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**Working Group on the place of men and boys in gender equality  
policies and in policies to combat violence against women  
(WG-GEC-MB)**

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**Amendments proposed by Croatia and Denmark to the draft  
guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies  
and policies to combat violence against women**

**Second Working Group meeting, 28.06.2022**

CROATIA

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20/04/2022

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION  
(GEC)**

**Amendments submitted by Croatia to the**

**WORKING DOCUMENT**

**With a view to drawing up guidelines on  
the place of men and boys in gender equality policies  
and policies to combat violence against women**

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been growing debate in recent years on the places of men and boys in gender equality policies and on which policies might better address their roles, while ensuring pursuit by all of the main goal, namely to secure respect for women's rights and achieve gender equality.

As part of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, **the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) wished to look more closely into the place of boys and men in gender equality policies.** Accordingly, a Study was prepared in 2021 by independent experts to inform the GEC's work, drawing on an overview of activities and experience at national and international level on the issue of involving men and boys in the promotion of gender equality and on the Council of Europe's existing standards and policies.

The expert **Study on the places of men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies** was presented to the GEC at its plenary session of 14 April 2021 and then approved by it. The Study identifies three distinct and sometimes overlapping places occupied by men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies: as barriers to gender equality (place 1), as agents of change towards gender equality (place 2) and as collateral victims of male domination (place 3).

To support these policies and ensure that they contribute overall to gender equality and to women's rights, the Study made six recommendations:

Recommendation 1. Ensure that the main aims of measures related to "men, boys and gender equality" are indeed the realisation of women's rights and gender equality;

Recommendation 2. Engage men – especially those in positions of power – to act for structural changes towards substantive equality;

Recommendation 3. Strengthen gender mainstreaming in all public policies to ensure that differences between women and men, and girls and boys, are taken into account;

Recommendation 4. Address the global threat posed by anti-feminist and/or anti-gender "men's rights movements";

Recommendation 5. Co-operate with and strengthen support for women's and feminist organisations;

Recommendation 6. Support the development of research on gender/women's studies.

Following the exploratory "Study on the places of boys and men in gender equality policies", the Gender Equality Commission was instructed by the Committee of Ministers, to draw up and submit, **by the end of 2022, Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women** for adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

## DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE PLACE OF MEN AND BOYS IN GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND POLICIES TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### Preamble

1. The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,
2. Recalling that gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy and good governance, respect for the rule of law and the promotion of well-being for all; that it entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation in all spheres of public and private life; and that it implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men, as set out in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023;
3. Recalling that there are still structural obstacles preventing the full realisation of gender equality and women's rights in the society, that violence against women remains the most widespread violation of women's human rights; that political activities and public decision-making remain male-dominated areas and that women continue to carry a large share of unpaid care work, which impacts their access to work, decision-making and other opportunities;
4. Considering that the issue of gender equality concerns society as a whole, that both men and women have a stake in it and that men have a major role to play in eradicating violence against women and gender-based discrimination and inequality, and that their involvement in building an egalitarian society is of medium and long-term benefit to women and men, and society as a whole.
5. Considering that the issue of "boys, men and gender equality" has had increased visibility in recent years, and taking into account the need to provide a policy framework for measures in this area, based on existing standards and policies;
6. Having regard to:
  - the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5, 1950),
  - the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35, 1961, revised in 1996, ETS No. 163);
  - the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197, 2005);
  - the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention", 2011),
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism;
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media;
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms;
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education;
  - Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence;

- Recommendation No. R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language;
  - The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023;
7. Considering relevant United Nations instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (“CEDAW”, 1979) and its Optional Protocol (1999), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, and the Report “Review of promising practices and lessons learned, existing strategies and United Nations and other initiatives to engage men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in the context of eliminating violence against women” adopted by the General Assembly in 2018;
  8. Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated and reinforced existing gender inequalities while generating new forms of disadvantage and exclusion;
  9. Stressing that men and women as groups are diverse and that this diversity related to race, colour, language, [education](#), religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity [and expression](#), age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status needs to be taken into account in measures related to the place of boys and men in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women.
  10. [Recognizing that unequal power relations are based on how patriarchy is privileging men and boys and oppressing women and girls.](#)
  11. Recognising that the individual and collective conduct of men and boys is crucial for the full achievement of women’s rights and gender equality, and their actions or inaction can slow down or reverse progress towards equality, and that men and boys must become agents of change, with men in positions of power having a particular responsibility in this regard;
  12. Noting that some men and boys may be “collateral victims” of persisting gender inequalities and of gender norms and stereotypes, particularly as victims of violence by other men, or when adopting behaviour that can be prejudicial to themselves;
  13. [Stressing the importance of moving forward from stereotyped picture of woman as victims and men as powerful and violent, and recognize vulnerabilities of both genders.](#)
  14. Affirming that the ultimate aim of reflections and measures on the place of men and boys in women’s rights and gender equality is to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and to achieve gender equality in society, including by transforming discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes and promoting non-violent, respectful and equal gender relations:
  15. Adopts the following Guidelines to serve as a practical framework for the member States to assist them in strengthening policies and measures on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women;

16. Recognizing that higher degree of gender equality will reduce pressure on men to conform to rigid forms of masculinity, which will improve quality of life of men and boys, and thus of women and girls.
17. Invites member States to:
  - ensure that these guidelines are widely disseminated with a view to their implementation by all relevant authorities,
  - assess progress in their implementation and inform the competent Council of Europe steering committee(s) of the measures undertaken and the progress achieved in this field.

