



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 192 (2017) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 8 December 2017, on mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in the implementation of the Convention as well as in the work of the Convention Secretariat

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Recalling that the Preamble of the Convention recognises that wild flora and fauna constitute a natural heritage of aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, economic and intrinsic value that needs to be preserved and handed on to future generations;

Recalling that the European Court of Human Rights has recognised that “the advancement of gender equality is today a major goal in the member states of the Council of Europe and references to traditions, general assumptions or prevailing social attitudes are insufficient justification for a difference in treatment on grounds of sex”;

Recognising the importance of ensuring a balanced participation of women and men in public decision-making and in the conservation and protection of the environment and biodiversity, including in the fight against climate change;

Recalling Article 3 of the Convention providing for Contracting Parties to promote education and disseminate general information on the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats as well as Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 13 of the Committee of Ministers to the Council of Europe (“member states”) on gender mainstreaming in education;

Recalling that Article 11, paragraph 1 of the Convention provides that, in implementing the Convention, Parties undertake to co-operate whenever appropriate and in particular where this would enhance the effectiveness of measures taken under other articles of the Convention;

Noting that greater species and habitats diversity enhances the sustainability of all life forms, contributes to the maintain of healthy ecosystems on which we depend for food, clean air, fresh water and shelter, enhances human’s resilience to a variety of natural and human-made disasters, provides recreational benefits and fosters good health and well-being;

Noting that the Council of Europe, the international organisation hosting the Convention, is a leading international organisation in the promotion of gender equality and women’s rights and of policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and needs as well as the specific impacts of its policies, measures and activities on diverse groups;

Recalling Recommendation No. R (90) 4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the elimination of sexism from language;

Recalling the Council of Europe defines gender mainstreaming: “the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”;

Recalling Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 17 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms, which calls for “the integration of a gender perspective into all areas of governance, both in laws and policies” and recognising that “gender equality is not a women’s issue but one that concerns men as well and affects society as a whole”;

Noting Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, which establishes a minimum target of 40% for both women and men as balanced participation in any decision-making body;

Noting the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 and its strategic objectives to achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures; taking further note of the ongoing work to finalise the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, which would keep the same two objectives, among others, for the period 2018-2023;

Bearing in mind the cross-cutting United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, in addition to the specific goals and targets to protect ecosystems, halt biodiversity loss and combat climate change;

Bearing in mind Decision XII/7 on Mainstreaming gender considerations, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at its 12th meeting in Pyeongchang (Republic of Korea), 6-17 October 2014, and the recognition made by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD of the importance of gender equality considerations to the achievement of the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

Recalling the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its four strategic objectives;

Convinced that addressing gender equality considerations in the work of the Convention would contribute to the achievement of its objectives, through action by both Contracting Parties and the Secretariat of the Convention,

Recommends Contracting Parties to the Convention and invites observer States to:

1. Seek to achieve a balanced participation of women and men, in the public decision-making bodies working on nature conservation (the representation of either women or men should not fall below 40%);
2. Mainstream, when relevant, gender equality into all processes at national level linked to the development of national biodiversity-related legislation, biodiversity strategies, species action plans and other policy guidance documents;
3. Seek to include a gender equality perspective in the work of the Standing Committee at all stages, including when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating its programme and activities;
4. Take account of existing work, in particular done following Decision XII/7 on Mainstreaming gender considerations adopted by the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to evaluate how biodiversity loss impacts on both women and men, and on the different ways that women and men contribute to biodiversity loss;
5. Include a gender equality perspective when raising awareness among the general public on the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats;
6. Encourage the non-governmental organisations active in biodiversity conservation to seek gender equality in their environmental work;
7. Recognise the increased danger faced by environmental defenders, including women, and support them;
8. Engage and co-operate with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission, as appropriate;
9. Keep the Standing Committee informed of the implementation of this Recommendation;

Invites the Secretariat to:

1. Seek advice and support from the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission and its Secretariat as well as gender mainstreaming experts and non-governmental organisations, in view of ensuring the best possible integration of gender equality considerations in the work of the Convention, including co-operation among Council of Europe bodies;
2. Consider possible ways to ensure a balanced participation of women and men in the Convention decision-making bodies, expert groups or any other activity implemented in the framework of the Convention's Programme of Work, including on-the-spot appraisals and visits related to the European Diploma for Protected Areas;
3. Support the development of a shared knowledge within the Secretariat, among Contracting Parties and with other international environmental instruments (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Migratory species (CMS) and its Daughter agreements, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora CITES) of the link between biodiversity, gender equality and the traditional knowledge and practice of local actors, land users and stakeholders, taking care to avoid duplication of efforts and to support the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity.