

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Type of committee: Steering Committee

Terms of reference valid from: **1 January 2020 until 31 December 2021**

PILLAR/PROGRAMME/SUB-PROGRAMME
<p>Pillar: Human Rights Programme: Equality and Human Dignity Sub-Programme: Gender Equality</p>
MAIN TASKS
<p>Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, building on the achievements in the area of gender equality, including notably the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) will steer the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work in the field of gender equality and advise the Committee of Ministers on appropriate action to be taken in its field of competence, taking due account of relevant transversal perspectives. In particular, the GEC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) promote gender equality as a visible priority for the Organisation (internally and externally) and, to this end, support all committees and bodies of the Organisation in ensuring that a gender equality perspective is maintained in their activities;(ii) conduct needs' assessments and provide advice on the development of standards, co-operation and monitoring activities within its field of competence;(iii) provide expertise to member States on the development of legislation, policies, practice, training schemes and awareness material to support implementation of internationally agreed standards at national level; and facilitate exchange of experiences and good practices;(iv) oversee and support the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023);(v) support governments, parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector for the purpose of achieving real progress on gender equality in member States;(vi) promote the inclusion in the political agendas of the Council of Europe member States and beyond of the need to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence;(vii) engage in co-ordination and joint planning at regional and international level with the European Union, including the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the UN, in particular UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact, the World Bank, the OAS, the OSCE, the OECD, other intergovernmental organisations and civil society with the aim of strengthening equality and enhancing women's rights as an integral part of universal human rights; promote the visibility of the Council of Europe's standards at these levels through participation in meetings at the level of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Council;(viii) follow the implementation of the non-binding instruments that it has prepared as well as conventions for which it has been given supervision by the Committee of Ministers;(ix) contribute to co-operation and other activities to support national initiatives in this field;(x) without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, follow the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies or convention mechanisms;(xi) hold an exchange of views annually in order to evaluate its activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on future priorities in its sector, including possible new activities and those that might be discontinued;(xii) take due account of building cohesive societies and promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in the performance of its tasks;(xiii) in accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind its priorities, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility¹ in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers;(xiv) contribute to the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regards to Goal 5: Gender Equality and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong institutions.

¹ Cf. relevant decisions of the Committee of Ministers (CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2) and list of Conventions in document CM(2019)132.

SPECIFIC TASKS

- (i) Prepare a draft Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on migrant and refugee women, on the basis of Recommendation Rec(79)10 concerning women migrants.
- (ii) Prepare studies, analyses of good practices and/or factsheets on such subjects as: gender equality in the development, design and application of artificial intelligence; sexism and violence, including harassment, against women in the political arena; online forms of violence against women and girls; the engagement of men and boys in promoting gender equality policies; selected articles of the Istanbul Convention.
- (iii) Identify a topic of particular relevance in the field of gender equality and organise an annual thematic conference to exchange experience and good practices and facilitate progress on this topic.
- (iv) Prepare annual reports on the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023), and in this context, in particular, review the effectiveness of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making, and Recommendation R(96)5 on reconciling work and family life.
- (v) Define an approach for following on the implementation of legal instruments (see main tasks viii and xiii), including notably Recommendation Rec/CM(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism.
- (vi) Contribute towards the implementation of the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
- (vii) Review progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), as evidenced by monitoring mechanisms and promoted through standard-setting and exchange of experiences and good practices.

COMPOSITION

Members:

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the government of the highest possible rank in the field of gender equality.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State (two in the case of the State whose representative has been elected Chair).

Each member of the Commission shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

In accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, in cases where there is no convention-based body including all the Parties, non-member States are invited to take part, with a right to vote, in the committee meetings pertaining to the conventions to which they are Parties.

Participants:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- other international organisations: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (including ODIHR), United Nations (including UN Women and other relevant UN agencies), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Observers:

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, European Women's Lobby and WAVE (Women against Violence in Europe);
- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership, including relevant co-operation activities.

WORKING METHODS**Plenary meetings:**

48 members, 2 meetings in 2020, 2.5 days

48 members, 2 meetings in 2021, 2.5 days

Bureau meetings:

3 members, meetings to be held by video-link and, where possible, in the margins of the plenary meetings.

The Gender Equality Commission is an integral part of the Council of Europe transversal programme on Gender Equality. With a view to fulfilling its main tasks, the GEC will maintain close links and exchanges with other elements of the transversal programme, including the Gender Equality Rapporteurs appointed by the respective steering committees and/or monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe, and the Council of Europe Gender Mainstreaming Team.

The Commission will appoint from amongst its members a Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The rules of procedure of the Gender Equality Commission are governed by Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Whenever appropriate, it will prioritise environmentally sound working methods, such as virtual meetings facilitated by information technology and written consultations.

SUBORDINATE STRUCTURE

The GEC supervises its Drafting Committee in charge of preparing a draft Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on migrant and refugee women (GEC-MIG) (see separate terms of reference).

BUDGETARY INFORMATION*

	Meetings per year	Number of days	Members	Plenary €K	Bureau €K	Working groups	Secretariat (A, B)
2020	2	2.5	48	90.8			1 A; 1 B
2021	2	2.5	48	90.8			1 A; 1 B

*The costs include the per diem, travel costs, interpretation, translation and document printing. These costs are calculated on the basis of the 2020 standard costs.