### Objectives, scope and purpose of the Guidelines

18. The aim of these Guidelines is to establish fundamental principles to be taken into account by member States when drawing up legislation, policies and other measures relating to the place of boys and men in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women and to suggest practical measures and policies to member States in this regard.
19. The Guidelines form part of the process of implementation of the rights and principles enshrined in European and international conventions, standards and policies concerning women's rights and gender equality, in the context of continuous risks of backlashes in this area, including as a result of the threats which "men's rights" and/or anti-gender movements pose to the realisation of the fundamental rights of all men and women.

### Fundamental principles

20. "Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life. It also implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men" (Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023). The aim of gender equality policies is to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to promote substantive gender equality, including by empowering women.
21. These policies should comply with international standards and criteria and the relevant instruments of the Council of Europe and should adopt a dual approach: (1) specific measures to promote women's rights, including positive action; and (2) the implementation of a gender mainstreaming perspective in all policies and measures.
22. Measures to involve men and boys in gender equality policies must pursue this aim and not constitute an alternative policy objective to strengthen men's and boys' rights in isolation, without challenging structural gender inequalities.
23. Measures regarding men and boys should take account of the combined effects of systems of exclusion, and disadvantage linked to aspects other than sex and gender, such as race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association

with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status. This means taking an intersectional approach.

24. Measures concerning men and boys should address the fact that violence against women is perpetrated primarily by men, and that they therefore have a particular role in the prevention of such violence. Special attention should be given to those provisions of the Istanbul Convention that address the role of men and boys; particularly in the area of prevention, including as decision-makers, role models, agents of change and advocates for equality between women and men; and speaking out against violence.
25. Measures involving men and boys should not call into question the legitimacy of gender equality policies primarily targeting girls and women or the specific approaches of feminist movements that provide for female-only spaces for women and women-focused programmes. Measures should acknowledge the leading role of women and girls in making progress towards gender equality.
26. Member States should guarantee that additional funding is allocated to measures involving men and boys, without diverting existing resources allocated to promote women's rights and support women's empowerment and leadership, and should ensure that regular assessments are carried out of action taken in terms of achieving gender equality and strengthening women's and girls' rights.
27. Measures involving men and boys should not have a negative impact on the visibility and funding of women's NGOs; opportunities and resources assigned to promoting women's rights and combating violence against women should not be compromised by them.
28. Measures involving men and boys should be designed in consultation with women's NGOs active in combating gender inequalities and violence against women and girls.
29. Legislation, policies and other measures adopted by member States should be evidence-based and reflect current, relevant and accurate scientific data in the area of women's rights and gender equality.
30. Measures should adopt transformative approach to gender relations – masculinity and femininity – and take into the account combined systems of domination at the intersections of which individuals may find themselves.

### Proposed measures for member States

31. Member States may devise the following types of measures according to the objective being pursued: (1) measures focusing on countering resistance to gender equality and on men and boys becoming allies; (2) measures focusing on men and boys as agents of change for the realisation of women's rights and gender equality; (3) measures to reduce the negative impacts of gender inequalities on men and boys; (4) measures to engage men and



boys in action to combat violence against women; (5) measures promoting the development and dissemination of scientific research and data on gender inequalities and women's rights.

32. Member States should also ensure the full application of relevant provisions of different Committee of Ministers recommendations to member States, including Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education, Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence and Recommendation No. R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language.

#### **I. Measures focusing on countering resistance to gender equality and on men and boys becoming allies**

33. The gendered division of paid and unpaid work, in particular the persistent unequal share of unpaid care work between women and men is a significant obstacle to gender equality and the involvement of men in care activities an important aspect in transforming gender roles and relations. Before the Covid-19 outbreak, women in the EU spent 13 hours more than men every week on unpaid care and housework. Effective and proactive strategies, policies, and programmes are needed to involve men in care and other unpaid work. In parallel, tackling entrenched gender norms and stereotypes is crucial in addressing the low participation of men in care activities.
34. Regressive or reactionary ideologies and social movements that oppose gender equality principles and feminism as well as misogynist online spaces – including “men's rights” and anti-gender movements – are a growing concern for stakeholders in women's rights and gender equality policies, including for organisations which specialise in involving men in promoting these rights and policies. Improved knowledge and forums are needed exchange views on these reactionary counter-movements and the threats that they constitute for democracy and human rights, and to devise appropriate countering measures.

The governments of member States should adopt the following measures:

35. Address gender stereotypical career choices through the development of innovative pedagogical tools, materials and activities for teachers and career guidance counsellors, in order to eliminate gender stereotypical expectations and choices among girls and boys.
36. Take measures to encourage more men to choose careers in care, including recruitment campaigns targeting boys and young men, educational scholarships for men in health-related and social care related degrees, and increasing the visibility of male role models in the sector. Specific targets should be set to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of measures.

