

Panel 5 – High level panel – the way forward

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- On behalf of the Gender Equality Commission, I thank warmly all panellists for their ideas and contributions to the preparation of the next Council of Europe Strategy on Gender Equality. This conference has launched the debate about the next Strategy and the Gender Equality Commission will be discussing the input received at our next meeting in November.
- Over the next year we will be evaluating the current Strategy and developing the next one, which is not a mean task! But I am reassured by the spirit of co-operation and partnership demonstrated at this conference by member states, international organisations and civil society. Europe needs our joint forces and efforts to make progress towards real gender equality in everyday life.
- The work of the Gender Equality Commission has been pivotal to achievements and progress with the implementation of the Strategy and its impact at national level. But we do know that sexism and gender stereotypes are not yet eradicated, that violence against women continues at an alarming rate, that we are far from having a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, that women do not have equal access to justice, and that much needs to be done to successfully mainstream a gender approach in all policies and measures.
- The current humanitarian and financial crisis has brought about new challenges. We will need to review our approach to existing priorities in the light of such developments and in close cooperation and consultation with our member states and our partners, and based on the added value of the Council of Europe, decide whether we should add to the political agenda for gender equality, issues such as the protection of the human rights of migrant and asylum-seeking women and girls. The Council of Europe has numerous and powerful standards on these topics, including the Istanbul Convention, the Anti-Trafficking Convention, the European Social Charter and many relevant Recommendations from the Committee of Ministers. We need to work together to increase the impact and visibility of these gender equality standards and support their implementation in member states.
- Dear friends and colleagues, we are living critical times for gender equality and the advancement of women's rights in Europe and beyond. We need to do more with less, a challenge shared by national authorities, international organisations and NGOs alike. We need to achieve more results with the tools and resources at our disposal.
- On behalf of the Gender Equality Commission, I can say that we will not spare efforts to make gender equality a reality, through our work and co-operation with all of you. I invite you to continue this on-going dialogue and participation in our respective meetings and activities to

ensure the successful implementation of the current Gender Equality Strategy and prepare the next one.