by ensuring that employment in the public health sector adequately reflects the diversity of society (see Revised European Social Charter art. 11, CM/Rec(2022)17, ECRI Factsheet on Tackling racism and intolerance in the area of health care, 2024). Local and regional authorities should be supported in adapting their health systems to the arrival of migrants and refugees, where there is a higher demand (see Congress Recommendation 481(2022)).

60. Access for migrants and persons with a migration background, including those who are irregularly present in the country, to emergency and other necessary health care, needs to be ensured. At the legislative level, any obstacles to migrants’ access to basic services in the area of healthcare, including psychiatric support and broader psychosocial support, should be eliminated. Policies should take into

consideration that poorer access to adequate housing also leads to poorer health outcomes. Essential information and services related to health should be made available to migrants in an appropriate range of languages and through suitable channels (see ECRI Factsheet on Tackling racism and intolerance in the area of health care, 2024).

61. Similarly, for Roma and Travellers, healthcare should be provided in an equal and non-discriminatory manner and antigypsyism and segregation in the healthcare institutions clearly prohibited. The trust in the healthcare system should be strengthened, e.g. through hiring and training health mediators, in particular from the Roma community to liaise between health personnel and health managers and Roma. Member states should take measures to ensure for all Roma and Traveller women and girls, including for those who lack the necessary financial resources or documentation, the best possible state of health and respond appropriately to and prevent all avoidable health risks they are exposed to, in particular in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and mental health (see ECRI GPR No. 13, CM/Rec(2024)1, Rec(2006)10).

62. For national minorities and regional or minority language users, as for other groups, equal and non-discriminatory access to health should be provided, especially for women, elderly, and persons in remote areas. Access to information in the minority language should be secured as far as possible and in particular in times of health crises.⁸ In order to secure effective access to healthcare, barriers preventing persons belonging to national minorities from enjoying equal access to healthcare services must be identified and removed. Equal and effective access also entails the possibility for persons affiliating with national minorities to express themselves in a language in which they feel comfortable. It is recommended that medical and administrative staff are able to provide services in minority languages when they are employed in health services and care of the elderly in areas inhabited in substantial numbers by persons belonging to national minorities. They should also receive training on the cultural and linguistic background of national minorities, so that they can adequately respond to the patients’ specific needs. States should also ensure the effective involvement of persons belonging to the minorities concerned in the design, implementation and evaluation of measures taken to address healthcare issues, so as to better respond to their specific needs (see Revised European Social Charter, FCNM and ECRML).

8. See Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on upholding equality and protecting against discrimination and hate during the Covid-19 pandemic and similar crises in the future.

63. Enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health and non-discriminatory access to healthcare for LGBTI persons should be secured. National policies and health action plans should take into account the specific needs of LGBTI persons, including older LGBTI persons, sexual and reproductive health, mental health and access to trans-specific health care for both children and adults. Access to legal gender recognition for transgender persons should be free from unreasonable requirements such as sterilisation. Legislations and policies should prohibit non-consensual medical interventions on intersex persons. Conversion practices should also be prohibited, as they have an adverse impact on the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI persons. Healthcare staff should be trained on this matter, and persons subjected to such procedures should receive assistance (see CM/Rec(2010)5; the Third thematic review of CM/Rec(2010)5 (2024), and ECRI GPR No.17).

64. Overall, equal access to healthcare for all, regardless of their background or origin, is essential for ensuring their equality and well-being within society. Minority groups such as migrants and persons with a migration background, Roma and Travellers, national minorities and LGBTI persons often face barriers to accessing healthcare, including discrimination, lack of culturally sensitive services, mistrust, language barriers, geographical barriers, age barriers, as well as legal or financial obstacles. Without equal access, in the long term these groups could be more likely to experience poorer health outcomes, higher rates of chronic diseases, increased risks of self-harm and reduced life expectancy. By ensuring that everyone has equal access to healthcare, society can address these disparities, promote public health, and reduce the burden of illness on the healthcare and social welfare systems. Inclusive healthcare policies are, therefore, also crucial for promoting societal cohesion and reducing inequalities within society. When persons and communities receive the healthcare they need, they will be more likely to contribute to their communities and society at large.

e. Culture

Culture fosters mutual understanding, respect, and the cohesion of society. It bridges divides and promotes unity.

Key measures in this area include:

- ▶ **Promoting interaction** through culture to combat prejudice, build mutual knowledge and trust. Creating safe spaces for community gatherings is also important.
- ▶ **Enhancing mutual understanding** by promoting cultural participation and visibility, which include supporting media and art

representation of various groups along with protecting and promoting plurilingualism and minority languages.

- ▶ **Fostering respect for different cultures** by protecting cultural expression rights and preventing forced assimilation.

65. In terms of culture, the Council of Europe recommends implementing systems where the societal majority can learn about the minorities' cultures, history and heritage and vice versa, while minorities can learn and be aware of the culture of the society that they are part of for the interests of inclusion. Suitable opportunities for a meaningful intercultural interaction should be enabled and supported in this regard through creating physical spaces and occasions for meeting one another without bias and prejudice. Whether from minorities or from majorities, cultures are neither rigid nor immutable and evolve through permanent interaction at local, national and global levels.

66. At the local level, the European Urban Charter stresses culture and cultural exchange as tools for creating and maintaining a powerful bond between persons of different nationalities and backgrounds.

67. In Council of Europe documents related to migrants' inclusion and intercultural integration, culture is indicated as an important instrument for creating meaningful interaction between migrants and the societal majority, for building shared values and a pluralist and open identity within society, and for preventing and combating prejudice and hate speech in the spirit of pluralism, acceptance and broadmindedness (CM/Rec(2022)10).

68. Culture and cultural policies are also considered important tools for combatting antigypsyism and raising mutual trust between Roma and Travellers and the societal majority. The promotion of the teaching of Roma and Travellers' history, culture, Romani language and the Roma Holocaust and the inclusion of those items in school curricula and textbooks, also through training of trainers and teachers, are indicated as essential elements for raising the group's self-esteem (see CM/Rec(2020)2, CM/Rec(2022)5, CM/Rec(2024)1). A capacity building programme and tools for the implementation of those items have been developed by ADI-ROM and adopted by the CDADI.