37. Develop working environments conducive to private and family responsibilities and to the redistribution of unpaid care work among women and men. Such measures may include:
- introducing paternity leave at 100% compensation,
  - introducing non-transferable paid parental leave and care leave for other dependants,
  - ensuring the availability of flexible working arrangements for both women and men,
  - reviewing tax systems so that they contribute to an equal share of care responsibilities between women and men.
38. Carry out awareness-raising and media campaigns to increase the understanding of unpaid care work and gender stereotypes, including issues related to masculinities and femininities among the general public but targeting men and boys specifically.
39. Ensure that diverse and non-stereotypical portrayals of parenthood are being disseminated, including in educational materials and through the media. This can also be achieved through ensuring that public communication and family policy measures target both parents in a non-stereotypical manner.
40. Ensure that policies and measures itself do not have stereotypical impact on lived realities of the care-work.
41. Adopt systematic approaches and mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and report the impact of measures on engaging men and boys, particularly in the areas of unpaid care work and social norms and gender stereotypes. The private sector and the media can be key partners in these efforts.
42. Take measures to raise awareness and promote the development of critical thinking among men and boys in relation to sexism in the substance, language and illustrations of online and offline content such as toys, comics, books, television programming, video and other games, online content and films, including pornography.
43. Implement measures to encourage all members of society, especially men and boys, to abandon sexist behaviour and harmful gender stereotypes and to adopt respectful and healthy behaviours, notably in the digital sphere, especially towards young women and girls, women journalists, politicians, public figures and women’s human rights defenders.
44. Take measures to better identify and decipher the opposition to gender equality by “men’s rights” and anti-gender movements, including online misogynist spaces in order to limit their power to recruit, cause harm, better prevent violence, and implement preventative interventions.
45. Encourage the organisation of public lectures, conferences and awareness raising campaigns to deconstruct preconceived ideas and caricatures about feminist movements and to increase public knowledge and awareness on “men’s rights” and anti-gender movements and their impact on democracy, public debate and gender equality policies.

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46. Invite bodies working on anti-terrorism at national level to mainstream gender equality in their activities, focusing in particular on the links between violent “men’s rights” and anti-gender movements (incels, etc.) and terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These links are increasingly apparent, and some have been officially recognised. This is the case for example with the bombing in Toronto in 2018, which was reclassified by the Toronto Police Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as a terrorist act inspired by the misogynistic incel ideology.

## II. Measures focusing on men and boys as agents of change for the realisation of women's rights and gender equality

47. "Political activities and public decision-making remain male-dominated areas. Men set political priorities, and political culture continues to be structured around male behaviour and life experience" (Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023). It is therefore particularly important to be able to improve the accountability of political leaders vis-à-vis the commitments they have made on women's rights and gender equality at all levels. Men in other areas, such as business and opinion leaders, can also play an important role to promote gender equality and women's rights through their decision-making power or resources.

The governments of member States should adopt the following measures:

48. Take measures to secure commitment at the highest level, both in the public and private sphere, to actively promote an institutional culture which rejects gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence, sexism and gender stereotypes in the public and private sector. Such measures could include:
  - the adoption and implementation of codes of conduct that contain sanctions and redress mechanisms, in order to eliminate discrimination, sexism and violence in diverse settings,
  - the adoption of concrete pledges or targets by men leaders related to gender balance, to the elimination of discrimination and to dedicating funding for gender equality issues,
  - the commitment not to participate in men-only public events or decision-making bodies.
49. Develop democratic and transparent monitoring mechanisms encouraging men in decision-making, including male heads of government and political parties, to report on action to implement national, European and international standards relating to gender equality and women's rights.
50. Create sustainable structures of consultation and partnerships with women and women's NGOs to enhance accountability and ensure their active inclusion in policies and initiatives on engaging men and boys in gender equality.
51. Take steps to foster non-toxic political leadership and to challenge the impact of dominant and violent types of masculinity in the public arena, including through research, awareness-raising and training.
52. Identify, encourage, and mobilize the voices of men in political decision-making, including politicians, party members and civil servants, in support of women's engagement in international relations, global processes of peace, reconciliation, and post-conflict reconstruction.
53. Develop and support targeted and focused training sessions for high-level political decision-makers, especially men, in human rights, gender equality and non-violence to

counter unconscious biases and raise awareness about remaining challenges and existing standards and to foster non-toxic political leadership. Encourage decision-makers to communicate about participating in such training and the commitment it entails, so as to foster peer participation.

54. Encourage and support the setting up of internal actions and compulsory training on gender equality, sexism and violence in the workplace, targeting particularly men and managers in private and public companies, and in public services.
55. In the context of government initiatives, issue clear public statements on why men and boys should be involved in gender equality strategies, and the reasons for men and boys to support gender equality.

