

Strasbourg, 30 April 2026



**Statement of CDADI and GEC on the
fundamental importance of equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion for the
New Democratic Pact for Europe**

(adopted by written procedure on 30 April 2026)

1. Democratic backsliding, shrinking civic space, rising hate speech and violence, a strong backlash against equality and gender equality, and increasing information disorder make the call for democratic renewal urgent. **In this environment, equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion policies are not peripheral add-ons but structural necessities that determine whether democracies can deliver for all citizens and maintain their legitimacy.** Through standards, expertise and concrete tools, the work of CDADI and GEC is a central contribution to achieving the objectives of the New Democratic Pact for Europe.
2. **Equality and equal participation form the backbone of democracy.** Democracy can function legitimately and flourish only if all individuals, regardless of gender or any other ground of discrimination, enjoy their right to equality and non-discrimination and are able to participate safely in public life on an equal footing. **Equality is a structural condition for democratic legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness,** as it ensures that democratic systems meaningfully reflect the full diversity of society. When more groups are represented, democratic accountability broadens and policies respond to a wider range of lived experiences. This reduces governance gaps and lack of understanding that often fuel disillusionment and mistrust.
3. **Democracies must renew their capacity to deliver for everyone. Inclusion is not a concession, nor is democracy a zero-sum equation between the majority and the minorities.** Exclusion and division come at a price for everyone, as they negatively impact the living together, cohesion, economy and security. **In contrast, equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion harness the full potential of society and benefit society as a whole, strengthening stability, trust, creativity and prosperity.** They enhance economic growth, promote innovation, increase labour market participation and living standards and strengthen competitiveness and societal cohesion.

4. **Equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion strengthen democratic resilience.** Democratic resilience is currently weakened by increasing polarisation and information disorder, in turn driving mistrust, hate and violence. Rebuilding confidence and a shared sense of belonging is a collective investment with a clear and proven return. The principles of equality and non-discrimination are powerful yet underused tools to strengthen democratic resilience and plurality. By addressing structural barriers to civic and political engagement for all, notably hate speech, sexism and violence, including against women in all their diversity, minorities and other individuals and groups at risk of discrimination, **effective equality policies ensure that all individuals are able to engage fully in democratic and public life.**
5. **Equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion are powerful tools for the protection of democracy.** Protecting democracy requires that all of society safeguards both individuals and institutions from threats such as hate speech, hate crime, gender-based violence, racism and intolerance and the compounding impact of a shrinking civic space. **Ensuring that all citizens can participate in public life safely and without fear is essential to democratic security, for fostering public trust and for strengthening democratic institutions.** It is necessary to protect and safeguard those targeted by hate, enable the relevant authorities and other actors to combat hate speech and hate crime effectively and promote inclusive narratives that highlight the added value of diversity and counter hate speech and disinformation. **Discrimination, regardless of ground, must be prevented and combated to enable everyone to live life to its full potential.** By tackling the root causes, equality-based approaches contribute to stronger, more secure democracies grounded in trust and shared values of living together.
6. **Embedding and mainstreaming equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion across all policy areas, with a whole-of-society approach to decision-making, is crucial for ensuring adaptive and resilient democracies of tomorrow.** Democracies must continuously evolve to respond to rapid societal, technological and environmental challenges. This enables better anticipation of emerging challenges and more inclusive solutions by design. Technological developments, including artificial intelligence, present both opportunities and risks. Algorithmic bias and digital exclusion must be avoided, and technological advancements should benefit humankind in its diversity. Accountability for technology-facilitated violence, including against women and girls, must become the norm. **Evidence-based policy- and decision making, by closing data gaps and making best use of available knowledge, should also be facilitated to enable good governance.**
7. Bearing this in mind, **CDADI and GEC emphasise the importance of implementing the objectives of the 2023 Reykjavík Declaration**, which reaffirmed that dignity and equality are the foundation of modern European societies. In the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, the Heads of State and Government of the member States also committed to inclusion, non-discrimination and ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation in political life for all, in particular for women and girls, free from violence, fear, harassment, hate speech and hate crime.
8. **In conclusion, the New Democratic Pact for Europe must build on this commitment.** CDADI and GEC emphasise that **placing the protection and advancement of equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of the New Democratic Pact for Europe is imperative for securing future-ready, peaceful, prosperous, sustainable, safe and trusted democracies.** CDADI and GEC commit to contributing through their future work to a thriving, democratic and resilient Europe, which celebrates and protects equality, gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Both committees will translate this vision into concrete action through developing new Terms of Reference that ensure that the Pact delivers on its democratic promises for everyone.