69. In regard to national minorities and regional or minority language users, meaningful participation in cultural life should be promoted. The Council of Europe standards point to the need of creating and promoting conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage, while fostering knowledge of

the culture, history, language and religion of the societal majority. Measures to promote effective equality between persons belonging to national minorities and those belonging to the majority, including in cultural life, should be implemented. Also, it should be prohibited to introduce policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will (see FCNM art. 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15 and Thematic Commentary No. 2). Furthermore, states should take action to protect and promote regional and minority languages and to facilitate and encourage their use in speech and writing, in public and private life, as far as possible. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population should be permitted. In addition, as far as possible, states should promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and include respect, understanding and tolerance among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries, as well as encourage mass media to pursue the same objectives. Last but not least, states should encourage the creation of a body or bodies responsible for collecting, keeping a copy of and presenting or publishing works produced in regional or minority languages (see ECRML art. 7, 8, 11).

70. The cultural expression of LGBTI persons, including Pride events, creating safe spaces for community gatherings and ensuring representation in media and art, is intrinsically linked to the fundamental rights of freedom of association and freedom of expression, as safeguarded by the Council of Europe standards. Member states should protect LGBTI persons' right to freely express their identities, promote visibility, and participate in cultural and public life without discrimination (see the European Convention on Human Rights, art. 10 and 11, CM/Rec(2010)5).

71. Overall, inclusive cultural policies that recognise and celebrate the diversity of minority groups such as migrants and persons with a migration background, Roma and Travellers, national minorities and LGBTI persons are essential for fostering a society that values and respects all its members. These policies should ensure that the cultural expressions, traditions, and contributions of minority groups are acknowledged and integrated into the broader cultural landscape. By promoting the visibility and participation of these groups in cultural life, inclusive policies help to combat stereotypes, reduce discrimination, and empower minorities to share their identities and heritage. This, in turn, enriches the cultural fabric of society, leading to greater creativity, innovation, and cultural dynamism.

72. This cultural exchange not only benefits minority groups by expressing their identity but it also enriches the majority by broadening its perspectives and understanding of the world. Ultimately, such

mutual respect and cultural awareness contribute to social stability, as they help to bridge divides, promote unity, and create a society where diversity is seen as a strength and richness rather than a source of division.

f. Countering discrimination, hate speech and hate crime

Countering discrimination, hate speech and hate crime is essential for achieving equality and protecting individuals and groups from violence and attacks on their dignity.

Key measures in this area include:

- ▶ **Adopting and implementing comprehensive policies and legal frameworks** to safeguard rights, prevent discrimination, promote equality in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders.
- ▶ **Providing support mechanisms for victims** as protection against discrimination to provide for legal remedies and necessary support.
- ▶ **Conducting awareness-raising initiatives** to combat stereotypes and promote tolerance and dialogue to forge a pluralist and open identity, including by raising trust with law enforcement actors.

73. Implementing effective anti-discrimination policies and measures is pivotal to achieving equality, integration and inclusion because they aim to eliminate unfair treatment based on grounds such as sex, gender, "race", colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.

74. Prohibiting and combatting discrimination is a cross-cutting ambition in all relevant Council of Europe standards, including those concerning migrants and persons with a migration background, Roma and Travellers, national minorities and LGBTI persons, and especially in the policy areas mentioned above (education, employment, social welfare and housing, healthcare and culture). A key aspect of this ambition is the need to prevent and combat discrimination and intolerance, at an individual level but also at systemic and institutional levels, which pose significant barriers to achieving true inclusion. In tackling discrimination, it is important to address systemic discrimination which "involves the procedures, routines and organisational culture of any organisation that, often without intent, contribute to less favourable outcomes for minority groups than for the majority of the population, from the organisation's

policies, programmes, employment, and services” (see [Intercultural Cities Systemic Discrimination page](#) and the Policy brief – Identifying and preventing discrimination at the local level).

75. The Council of Europe’s legal framework is anchored in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which serves as the foundation for anti-discrimination principles. Article 14 of the ECHR explicitly prohibits discrimination on an open list of grounds. This prohibition is further strengthened by Protocol No. 12 (signed by 18 and ratified by 20 Council of Europe member states), which provides a general ban on discrimination. The European Court of Human Rights plays a vital role in enforcing these provisions, ensuring that member states uphold their obligations to protect against discrimination. Additionally, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) monitors compliance with these standards, offering country-specific recommendations to address issues of racism, including antigypsyism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance, and discrimination.

76. The Council of Europe also recognises that hate speech, both online and offline, exacerbates social division and negatively affects individuals, groups and societies in a variety of ways, including by instilling fear in and causing humiliation to those it targets and by having a chilling effect on participation in public debate, which is detrimental to democracy. It is worth noting that online hate speech disproportionately targets women, perpetuates gender-based violence and discrimination, and undermines efforts to promote equality and safety both online and offline (see CM/Rec(2019)1 and GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1). To address the problem of hate speech, the Council of Europe has developed comprehensive standards and recommendations aimed at preventing and countering hate speech, which is considered an important element of achieving inclusion (CM/Rec(2022)16 and ECRI GPR No. 15). According to those standards, member states should develop broad policies, legislation, and action plans, allocate resources and engage various stakeholders in this regard. Support mechanisms should be established to help those targeted by hate speech, including by providing psychological, medical and legal assistance. Special attention should be given to marginalised groups by implementing age- and gender-sensitive approaches. Member states are also encouraged to work with civil society organisations to raise awareness, provide education, and ensure access to legal aid and other support services for victims of hate speech (see CM/Rec(2022)16 and ECRI GPR No. 15).

77. Hate speech can mobilise groups and societies against each other in order to provoke violent escalation and hate crime. In line with the Council of Europe standards, effective, proportionate and dissuasive provisions to prevent and combat hate crime should

be included in criminal law, and priority should be given to unmasking, acknowledging and recording the hate element of the crime. Member states should provide victims of hate crime with access to specialised support services. Special attention should be paid to children and young people. Member states are encouraged to ensure access to free legal aid for victims of hate crime. Police should be trained in recognising “bias indicators” of hate crime and states should combat impunity and respond to any biased behaviour on the part of law enforcement or other criminal justice practitioners towards persons targeted by hate crime. Public officials should condemn instances of hate crime. Member states should ensure that educational institutions and teachers contribute to the development of a culture of inclusiveness and internet service providers should identify and address hate crimes. Member states should also promote a safe, inclusive and enabling online and offline civic space in which civil society organisations working in the area of hate crime can operate (see CM/Rec(2024)4). Providing trauma-informed trainings for various stakeholder groups, including policymakers, would help to understand the perspective of the vulnerable groups, their experiences and background and to adopt better tailor-made policies.

78. In terms of protecting specific groups, the Council of Europe has developed tailored recommendations and strategies. The relevant documents clearly state that the integration and inclusion of migrants should be based on safeguarding their rights and preventing their discrimination in all aspects of society and policy. Direct or indirect discrimination should be identified and eliminated in a systematic way, and discrimination should be primarily combatted through public policies contributing to the building of shared values and a pluralist and open identity within society (see CM/Rec(2022)10).

79. For Roma and Travellers, the Council of Europe has recognised antigypsyism as a severe and specific form of racism based on prejudice and stereotypes. ECRI GPR No. 13 on combating antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma offers concrete solutions and recommendations in the area of combatting discrimination, including in various policy areas; these include inclusive and intercultural education, employment, housing, healthcare, combatting hate crimes, and raising mutual trust between Roma and Travellers and the societal majority. Also, the importance of fostering diversity within law enforcement authorities and thus strengthening the mutual trust between Roma and Travellers and the law enforcement is highlighted (see ECRI GPR No. 13 and PACE Resolution 2523 (2023)).

80. For national minorities and regional or minority language users, Council of Europe standards require that states take appropriate measures to protect

persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity. The protection against discrimination should be ensured through encouraging a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and taking effective measures to promote mutual respect, understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory (see FCNM art. 4 and 6, and ECRML).

81. For LGBTI persons, member states should take appropriate measures to combat discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), as well as on multiple grounds. Effective legal remedies, sanctions, and reparation for victims of discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech should also be ensured. At the level of national legislation, it should be ensured that a comprehensive legal framework is developed to prevent and tackle discrimination, hate speech and hate crime (for example criminalisation of hate crime on the grounds of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics and that such motive can be considered an aggravating circumstance). Member states should ensure **effective, prompt and impartial investigations** into crimes where SOGIESC is suspected to be a motive, including when committed by law enforcement officials. Additionally, states should ensure the **safety and dignity** of LGBTI persons in prisons or other forms of detention. They should **gather and analyse data** on discrimination, intolerance and hate crimes related to SOGIESC to better address these issues. Last but not least, codes of conduct for government and other

public officials, requiring them to oppose hate speech targeted at LGBTI persons, should be adopted and enforced (see CM/Rec(2010)5 and Second Thematic Review, ECRI GPR No. 17).

82. While anti-discrimination policies and measures lay the groundwork for equality, they often focus primarily on preventing and addressing unequal treatment (equality of opportunities). Therefore, it is important not only to prohibit discrimination but also to encourage relevant stakeholders to implement positive actions to ensure full and effective equality. The goal of combining anti-discrimination policies with positive measures is to achieve equality of results, where all groups in society can have comparable outcomes in terms of education, employment, health, political representation and in other spheres of life. This goes beyond providing equal opportunities; it recognises that different groups may need different levels of support to overcome the disadvantages they face due to past and ongoing discrimination, such as limited access to quality education, poorer health outcomes, lower economic status, and under-representation in political and social institutions.

83. Once again, in this area, it is notably at local and regional levels that such policies need to be implemented with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and by applying intercultural approaches like the one promoted for many years by the Council of Europe "Intercultural Cities Programme".

84. This approach is pivotal to achieving real equality and inclusion, where everyone not only has the same opportunities but can also reach the same outcomes, leading to a more equal, just and inclusive society.

Chapter 4

Transversal approaches to the inclusion of all

85. In the most recent Council of Europe documents on inclusion, new transversal approaches and measures can be identified. In general, in combination with strong anti-discrimination provisions, these add new positive (affirmative) elements to the traditional concepts of human rights, equality and human dignity, with the intention of not only protecting the rights of a person or of a community but also making these feel part of the societal majority and creating a sense of belonging, ultimately leading to a higher level of inclusion.

a. Ensuring equality/ equality mainstreaming

Equality mainstreaming ensures equality considerations are integrated into all stages of policymaking and across all policy areas.

It aims at achieving systematic incorporation of equality and anti-discrimination concerns.

It is implemented by applying equality mainstreaming at national, regional, and local levels, and across all policy areas.

Measures include developing responsive budgets; ensuring judicial and non-judicial redress mechanisms.

86. According to Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. Ensuring equality has been identified as one of the four fundamental principles of intercultural integration in paragraphs 17-19 of CM/Rec(2022)10.

87. Equality is inherently connected to anti-discrimination and fosters relationships of mutual respect, reciprocity and solidarity among citizens from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that everyone can fully access and enjoy rights, resources and opportunities. It is essential to have legal and policy frameworks that guarantee equality for all within a member state, ensuring they are protected under the law and free from discrimination and intolerance in every aspect of life. This includes ensuring equal treatment by public services and addressing all forms of intolerance and hate speech.

88. Equality mainstreaming is the systematic incorporation of equality and anti-discrimination concerns into all stages of the policy process, including policy making, policy implementation and policy review. It should be incorporated at national, regional and local levels of governance and it should be applied to all policy areas, especially those mentioned before (education, employment, social welfare and housing, and health policies), and at all governance levels. Budgets, including local and regional ones, should be developed using responsive budgeting principles, meaning using set indicators which ensure that they respond to the needs and priorities of the local communities, including groups exposed to discrimination, which should participate in the design, implementation and evaluation processes.

89. As an essential element of the legal frameworks ensuring equality and prohibiting discrimination, judicial and non-judicial redress mechanisms for the victims of discrimination need to be put in place.

90. It is crucial to consider the importance of “symbolic” equality — how various societal groups are represented in legal and policy documents, as well as in political and institutional discussions. Language that emphasises cultural, linguistic, historical or any other differences as sources of societal problems or conflict should be avoided. Generally, policies for inclusion should promote mutual recognition and respect among all members of society, laying the foundation for effective equality and a shared sense of belonging.

91. Last but not least, as mentioned before, it is important that national inclusion strategies ensure not only equal treatment, but at least equality of opportunities, particularly for marginalised or minority groups, combined with positive action, because equal treatment alone does not address the structural barriers that these groups face. Marginalised communities often start from a position of disadvantage due to historical injustices, systemic discrimination and social exclusion. Without intentional and effective efforts to ensure effective equality, merely providing equal treatment can perpetuate existing inequalities, as these groups may lack the resources, support, or access, which are necessary to take advantage of equal treatment.