### **III. Measures to reduce the negative impacts of gender inequalities on men and boys**

56. The proportion of early leavers from education and training in 2020 in the EU was 3.8 percentage points higher for young men (11.8 %) than for young women (8.0 %). However, figures on social inclusion and employment rates, and job quality indicators show that women in the EU remain at greater risk of social exclusion, unemployment and low-quality jobs. Thus, the long-term consequences and challenges of early school leaving are different for women and men and should be addressed separately.
57. Social norms also affect the health status of women and men differently. Women are less likely to engage in risky health behaviour and consequently face fewer of the related illnesses and disabilities as compared to men. Men also have substantial sexual and reproductive health needs, including the need for contraception, prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as cancers particular to men. Yet these needs are often unfulfilled due a combination of factors, including poor health-seeking behaviour among men. Comprehensive sexuality education has positive effects on both boys and girls, and can contribute to conveying strong messages in favour of equality between women and men, developing respectful social and sexual relationships, promoting non-stereotyped gender roles, and reducing risky behaviour, particularly among young men, in relation to sexual relationships, HIV and other STDs, and contraception.

The governments of the member States should adopt the following measures:

58. Introduce evidence-based policies and measures to combat school dropout rates and early school leaving, taking into account the gendered patterns at play, and adopt an intersectional approach to explore how gender may intersect with other factors, such as migration status and socio-economics.

59. Ensure that comprehensive sexuality education, including the notion of consent and responsible behaviour in intimate relationships is provided for by law, and that it is sufficiently resourced, mandatory and mainstreamed across the education system from early school years.
60. Regularly evaluate and revise sexuality education curricula, in order to ensure that they are accurate, evidence-based and meet the existing needs of both girls and boys.
61. Make visible the societal and financial costs of harmful, restrictive masculinity, in terms of perpetrating and being subjected to violence, risk taking behaviour, ill-health, suicide, and life dissatisfaction.
62. Implement evidence-based public policies, and develop adequate health promotion programmes, that respond to the needs of both women and men, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups.
63. Promote the inclusion of gender aspects of health in the training and continuing education of all professionals in the health and care sectors.
64. Design and implement evidence-based initiatives targeting men and boys, such as awareness raising campaigns and informational activities, to improve men's use of health care services, including mental health, cancer screening, vaccination, and sexual and reproductive health services.

#### IV. Measures to strengthen the role of men and boys in combating violence against women

65. Men and boys have an essential role to play in combating all forms of gender-based violence (that is the most comprehensive term) against women in their different roles, including as allies, witnesses and bystanders.
66. Impunity for perpetrators of acts of violence against women is still one of the major challenges to be addressed. The question of the effectiveness of sanctions as provided for in existing international standards, including the Istanbul Convention should be addressed in measures relating to men and gender equality.
67. Violence against women should also be an essential factor in determining child custody, as required by Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention, as domestic violence has a direct impact on children's lives. GREVIO, the monitoring mechanism of the Istanbul Convention has noted in several baseline reports<sup>2</sup> that parties tend to give priority to the presumed best interest of the child, which is deemed to be to maintain contact with both parents at all costs, regardless of the violence children have witnessed. Furthermore, the non-scientifically recognised concept of 'parental alienation' has been successfully

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<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe (2021), Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, Strasbourg.

instrumentalised by “men’s rights” movements and is often invoked to deny child custody to the mother and grant it to a father accused or convicted of domestic violence.

The governments of member States should adopt the following measures:

68. Develop and implement violence prevention initiatives and interventions focused on encouraging bystander intervention – specifically among men and boys – in both formal education and community-based education programmes as well as among the general public.
69. Develop and implement interventions in education that contribute to creating peer environments, especially among young men, in which they feel safe to open up, promote non-violent masculinity and assume responsibility for men’s violence against women, including as witnesses and bystanders.
70. Address impunity for gender-based and sexual violence against women by taking measures to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement in state responses to violence against women, promote accountability of state agencies, and set specific and time-bound targets for increased reporting and conviction rates for offences covered by the Istanbul Convention.
71. Take measures to increase the levels of attendance of perpetrator programmes for domestic violence and sexual violence. This can be achieved by integrating referrals to perpetrator programmes into the criminal justice system as a tool to reduce recidivism, while ensuring that such referrals do not replace prosecution, conviction or sentencing.
72. Provide court appointed professionals, including health professionals, with systematic and mandatory initial and ongoing training on the different forms of violence, including the effects of such violence on victims and child victims and witnesses, in order to enable them to provide expert advice in legal proceedings concerning child visitation/custody rights.
73. Raise awareness among relevant professionals on the absence of scientific grounds for so-called “parental alienation syndrome”, and consider banning its use in court proceedings on the determination of custody and visitation rights.
74. Develop integrated and co-ordinated strategies to address the demand that fosters the trafficking and exploitation of women and girls, including conducting public surveys on the number and percentage of the population of men who have purchased sex, and through awareness raising and information campaigns targeting men and boys.
75. Encourage different stakeholders such as sports and cultural institutions, public services including transportation, commercial centres, restaurants, bars to develop communication and information campaigns targeting men and boys on the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence at all intersections.

