

Opening Session

Sergiy Kyslytsya (Moderator)

- Good morning to you all. It is a great pleasure for me as Chairperson of the Gender Equality Commission and in my personal capacity to welcome you to the Conference: Are we there yet? Assessing progress, and inspiring action about the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy.
- We are very grateful to the Estonian authorities for hosting the Conference in the beautiful town of Tallinn - we look forward to work ahead but also to discover the culture, history, heritage and hospitality of your country during our stay here.
- Three years have passed since the launch of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy and today, we have the opportunity to look at our work over these years, celebrate progress, discuss barriers and challenges and how to overcome them, and get the conversation going about priority areas for future work.
- For the Council of Europe achieving gender equality is fundamental to protecting human rights, the functioning of a democracy, respect for the rule of law, economic growth and sustainability. The Gender Equality Commission, that I have the honour to chair, is determined to continue its work to support member states in their work and efforts to achieve the advancement and empowering of women and the effective realisation of gender equality.
- We have with us today experts and representatives from a wide spectrum of stakeholders and I am sure each and every one of us as well as collectively, we will have interesting discussions and conversations and learn a lot from each other.
- We are honoured to have with us here today Estonia's Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas. Prime Minister, your presence here today demonstrates your personal commitment and that of your government to gender equality – Estonia has achieved a lot but we can always do more and better and we look forward to your intervention and your perspective on making gender equality a reality. Prime Minister Rõivas, you have the floor.