92. To that end, member states should consider targeted measures, in addition to mainstream measures, to address barriers that prevent persons belonging to certain groups from benefitting from general policies. By focusing on outcomes, national, regional and local strategies can more effectively break cycles of discrimination, exclusion and resulting poverty, leading to a more equal, just and inclusive society.

b. Valuing diversity

Valuing diversity enriches communities, fosters innovation, and promotes social harmony.

It implies seeing, treating and communicating diversity as a valuable resource and asset.

It is realised by adopting positive and inclusive political and institutional discourse.

Measures include training public officials in intercultural competences, adopting diversity charters, countering stereotypes.

93. According to paragraphs 20-22 of CM/Rec(2022)10, public policies at all levels should take into account the potential of diversity, focus on maximising the value of diversity for society as a whole and foster trust as well as a sense of living together and of belonging. Valuing diversity in society is important because it enriches communities, fosters innovation and promotes social harmony. Embracing different perspectives, cultures, origins and backgrounds leads to a broader understanding of the world, which can result in more creative problem-solving and better decision-making. Valuing diversity also encourages mutual respect and empathy, helping to reduce prejudice, discrimination and hate speech.

94. Strategies for inclusion for all should define and treat diversity as a valuable resource and an asset. The message should be that diversity can serve as a catalyst for innovation, offering significant advantages to organisations, communities and businesses. This approach also leads to the development of policies that harness the potential of diversity while reducing the challenges associated with human mobility and diverse identities.

95. Strategies should promote political and institutional discourse that highlights the positive potential of diversity and include communication initiatives that share factual information about the contributions of people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, both historically and in the present. These efforts should aim to counteract misinformation, prejudice, negative stereotypes and rumours. The essential role of local and regional authorities in this area should not be overlooked, as it is in local communities that

people of diverse background meet and experience the potential of diversity.

96. Public officials should be trained in relation to intercultural competence (see paras. 19 and 41 of CM/Rec(2022)10) and, independently or with the help of cultural mediators, play a valuable role in ensuring that different perspectives are recognised and respected through constructive dialogue and that potential conflicts are managed effectively. Public authorities can further their role in promoting inclusion through showing a good example, e.g. by promoting diversity in the workforce through dedicated recruitment policies or through their procurement rules by prioritising companies which have demonstrated a commitment to diversity, e.g. through signing and implementing diversity charters.

c. Enabling meaningful interaction

Enabling meaningful interaction builds trust and social cohesion through positive engagement.

It requires creating spaces and opportunities for meaningful interaction.

It demands reassessing policies to encourage intercultural mixing.

Measures include engaging diverse residents in educational, cultural, and sports activities; training public officials and civil society organisations.

97. Public policies at all levels should seek to create spaces and opportunities for meaningful and positive interaction between members of society from a wide range of backgrounds as a precondition for building trust and living together, as well as for realising the advantages diversity brings (para. 20 of CM/Rec(2020)10). In order to combat social exclusion and segregation, continuous and effective efforts are needed to engage diverse residents in meaningful interactions through educational, cultural, sports, entrepreneurial, and other activities. Additionally, fostering constructive discussions about shared goals and the principles of living together in dignity and peace is essential. Meaningful interaction between diverse individuals and groups is engineered through public policies that promote trust, create connections and transform the public space in a way that it multiplies occasions for encounters, exchange and dialogue.

98. This calls for public authorities to adopt an “intercultural lens” in their work (para. 28 of CM/Rec(2022)10), reassessing their policies and programs to determine whether they encourage or hinder intercultural mixing, interaction and trust. It is particularly important to promote integration and meaningful interaction in public spaces across key

policy areas such as housing, education, employment, entrepreneurship, social services and urban planning, rather than allowing segregation to occur unintentionally.

99. Creating space and opportunities for a meaningful interaction also counteracts hate speech, stereotypes and prejudices, as meeting the “feared” persons allows to get to know them better and to face our prejudices.

100. It is also recommended that public officials as well as civil society organisations play an active role in facilitating such interaction (para. 30 of CM/Rec(2022)10). Therefore, they should be provided with training and support to enhance intercultural competence and to have the capacity to facilitate constructive exchanges and dialogue.

101. Addressing stereotypes, prejudice and hate speech and promoting intercultural dialogue is also fundamental for the implementation of a successful inclusion strategy. An inclusive and diversity-embracing portrayal of minorities, in particular women belonging to minorities (see CM/Rec(2013)1 and CM/Rec(2019)1), in public and private media can play a vital role in creating conditions for a positive interaction. Various measures can be envisaged in this regard, e.g. promoting the adoption of codes of conducts by media outlets, diversification of their editorial staff or promoting more inclusive and culturally diverse content. However, any such measures must not infringe upon the freedom of the press.

d. Fostering active citizenship and participation

Fostering active citizenship and participation ensures inclusive and stable societies through participatory democracy.

It is achieved by supporting broad active involvement in public life and decision-making.

It requires framing policies to promote participation.

Measures include involving local and regional authorities; ensuring youth and children participation; consulting civil society organisations.

102. Council of Europe standards clearly state that inclusive and stable societies are an outcome of participatory democracy, which respects and recognises the role of all actors (see CM/Rec(2018)4). In this regard, member states are recommended to frame a policy, involving local and – where applicable – regional authorities, designed to promote the participation of all citizens in local public life. It is advised to recognise and enhance the role played by associations and groups of citizens as key partners in developing and sustaining a culture of participation.

Local authorities should be given the possibility to introduce, at a neighbourhood level, participatory structures that offer citizens opportunities to influence their immediate environments. Ensuring participation by youth and by children is of particular importance (see CM/Rec(2012)2 and the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional life).

103. The need to secure active citizenship and participation of all is a cross-cutting and transversal theme for all groups under the CDADI mandate and is strongly stressed in all relevant group-specific Council of Europe standards. Migrants and persons with a migration background should be involved in the decision-making processes on issues concerning them directly but they should also be encouraged to partake in the decision-making related to society at large. As a minimum this should be achieved through involving communities and civil society organisations in consultation processes; where the legislation relating to elections and citizenship allow for it, migrants and persons with a migration background should also be enabled to vote and run for election (see CM/Rec(2022)10). Migrant and refugee women and girls should be particularly encouraged to participate actively in decision-making processes as part of their integration and empowerment process (see CM/Rec(2022)17).