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**V. Development and dissemination of scientific research and data on gender inequality and women's rights**

76. Sex- and gender- disaggregated data is still often not available across policy sectors. Accurate and comparable data is essential in assessing the scale and nature of gender inequalities and identifying those most affected, as well as how such gender inequalities intersect with other forms of discrimination. Robust data enables governments to better design, adapt, monitor and evaluate policies.
77. In addition, there is strong evidence in literature and statistics that research and higher education institutions reproduce social values leading to gender inequalities and that unconscious or implicit bias may impede objective research design and analysis. Such research bias leads to data being manipulated by "men's rights movements" and "anti-gender movements" to undermine progress on women's rights and gender equality.

The governments of the member States should adopt the following measures:

78. Promote gender equality in scientific research, as well as the integration of a gender dimension in research methodology and analysis, ensuring that such analyses are used and disseminated appropriately and feed into policies and measures to promote gender equality.
79. Promote scientific research that includes an intersectional approach to gender inequalities, by including other demographic variables in the research methodology, such as age, social origin, ethnicity, migration status, disability, civil status, or income level, in order to inform policy measures.
80. Build institutional capacity to collect robust and reliable sex-disaggregated data across policy sectors and allocate adequate funding to those bodies and organisations that collect such data, including national statistical offices and research institutes carrying out large scale surveys, as well as equality bodies, other public institutions and civil society organisations that carry out targeted surveys on the needs and experiences of women and girls, and men and boys.
81. Systematically collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data on the distribution of unpaid care work, including through time-use surveys at regular intervals, in order to better understand and monitor changes in men's and women's unpaid care work and their links with policies and programmes.
82. Conduct assessments at regular intervals of the economic value of unpaid care work as a percentage of GDP and disseminate widely, [as for example carried out in the Republic of Serbia.]
83. Initiate, support and fund research on boys' and men's perceptions of women's rights and gender equality in order to inform equality policy stakeholders and raise public awareness,



particularly among men, about both the pace of change and the diverse attitudes of men with regard to women's rights and gender equality.

84. Initiate, fund, and support research on the interrelations between sex-related biological differences and socio-economic and cultural factors that affect the behaviour of women and men and their access to health services, to allow evidence-based interventions and gender sensitive policies.
85. Promote gender-sensitive language and communication, for example by producing training material and tools as provided for in relevant recommendations of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to member States.

## Reporting and evaluation

86. These Guidelines ask member States to monitor progress in their implementation and to inform the competent steering committee(s) of the measures taken and progress achieved.
87. Reporting should be regular and include information on:
  - policies, measures, programmes and best practices that address the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women,
  - research undertaken and supported to provide data on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women, as well as the outcomes of any such research,
  - national awareness-raising measures and campaigns undertaken at all levels, including regarding the media through which they were conducted.

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## Key concepts

88. The terms "**masculinity/masculinities**" and "**femininity/femininities**" can be used to describe the range of behaviours, psychological features, social roles and practices which are assigned to men or women in a given culture at a given time. Masculinity and femininity are social constructs, which reflect a desire to differentiate between women and men, often leading to unequal power relations and gender inequalities. The economic, social, cultural and political structures that sustain, reproduce and reinforce masculine and feminine norms and roles constitute the "gender system".
89. "**Feminism**" can be defined as one or several social movements whose aim is to end sexism, gender discrimination, and violence against women, and achieve full equality between women and men in law and in practice.
90. The terms "**men's rights movements**" and "**anti-gender movements**" are used to describe regressive or reactionary ideologies and social movements that oppose women's rights and

gender equality and consider that disproportionate attention, action and resources have been dedicated to women and their rights to the detriment of men and their rights. These movements are diverse and range from “fathers’ rights” movements, initiatives highlighting men’s education and health issues, to more violent online and offline movements. Such movements have a great capacity to espouse conceptual and societal and technological developments and trends in order to adjust their discourse, operating ground and methods. These movements have driven the backlash against women’s rights and gender equality and are often well funded and organised.

91. The so-called “**crisis of masculinity**” can be defined as the confusion that some men claim to experience because of progresses towards gender equality and women’s improved position in society, and the resulting changes in societal norms. This concept, which dates back to the 1960s, has helped to fuel “men’s rights” and anti-gender movements, and calls into question the benefits of gender equality in society.
92. The concept of the “**cost of male domination**” can be understood as the negative consequences caused by male domination for men and society, linked for example to suppressing emotions and affection and rewarding risky behaviour. The concept is often manipulated by “men’s rights movements” to obscure the position and privileges of men in society.
93. The concept of “**male privilege**” can be defined as a system of advantages and rights – whether recognized/conscious or not – associated with the male sex, such as a greater feeling of security and bodily autonomy (less exposure to sexual violence), legitimacy and confidence (in conversations), more and easier access to work opportunities and material resources (power, money, property), and greater freedom (occupation of public space, availability of free time).
94. The concept of “patriarchy” can be defined as

**Commented [M2]:** I did some research on the concept of “patriarchy” in international human rights documents and only CEDAW Committee mentions patriarchy in its concluding observations in relation to Article 5. However, its interpretation has been very narrow considering patriarchy as “harmful traditional practices” or “cultural practices”. For that I see as important, if we decide to have definition in the Guidelines, to define the concept clearly.

