

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

8 March 2025

English only

CCJ statement on International Women's Day

The Advisory Council on Youth is celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) 2025 as a global occasion to highlight the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women while also reflecting on the work that remains to achieve full gender equality. The theme of IWD 2025, Accelerate Action, underscores the urgency of advancing women's rights and empowerment¹. Over the past decades, concerted efforts have led to meaningful progress – from greater access to education for girls to increased participation of women in leadership and decision-making. However, despite these gains, women and girls worldwide continue to face significant inequalities and barriers.

In light of this, the Advisory Council notes that amidst growing anti-gender and anti-rights movements across Europe, the Advisory Council on Youth calls on Member States to protect and uphold progress made towards women's political, economic, social and cultural rights. Moreover, the Advisory Council urges for an intersectional approach to women's access to rights, which acknowledges the realities of young women experiencing discrimination based on multiple marginalized identities, including, but not limited to, Roma women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

We also call for alignment and implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029, which emphasises the role of youth as stakeholders and the importance of a youth perspective in policy development². The Advisory Council is actively participating in working groups on the implementation of the strategy. Despite considerable improvements, young women face structural hindrances in, for example, participation in political and public life, with young female politicians and young women in civil society experiencing disproportionately high levels of online attacks and threats through both gender- and politically based violence³. Female elected politicians are particularly targeted through online discrimination and hate speech, scrutinized significantly more than their male counterparts regarding their looks, personal beliefs and private lives. Furthermore, the expansion of the digital world, combined with the rise of the misogynistic online culture, has led to the proliferation of online methods for tech-facilitated gender-based violence predominantly against young women and girls, including through AI-generated content. To combat such discrimination, both PACE, through Resolution 2274 (2019)⁴, and the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, through Resolution 459⁵, call for multifaceted action to confront sexism. Committing to action across the Council of Europe, the Advisory Council also highlights the GES' emphasis on young women's role in the strategic priority 'Ensuring women's empowerment in relation to global and geopolitical challenges'.

Finally, the message 'Accelerating Action' emphasises the need to acknowledge the unique experiences of women and girls and their efforts toward gender equality. It also stresses that achieving the goal of

¹ <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Theme>

² <https://rm.coe.int/prems-073024-gbr-2573-gender-equality-strategy-2024-29-txt-web-a5-2756/1680afc66a>

³ <https://rm.coe.int/prems-073024-gbr-2573-gender-equality-strategy-2024-29-txt-web-a5-2756/1680afc66a>

⁴ <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/27614/html>

⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/fighting-sexist-violence-against-women-in-politics-at-local-and-region/1680a061c3>

removing structural and informal barriers to fully realising women's rights will require the involvement of all actors in society and that action should not be limited to women themselves. Such action entails not only changes to legal and administrative barriers but also to challenge existing gender stereotypes and biases ingrained in society and negatively affecting girls and women from a young age.

Standing up for gender equality, the Advisory Council on Youth reaffirms its commitment to supporting cooperation between Member States, the Council of Europe's youth sector and civil society organisations in accelerating action empowering the full participation of especially young women in economic, political, public and social life. Together we aim to accelerate action towards full gender equality and a world free from gender-based discrimination.

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