104. Participation of Roma and Travellers civil society should be ensured at all stages of the implementation of strategies for Roma and Travellers’ inclusion. Like other groups, they should be involved not only in decision-making processes concerning them directly, but also in those related to society at large, both at local and national levels. Gender balance and reflecting the diversity of Roma and Traveller communities should be ensured in consultation processes (see CM/Rec(2008)5). Roma and Traveller women and girls should be actively engaged, including through awareness-raising activities, to ensure that they are adequately informed about the importance of political participation, methods and existing opportunities. Those measures should also reach Roma and Traveller women and girls living in rural areas (see CM/Rec(2024)1). Emphasis is also placed on the political participation of Roma and Travellers youth (CM/Rec(2023)4). Participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life at local, regional, national, and European levels should be increased not only through consultation but also through active engagement, for instance by promoting Roma and Travellers candidates for elections (see ECRI GPR No. 13 and the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion).

105. For persons belonging to national minorities and regional or minority language users, the conditions necessary for their effective participation in cultural,

social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them, should be put in place. Particular focus should be put on the participation of national minorities youth (see CM/Rec(2023)9, FCNM, and ACFC Thematic Commentary No. 2). The Council of Europe standards also recommend a number of consultative bodies and procedures to be set up, as far as possible, to secure the rights and participation of regional and minority language users in the decision-making process. States should take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, to advise the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority language users. In the area of education, it is recommended to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public. Additionally, the bodies set up to guarantee the freedom and pluralism of media should have a representation or at least take into account the interests of the regional or minority language speakers (see ERCML).

106. For LGBTI persons, the need to secure freedom of association and freedom of expression and peaceful assembly is stressed. Prevention from discrimination in exercising these rights (e.g. with regard to complex formalities to register an organisation or difficult access to funding for NGOs) is required. Human rights defenders should be protected. Abusive restrictive procedures for organising assemblies should be avoided and the participants of assemblies protected. The existing standards also point to the need to work with a variety of stakeholders in order to secure equality of LGBTI persons. Like in many areas above, measures taken to combat discrimination and intolerance against LGBTI persons are to be carried out at all administrative levels (local, regional and national), and they should facilitate the involvement of a wide range of actors from different sectors of society, including the legal, social, religious, educational, civil society and cultural spheres of society (see CM/Rec(2010)5 and ECRI GPR No. 17).

107. Overall, a society that embraces inclusion relies on a strong sense of individual citizenship, grounded in a well-defined set of rights and responsibilities. It also depends on individuals feeling a personal connection to the broader community, where they see themselves as fellow citizens who share common values.

108. In this regard, it is fundamental to involve people of all diverse backgrounds to be active citizens and take part in the decision-making, based on a clear framework of rights and responsibilities, regarding decisions that concern them directly, but also

regarding decisions on the entire society at large. National, regional and local level strategies for inclusion should ensure that appropriate mechanisms for such participation exist and function effectively for all.

e. Applying an intersectional approach

Applying an intersectional approach addresses compounded forms of discrimination faced by individuals with multiple intersecting identities.

It recognises and analyses the interaction of multiple backgrounds and characteristics.

It requires adopting intersectional perspectives in all policies.

Measures include mainstreaming gender equality; addressing specific challenges faced by groups exposed to discrimination.

109. The Council of Europe strongly advocates for the application of an intersectional approach in inclusion strategies, recognising that people's identities are shaped by the interaction of multiple, overlapping backgrounds, identities and characteristics such as sex, gender, "race"⁹, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status. These intersecting identities can create unique multiple forms of discrimination that cannot be fully understood or addressed by looking at each identity in isolation. The Council of Europe emphasises that an intersectional perspective is crucial for developing policies that accurately reflect the complex realities faced by individuals who belong to two or more disadvantaged groups, and which often face particularly high levels of discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion.

110. In the "Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024 – 2029", the Council of Europe stresses that "integrating an intersectional perspective, by taking into account this diversity and compounded forms of oppression, is essential if the Organisation is to adopt and implement inclusive policies and projects. The various needs and challenges faced by certain groups must therefore be analysed and integrated into policy making and activities". The

9. Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers rejects, as does ECRI, theories based on the existence of different "races". However, in this document, the term "race" is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as "belonging to another race" are not excluded from the protection provided for by legislation and the implementation of policies.

document highlights that without an intersectional lens, policies may be too broad or fail to address the specific challenges faced by women who experience multiple layers of exclusion.

111. It should be stressed that gender mainstreaming is an important and essential part of ensuring inclusion for all. The approach and methodologies developed for gender mainstreaming purposes are precious examples and can serve as an inspiration for a broader equality mainstreaming.

112. Council of Europe standards and guidance point to several challenges faced by migrant women and girls, women and girls from national minorities, Roma and Travellers women and girls, as well as LGBTI (lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex) women who, due to intersectional discrimination, are among the most vulnerable groups. In this context, Council of Europe standards propose measures that should be implemented by the member states to combat sexism and gender stereotypes, ensure equal access to justice and prevention of violence, enhance participation in political, public, social and economic life, mainstream gender and include an intersectional approach in all policies and measures adopted by the Council of Europe and its member states.

113. The necessity to mainstream gender equality throughout all policies is mentioned in the context of the inclusion of migrants and persons with a migration background (see the Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level, CM/Rec(2022)17 and PACE Resolution 2159 (2017)), inclusion of Roma women and girls (see CM/Rec(2024)1) and inclusion of LGBTI persons (see ECRI GPR No. 17). For all these groups, prevention of gender-based violence is stressed as an important element.

114. The Council of Europe furthermore emphasises the need to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in policies aimed at the protection and inclusion of other vulnerable groups, including those falling under the mandate of CDADI. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) promotes and protects the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. It calls for equal rights, non-discrimination, and accessibility in all areas of life, including education, employment, health care, and political participation. The convention urges countries to take legislative, policy, and practical measures to ensure full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society. In line with Council of Europe standards, persons with disabilities should not be discriminated against (see art. 14 of ECHR) and member states should take measures to ensure their inclusion in the life of the community, especially by securing access to education and employment, as well as taking positive actions to reduce barriers

of entry (see art. 15 of the Revised European Social Charter). Policies relevant for the inclusion of migrants and persons with a migration background should address the intersecting challenges of ethnicity and disability, ensuring that disabled migrants and persons with a migration background receive tailored support (see Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for at the National Level and CM/Rec(2022)17). Similarly, there is a need to integrate a disability perspective into policies for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers (see e.g. CM/Rec(2023)4 and CM/Rec(2024)1), of national minorities (see FCNM Compilation of thematic commentaries of the Advisory Committee) and of LGBTI persons (see ECRI GPR No.17), recognizing the compounded marginalisation and intersectional discrimination that persons with disabilities from these group face.

115. The Council of Europe has developed several standards and guidelines incorporating intersectional approaches to protecting vulnerable children and youth. These standards recognize that multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination — such as gender, disability, migration status, and socio-economic background — can compound risks for young people (see Istanbul Convention, Lanzarote Convention). The Council of Europe has established several standards and initiatives to promote the inclusion of children and youth in national policies, particularly focusing on participation and interaction, education (including quality education and education in minority languages), and other relevant areas. Involvement of parents of children from vulnerable groups into school life and into the education of their children should be promoted. Children and youth should be encouraged and empowered to participate in the decision-making relevant to their lives and the lives of the society at large (see the next section).

116. It is important to stress that identities of all the groups mentioned above may intersect (e.g. LGBTI Roma and Travellers, Roma and Travellers with a migrant background, elderly LGBTI persons, national minority women with disability etc.), which leads to compounding and specific forms of discrimination. Therefore, an intersectional approach is indispensable for creating and implementing effective inclusion strategies that are truly reflective of the diverse experiences and needs within society.

f. Implementing multilevel governance and stakeholder engagement

Implementing multilevel governance and stakeholder engagement ensures policy consistency, knowledge sharing, and mutual learning across national, regional and local governance levels.

It needs establishing a bottom-up and participatory model for policy co-creation and coordination among all governance levels and societal actors.

It entails setting up governance frameworks based on partnerships.

Measures include involving local communities and grassroots organisations; use participatory approaches and self-assessment tools to evaluate multilevel governance effectiveness.

117. The previous chapters of this document show that various national, regional and local level authorities and actors need to contribute to achieve effective intercultural inclusion. The organisation of the co-operation between these various actors is ensured through what is called multilevel governance of inclusion and diversity. This multilevel governance aims to “ensure policy consistency, knowledge and resources sharing, best-practice exchange and mutual learning”. Multilevel governance should be based on a bottom-up and participatory model that ensures policy co-creation, co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities, at all levels of governance, and also includes all relevant stakeholders in areas of shared competence or common interest (see the Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level). The Council of Europe recommends applying 12 principles of good democratic governance which include, among others, principles of democratic participation, responsiveness and accountability (see CM/Rec(2023)5).

118. A useful tool to check to what extent multilevel governance for intercultural inclusion as outlined in the Model Framework is already implemented, is the Multilevel Governance (MLG) Self-Assessment Tool that the Committee of Experts on intercultural inclusion (ADI-INT) is about to finalise as per the Committee’s Terms of Reference. The Tool aims to define the multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance approach to inclusion. It will provide policy guidance to formulate, design, implement and evaluate national intercultural policies following the principles of multilevel governance. Through a set of questions, it will allow member states to carry out a self-assessment whether effective intercultural integration public policies are in place, whether coordination between all levels of government is ensured (including co-creation with regional and local levels) and whether multi-stakeholders’ participation and mechanisms were put in place.

119. The necessity to involve a whole range of governance actors as well as other stakeholders in the process of the design of the inclusion strategy is yet again highlighted by the Council of Europe standards in the case of groups under the CDADI’s mandate.

120. In relation to migrants and persons with a migration background, it is recommended that integration strategies envisage capacity building to support institutions and civil society organisations in developing, implementing and assessing the impact of intercultural integration policies. In terms of multilevel governance and multi-stakeholder approach, it is recommended to set up a solid governance framework for intercultural integration based on partnerships between all relevant levels of government (national, regional and local) and other stakeholders. This framework should facilitate policy coordination, collaboration, and coherence across different levels of governance. The strategy should be adopted through partnerships between public authorities at all levels of government, local institutions, civil society organisations and groups and the private sector. Policies and decision-making processes should involve input and participation from local communities and grassroots organisations. This ensures that policies are tailored also to local needs and realities (see CM/Rec(2022)10 and CM/Rec(2022)17).

121. Similar recommendations are made in terms of the process of designing inclusion strategies or policies for Roma and Travellers. Inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination among different agencies involved in the strategy’s implementation should be ensured to avoid duplication of efforts and achieve effective implementation (see CM/Rec(2008)5). Numerous different stakeholders need to be engaged in the process of the implementation to ensure the success of the inclusion strategy, such as the judiciary, police, media and healthcare providers, as well as civil society organisations, namely those representing Roma and Travellers, and to build mutual trust between Roma and Travellers and civil servants, including through engaging Roma mediators. At the local level, it is important that Roma and Travellers civil society is engaged in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of relevant policies or strategies, as this ensures that their specific needs and priorities are addressed (see ECRI GPR No. 13).

122. To ensure the effective participation of national minorities and regional or minority language users in cultural, social, economic life, and public affairs, the necessary conditions should be established. Special attention should be given to the involvement of youth from national minorities (see FCNM, Thematic Commentary No. 2 and CM/Rec(2023)9). Council of Europe standards recommend setting up consultative bodies and procedures to secure the rights and participation of regional and minority language users in decision-making. States should consider the needs and desires of these groups and, if needed, create advisory bodies for matters related to these languages. In education, it is advised to establish a supervisory body to monitor and report on the

progress of teaching regional or minority languages. Additionally, media bodies should represent or at least consider the interests of regional or minority language speakers (see ERCML).

123. Similarly, there is a strong need to work with a variety of stakeholders in order to secure equality of LGBTI persons. Measures taken to combat discrimination and intolerance against LGBTI persons are to be carried out at all administrative levels (local, regional and national), and they should facilitate the involvement of a wide range of actors from different sectors of society, including the legal, social, religious, educational, civil society and cultural spheres of society. It is important to ensure that relevant civil society actors, including LGBTI people, are closely consulted in the development, implementation and monitoring of relevant laws, policies and practices. It should be ensured that the mandates of equality bodies expressly cover discrimination based on actual or perceived SOGIESC grounds. Political parties and media should be encouraged to adopt relevant codes of conduct opposing hate speech targeted at LGBTI persons. Public media regulatory bodies should organise training sessions for media professionals on legal and other standards for LGBTI equality and on combating LGBTI-phobic hate speech, with a view to enforcing such standards, notably in electronic media (see CM/Rec(2010)5 and ECRI GPR No.17).