DENMARK

Jepp Holm Nielsen and Kira Appel

22/04/2022

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022

**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION  
(GEC)**

**Amendments submitted by Denmark to the**

**WORKING DOCUMENT**

**With a view to drawing up guidelines on  
the place of men and boys in gender equality policies  
and policies to combat violence against women**

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been growing debate in recent years on the places of men and boys in gender equality policies and on which policies might better address their roles, while ensuring pursuit by all of the main goal, namely to ensure gender equality and women and girls' rights and achieve gender equality.

As part of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, **the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) wished to look more closely into the place of boys and men in gender equality policies.** Accordingly, a Study was prepared in 2021 by independent experts to inform the GEC's work, drawing on an overview of activities and experience at national and international level on the issue of involving men and boys in the promotion of gender equality and on the Council of Europe's existing standards and policies.

The expert **Study on the places of men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies** was presented to the GEC at its plenary session of 14 April 2021 and then approved by it. The Study identifies three distinct and sometimes overlapping places occupied by men and boys in women's rights and gender equality policies: as barriers to gender equality (place 1), as agents of change towards gender equality (place 2) and as collateral victims of male domination (place 3).

To support these policies and ensure that they contribute overall to gender equality and to women's rights, the Study made six recommendations:

Recommendation 1. Ensure that the main aims of measures related to "men, boys and gender equality" are indeed the realisation of women's rights and gender equality;

Recommendation 2. Engage men – especially those in positions of power – to act for structural changes towards substantive equality;

Recommendation 3. Strengthen gender mainstreaming in all public policies to ensure that differences between women and men, and girls and boys, are taken into account;

Recommendation 4. Address the global threat posed by anti-feminist and/or anti-gender "men's rights movements";

Recommendation 5. Co-operate with and strengthen support for women's and feminist organisations;

Recommendation 6. Support the development of research on gender/women's studies.

Following the exploratory "Study on the places of boys and men in gender equality policies", the Gender Equality Commission was instructed by the Committee of Ministers, to draw up and submit, **by the end of 2022, Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women** for adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

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2) Suggest streamlining "and girls" to match "men AND boys".

## DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE PLACE OF MEN AND BOYS IN GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND POLICIES TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### Preamble

1. The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,
2. Recalling that gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy and good governance, respect for the rule of law and the promotion of well-being for all; that it entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation in all spheres of public and private life; and that it implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men, as set out in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023;
3. Recalling that there are still structural obstacles preventing the full realisation of gender equality and women's rights in the society, that violence against women remains the most widespread violation of women's human rights; that political activities and public decision-making remain male-dominated areas and that women continue to carry a large share of unpaid care work, which impacts their access to work, decision-making and other opportunities;
4. Considering that the issue of gender equality concerns society as a whole, that both men and women have a stake in it and that men have a major role to play in eradicating violence against women and gender-based discrimination and inequality, and that their involvement in building an egalitarian society is of medium and long-term benefit to women and men, and society as a whole.
5. Recognising that men and boys are key actors for ensuring gender equality and women's and girl's rights as well as beneficiaries of gender equality policies in their own right.
6. Taking into account the need to provide a policy framework for measures in this area, based on existing standards and policies;
7. Having regard to:
  - the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5, 1950),
  - the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35, 1961, revised in 1996, ETS No. 163);
  - the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197, 2005);
  - the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, "Istanbul Convention", 2011),
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism;

#### Commented [TJHN2]: General comment:

We need to stress the connection between violence against men and violence against women. It is empirically proved that these issues should be treated in conjunction and not separately.

Furthermore, violence, which is predominately perpetrated by men, is in part a result of gender stereotypes and the lack of positive male figures in many boys' upbringing. Combatting men's gender inequalities in terms of negative social norms and cultural and structural barriers for involving themselves in their child's upbringing is instrumental in preventing interpersonal violence against both women and men.

"Men's violence against women and men are interrelated, but most of the interventions are developed and conducted separately. This leads to less effective results than addressing them simultaneously. Preventing and reducing violence requires that the reasons for violence and the influence of gender norms, including norms and social constructions of masculinity, be addressed (Fleming et al., 2015). By not addressing social norms, initiatives run the risk of treating the symptoms and not the underlying inequalities" (WHO 2018, 88)

#### Commented [TJHN3]: Important with this duality

~~Deleted:~~ Considering that the issue of "boys, men and gender equality" has had increased visibility in recent years, and t

**Commented [TJHN4]:** Combatting boys, men and gender equality is a good in itself. It should not be primarily motivated on the basis of increased visibility.

Addressing men's gender equality will help promote gender equality for everyone both as a results of the structural mediation between the gendered issues that concern men and women respectively, and as a result of increased and persistent support from men by engaging them and their gender-specific problems in the overarching struggle for gender equality.