124. Another important element of inclusion policies is cooperation with the parliaments of the member states. Parliaments, Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play a key role in protecting and promoting equality and non-discrimination. In this regard, it is important to recall the ECRI GPR No. 2 and the Paris Principles with regard to national human rights institutions and that member states must ensure the independence of Equality Bodies and NHRIs. Cooperation between Equality Bodies, NHRI's and Parliament is also essential, which is why it is recommended to identify opportunities for

joint initiatives and hold joint events to raise awareness of equality and non-discrimination issues, but also explore partnerships on human rights issues by engaging with supranational bodies, including intergovernmental organisations and international financial institutions, in the field of equality and non-discrimination (see PACE Resolution 1998 (2014)).

125. Overall, a strategy for inclusion for all should stress the importance of multi-level governance and stakeholder engagement in its design, implementation and evaluation. Involving various levels of government – national, regional, and local – is crucial because each of these different levels has specific insights, competencies, responsibilities and capabilities that can contribute to more effective and comprehensive inclusion policies.

126. This approach ensures that policies are tailored to the specific needs of communities, reflecting the diverse contexts within a country, but also that the implementation of the strategies is realistic and achievable within the existing limitations (e.g. legal, budgetary or human capacities). The multilevel governance approach should also strive to ensure policy coherence across different levels of government in terms of goals, means, and public messages related to integration and inclusion. It should encompass aligning strategic needs and goals to promote consistency and effectiveness in policy implementation.

127. The significance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, community groups, the private sector, and individuals who are directly affected by inclusion policies, should be stressed. This participatory approach fosters greater transparency and accountability. By involving diverse actors in the policy-making process, governments can build a broad consensus and public support for inclusion strategies. This collaborative approach helps to ensure that policies are not only well-informed and inclusive but also sustainable over time.

Chapter 5

Measures for the inclusion of specific groups

128. All of the core policy areas for inclusion, as well as the innovative approaches to inclusion, as described above, are relevant for the inclusion of all groups which fall under the mandate of the CDADI. At the same time, certain Council of Europe standards and documents make recommendations related to a concrete group in relation to a specific type of discrimination. This is often related to a concrete type of prejudice or negative stereotype, to the history of this group and the long-term type of discrimination it is facing, or to the characteristics of this group or its social or legal status.

129. Policy recommendations relevant for migrants and persons with a migration background should for example include access to asylum (for those who are eligible), and providing translated information in first languages, as well as ensure opportunities to participate in meaningful interaction, even before their stay in the country is legalised.

130. Roma and Travellers have faced centuries of discrimination and consequences of antigypsyism, which have led to segregation and lack of trust in public institutions. As a consequence, Council of Europe documents prohibit segregation in relation to healthcare, education and housing. Forced sterilisation of Roma women and girls is also an issue of specific concern. Enhancing mutual trust between Roma and public authorities is strongly recommended, in particular by hiring and training mediators from, among others, the Roma community, especially in the area of health and education. Moreover, policy makers should consider that certain forms of violence against women and girls, such as child marriages, early marriages and forced marriages, represent specific obstacles that some Roma and Traveller girls face in accessing education, healthcare or employment and that those practices affect their right to development (see CM/Rec(2024)1).

131. Among the specific recommendations related to the inclusion of national minorities and regional or minority language users, it is worth noting that the relevant Council of Europe documents encourage establishing transfrontier cooperation, in particular

between regional or local authorities. States should facilitate cooperation and contacts between the users of the same language in different States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and continuous education. FCNM provisions also ensure the right to establish private educational institutions, the protection from arbitrary changes to administrative boundaries that could negatively impact national minorities, and the right to use minority languages in public life, including topographic signs and communication (see FCNM).

132. For LGBTI persons, certain questions regarding the legal status of same sex couples, legal gender recognition and access to certain kinds of healthcare are among the specific needs and policy measures that could be mentioned. National law should guarantee a quick, transparent, and accessible process by which people can obtain legal gender recognition (without facing unnecessary requirements). Trans-specific healthcare should be safe, affordable, timely and accessible to all. Legislation and policies should prohibit non-consensual medical interventions on intersex persons. Healthcare staff should be trained on this matter and persons subjected to such procedures should receive assistance. Regarding persons who have received legal recognition of gender reassignment, the change of personal documents should be facilitated, and their right to marriage should be ensured. Last but not least, it is recommended that States ensure that couples, who have formalised their same-sex relationship, have the same rights and are entitled to the benefits as individuals in legally recognised different-sex relationships.

133. It is worth noting that while these specific (non-exhaustive) measures address the specific circumstances or obstacles faced by these groups, many others are common and transversal. For example, school segregation, a problem long faced by Roma and Travellers children, also needs to be tackled in the case of migrants and persons with a migration background who are often facing school or classroom segregation due to the spatial segregation related to their concentrated place of residence. Inclusive quality education should cater for the needs also of these

children regardless of their background or origin. Inclusive education may mean creating an accepting space where all youth receive comprehensive and factual information about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. For children from national minorities, it can mean creating an educational space where they can learn in their specific minority language and about the related culture while learning the language and culture of the societal majority. At the same time, inclusive schooling also

needs to ensure that every student from the majority can learn minority languages. Inclusive education is a transversal answer to the requirements for all groups while catering for the specific needs of each one of them, which should be carefully assessed at each stage of the planning and implementation phase, in consultation with the groups concerned. Moreover, as mentioned in many Council of Europe standards, diversity within each of these groups needs to be reflected in the consultation process.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

1. **A comprehensive approach to inclusion:** To achieve full and effective equality and inclusion, it is recommended that Council of Europe member states at all levels of authority adopt broad and comprehensive inclusion strategies. Numerous issues related to effective inclusion are transversal, cross-cutting and relevant for several or all societal groups, and can thus be tackled by an overall strategy document. A holistic approach ensures that systemic and other barriers are addressed at a structural level, helps society to advance inclusion for all and to embed inclusion in all aspects of life and governance.

2. **Balancing general and group-specific measures:** While a big part of measures needed to achieve inclusion are universal and should be implemented through comprehensive inclusion strategies, there will always be room and need for group-specific policies and measures. Having implemented a wide-reaching inclusion strategy does not impede implementing group-specific, targeted interventions, where deemed necessary to tackle a concrete problem, to effectively ensure the group's rights or to deal with cases of intersectional discrimination.