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media;
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms;
  - Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education;
  - Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence;
  - Recommendation No. R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language;
  - The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023;
8. Considering relevant United Nations instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (“CEDAW”, 1979) and its Optional Protocol (1999), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, and the Report “Review of promising practices and lessons learned, existing strategies and United Nations and other initiatives to engage men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in the context of eliminating violence against women” adopted by the General Assembly in 2018;
9. Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated and reinforced existing gender inequalities while generating new forms of disadvantage and exclusion;
10. Stressing that men and women as groups are diverse and that this diversity related to race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status needs to be taken into account in measures related to the place of boys and men in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women.
11. Recognising that the individual and collective conduct of men and boys is crucial for the full achievement of women’s rights and gender equality, and their actions or inaction can slow down or reverse progress towards equality, and that men and boys must become agents of change, with men in positions of power having a particular responsibility in this regard;
12. Recognising that men and boys are also subject to traditional masculine ideals, that limit their opportunities in education, career, care work, parenting, etc., and that men and boys are socialized into gender stereotypes that promote violence, poor awareness of health, substance abuse, homelessness, and higher risks of suicide.
13. Affirming that the ultimate aim of reflections and measures on the place of men and boys in women’s rights and gender equality is to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and to achieve gender equality in society, including by transforming discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes and promoting non-violent, respectful and equal gender relations:
14. Adopts the following Guidelines to serve as a practical framework for the member States to assist them in strengthening policies and measures on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women;

**Commented [TJHN5]:** We fully support the intention of this para.  
We would like to know the source of the listing – normally we use a treaty based listing and hence ethnicity instead of color/race – but if it is CoE agreed language it is fine.

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**Deleted:** Noting that some men and boys may be “collateral victims” of persisting gender inequalities and of gender norms and stereotypes, particularly as victims of violence by other men, or when adopting behaviour that can be prejudicial to themselves;

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15. Invites member States to:

- ensure that these guidelines are widely disseminated with a view to their implementation by all relevant authorities,
- assess progress in their implementation and inform the competent Council of Europe steering committee(s) of the measures undertaken and the progress achieved in this field.

### Objectives, scope and purpose of the Guidelines

16. The aim of these Guidelines is to **promote** fundamental principles to be taken into account by member States when drawing up legislation, policies and other measures relating to the place of boys and men in gender equality policies **and policies to combat violence against women** and to suggest practical measures and policies to member States in this regard.

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17. The Guidelines form part of the process of implementation of the rights and principles enshrined in European and international conventions, standards and policies concerning **women's rights and gender equality**, in the context of continuous risks of backlashes in this area, including as a result of the threats which **"men's rights"** and/or **anti-gender movements** pose to the realisation of the fundamental rights of all men and women.

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**Commented [TJHN9]:** Needs clearer definition as not all "men's rights" movements are anti-feminist.

Suggest replacing with "anti gender equality or anti feminist movements" through the text

### Fundamental principles

18. "Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life. It also implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men" (Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023). **The aim of gender equality policies is to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to promote substantive gender equality, including by empowering women.**

**Commented [TZWBH10]:** Gender equality for men is also a good in itself. Stress this or the intersection between women and men's gender equality

19. **These policies must comply with international standards and criteria and the relevant instruments of the Council of Europe and should adopt a dual approach: (1) specific measures to promote women's rights, including positive action; and (2) the implementation of a gender mainstreaming perspective in all policies and measures.**

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21. Measures regarding men and boys should take account of the combined effects of systems of exclusion, and disadvantage linked to aspects **such as race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.** **This means taking an intersectional approach.**

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22. Measures concerning men and boys should address the fact that violence against women is perpetrated primarily by men, and that they therefore have a particular role in the prevention of such violence. Special attention should be given to those provisions of the



Istanbul Convention that address the role of men and boys; particularly in the area of prevention, including as decision-makers, role models, agents of change and advocates for equality between women and men; and speaking out against violence.

23. Measures involving men and boys should supplement gender equality policies primarily targeting girls and women as well as the specific approaches of feminist movements that provide for female-only spaces for women and women-focused programmes.
24. Member States should guarantee that additional funding is allocated to measures involving men and boys, without diverting existing resources allocated to promote women's rights and support women's empowerment and leadership, and should ensure that regular assessments are carried out of action taken in terms of achieving gender equality and strengthening women's and girls' rights.
25. Measures involving men and boys should not have a negative impact on the visibility and funding of women's NGOs; opportunities and resources assigned to promoting women's rights and combating violence against women should not be compromised.
26. Measures involving men and boys should be designed in consultation with men's and women's NGOs active in combating gender inequalities and violence against women and girls.
27. Legislation, policies and other measures adopted by member States should be evidence-based and reflect current, relevant and accurate scientific data in the area of women's rights and gender equality.

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### Proposed measures for member States

28. Member States may devise the following types of measures according to the objective being pursued: (1) measures focusing on countering resistance to gender equality and on men and boys becoming allies; (2) measures focusing on men and boys as agents of change for the realisation of women's rights and gender equality; (3) measures to reduce the negative impacts of gender inequalities on men and boys; (4) measures to engage men and boys in action to combat violence against women; (5) measures promoting the development and dissemination of scientific research and data on gender inequalities and women's rights.
29. Member States should also ensure the full application of relevant provisions of different Committee of Ministers recommendations to member States, including Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 on gender equality and media, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education, Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence and Recommendation No. R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language.