3. **Promoting equality and combatting discrimination through positive measures:** Promoting equality and combatting discrimination are fundamental elements of any strategy aimed at ensuring inclusion of all. In this context, equality should be understood as substantive and effective equality, meaning not only equality before the law, equal treatment and equality of opportunities, but also equality of outcomes and results. To achieve this level of equality, appropriate positive actions should be implemented that address the disparities and difficult starting conditions of marginalised groups and create conditions whereby members of those groups can achieve outcomes comparable to those of the broader population.

4. **Achieving inclusion as a multi-stakeholder process benefiting society as a whole:** Inclusion should be seen as an overarching policy goal and thus involve a wide variety of authorities at all governance levels (national, regional and local), as well

as non-governmental actors and society at large. Inclusion is not only a matter of access to rights for individuals or minority groups exposed to discrimination but also for the well-being of society as a whole. It should be emphasised that all members of society benefit from inclusion, but also have a responsibility to prevent and combat discrimination and intolerance and to contribute to making society inclusive.

5. **Mainstreaming inclusion across all policy areas:** Inclusion as an overall goal should be mainstreamed across all policy areas that are in the area of responsibility of the respective authorities. A specific focus should be put on the following core policy areas for inclusion: education, employment and economic inclusion, social welfare, housing, healthcare, culture and antidiscrimination (including hate speech). These policy fields should be at the core of comprehensive inclusion strategies. At the same time, the transversal approaches to inclusion identified in this document should be pursued, including equality mainstreaming, valuing diversity, enabling meaningful interaction, fostering active participation and participation, applying an intersectional approach and implementing multilevel governance and stakeholder engagement for inclusion.

6. **Measuring inclusion:** While this document aims to conceptualize the terms, conditions and principles necessary to achieve inclusion, one of the challenges faced by authorities is how to monitor and measure progress with inclusion in their national context. It would therefore make sense to use this guidance document as a basis for the development of a peer-learning and benchmarking instrument, which would identify concrete elements and indicators for the assessment of inclusion policies and strategies at the national, regional and local level, and whether those policies and strategies are comprehensive, successful as well as sustainable.¹⁰

10. In its Terms of Reference (CM(2023)131), ADI-INT is tasked to prepare a concept and methodology for a new peer learning and benchmarking tool on strategies for inclusion in the fields under the responsibility of the CDADI by the end of 2027.

Appendix 1 – One-pager overview of the Guidance document

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION	
Purpose	Provide guidance and inspiration for all level of authorities of the Council of Europe member states on comprehensive inclusion strategies
Scope	<p>Key policy areas: education; employment; social welfare and housing; healthcare; culture; combatting discrimination, hate crime and hate speech (<i>presented as the main ones – all policy areas should be covered</i>).</p> <p>Main target groups: Ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious minorities, migrants, Roma and Travellers, LGBTI persons and other groups not covered by the mandate of CDADI (<i>the study focuses on some groups provided as examples as falling under CDADI mandate – all groups should be covered in comprehensive inclusion strategies</i>).</p>
Definition of inclusion	Holistic approach grounded on human rights and non-discrimination principles, upholding equality, participation, interaction, and diversity, catering for the needs of individuals belonging to one or more specific groups.

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION	
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure that all groups' core needs – common, specific, and intersectional – are met through a comprehensive and unified inclusion strategy, across all policy areas. ▶ Address systemic barriers to inclusion and promote equality to achieve effective protection from discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime; equal participation in political and public life; respect for, valuing of and benefitting from diversity. ▶ Improve institutional, internal and external cooperation and coordination; reduce disparities in implementation across policies, groups in focus, competition for resources, and political attention. ▶ More inclusive, equal, just, and cohesive societies enhanced mutual interaction, knowledge and respect, and collective well-being through a whole-of-society approach. ▶ Raise awareness that inclusion is of benefit to and a responsibility of society at large.
Essential approaches	<p>Equality: Mainstream equality in all policies.</p> <p>Diversity: Embrace diversity as a value and a resource.</p> <p>Interaction: Create opportunities for meaningful connections.</p> <p>Participation: Ensure everyone can contribute to public life and decision-making.</p> <p>Intersectionality: Address intersectional discrimination on multiple grounds, including gender mainstreaming.</p> <p>Multilevel governance & stakeholder engagement: Adopt an approach that involves all levels of government (national, regional and local) and all relevant stakeholders.</p>

<p>Constitutive elements</p>	<p>Comprehensive approach: Adopt broad strategies to address systemic barriers and advance inclusion for all groups and to the benefit of the entire society in core aspects of life and governance.</p> <p>Balancing measures: Focus on universal policies, and add group-specific policies if needed, depending on the needs and context, mindful of intersectionality.</p> <p>Promoting equality: Understand equality as substantive and effective, encompassing equal opportunities and outcomes.</p> <p>Multi-stakeholder process: Include all governance levels and societal actors through an inclusive, participatory, whole-of-society approach.</p> <p>Mainstreaming inclusion: Inclusion as a goal for all policy areas and transversal approaches.</p> <p>Measuring inclusion: Develop tools to monitor and measure progress, effectiveness and sustainability.</p>
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Appendix 2 – Council of Europe standards and tools

a. General documents

European Convention on Human Rights

Protocol No. 12, 2000

Revised European Social Charter, 1996

Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional life

European Urban Charter, 2023

Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005

Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention)

Additional Protocol on the right to participate at public life to the Charter of Local Self-Government, 2009

Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 on combating hate crime, 7 May 2024

Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 to member States on the principles of good democratic governance, 6 September 2023

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech, 20 May 2022

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, 2 February 2022

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 on the participation of citizens in local public life, 21 March 2018

Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education, 12 December 2012

Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, 28 March 2012

Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, 11 May 2010

Guidelines for the protection and promotion of human rights in culturally diverse societies adopted by the Committee of Ministers: Human rights in culturally diverse societies, 2 March 2016

Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on upholding equality and protecting against discrimination and hate during the Covid-19 pandemic and similar crises in the future, May 2020

Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029

Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

ECRI GPR No. 2: Equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at the national level, revised 7 December 2017

ECRI GPR No. 7 on National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, revised 7 December 2017

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d. Other relevant documents

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