## I. Measures focusing on countering resistance to gender equality and on men and boys becoming allies

30. The gendered division of paid and unpaid work, in particular the persistent unequal share of unpaid care work between women and men is a significant obstacle to gender equality and the involvement of men in care activities an important aspect in transforming gender roles and relations. Before the Covid-19 outbreak, women in the EU spent 13 hours more than men every week on unpaid care and housework. Effective and proactive strategies, policies, and programmes are needed to involve men in care and other unpaid work. In parallel, tackling entrenched gender norms and stereotypes is crucial in addressing the low participation of men in care activities.

31. Regressive or reactionary ideologies and social movements that oppose gender equality principles and feminism as well as misogynist online spaces – including anti-gender movements – are a growing concern for stakeholders in women's rights and gender equality policies. Improved knowledge and forums are needed exchange views on these reactionary counter-movements and the threats that they constitute for democracy and human rights, and to devise appropriate countering measures.

The governments of member States are encouraged to take the following measures:

32. Address gender stereotypical career choices through the development of innovative pedagogical tools, materials and activities for teachers and career guidance counsellors, in order to eliminate gender stereotypical expectations and behaviours among girls and boys.

33. Take measures to encourage more men to choose careers in care, including through inter alia; recruitment campaigns targeting boys and young men, educational scholarships for men in health-related and social care related degrees, and increasing the visibility of male role models in the sector. Specific targets should be set to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of measures.

34. Develop working environments conducive to the equal sharing of work-life responsibilities and to the redistribution of unpaid care work among women and men. Such measures may include:

- non-transferable paid parental leave and care leave for other dependants,
- the availability of flexible working arrangements for both women and men,
- reviewing tax systems so that they contribute to an equal share of care responsibilities between women and men.

35. Carry out awareness-raising and media campaigns to increase the understanding of unpaid care work and gender stereotypes, including issues related to masculinities and femininities among the general public but targeting men and boys specifically.

36. Ensure that diverse and non-stereotypical portrayals of parenthood are being disseminated, including in educational materials and through the media. This can also be

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achieved through ensuring that public communication and family policy measures target parents in a non-stereotypical manner.

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37. Adopt systematic approaches and mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and report the impact of measures on engaging men and boys, particularly in the areas of unpaid care work, negative social norms and gender stereotypes. The private sector and the media can be key partners in these efforts.

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38. Take measures to raise awareness and promote the development of critical thinking among men and boys in relation to sexism in the substance, language and illustrations of online and offline content such as toys, comics, books, television programming, video and other games, online content and films, including pornography.

Commented [TZWBH20]: Why does this need to be specified to certain types of media? A critical thinking among men and boys should be cultivated in all aspects of life and not just in media consumption. If not there needs to be some sort of theoretical reason or empirical evidence for the primacy of media.

39. Implement measures to encourage all members of society, especially men and boys, to abandon sexist behaviour and gender stereotypes and to adopt respectful and healthy behaviours, notably in the digital sphere, especially towards young women and girls, women journalists, politicians, public figures and women’s human rights defenders.

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40. Take measures to better identify and decipher the opposition to gender equality by anti-gender movements, including online misogynist spaces in order to limit their power to recruit, cause harm, better prevent violence, and implement preventative interventions.

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41. Encourage the organisation of public lectures, conferences and awareness raising campaigns to deconstruct preconceived ideas and caricatures about feminist movements and to increase public knowledge and awareness on anti-gender movements and their impact on democracy, public debate and gender equality policies.

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42. Invite bodies working on anti-terrorism at national level to mainstream gender equality in their activities, focusing in particular on the links between violent anti-gender movements and terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These links are increasingly apparent, and some have been officially recognised. This is the case for example with the bombing in Toronto in 2018, which was reclassified by the Toronto Police Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as a terrorist act inspired by the misogynistic incel ideology.

## II. Measures focusing on men and boys as agents of change for the realisation of women's rights and gender equality

43. "Political activities and public decision-making remain male-dominated areas. Men set political priorities, and political culture continues to be structured around male behaviour and life experience" (Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023). It is therefore particularly important to be able to improve the accountability of political leaders vis-à-vis the commitments they have made on women's rights and gender equality at all levels. Men play an important role to promote gender equality and women's rights through their decision-making power or resources.

The governments of member States are encouraged to take the following measures:

44. Take measures to increase commitment at the highest level, both in the public and private sphere, to actively promote an institutional culture which rejects gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexism and gender stereotypes in the public and private sector. Such measures could include:

- the adoption and implementation of codes of conduct that contain sanctions and redress mechanisms, in order to eliminate discrimination, sexism and violence in diverse settings,
- the adoption of concrete pledges or targets by men leaders related to promote gender balance in the workplace, to eliminate discrimination and to dedicate funding for gender equality issues,
- the commitment not to participate in men-only public events or decision-making bodies.

45. Develop transparent monitoring mechanisms encouraging men in decision-making, including male heads of government and political parties, to report on action to implement national, European and international standards relating to gender equality and women's rights.

46. Create sustainable structures of consultation and partnerships with men's and women's NGOs to enhance accountability and ensure their active inclusion in policies and initiatives on engaging men and boys in gender equality.

47. Take steps to foster non-toxic political leadership and to challenge the impact of dominant and violent types of masculinity in the public arena, including through research, awareness-raising and training.

48. Identify, encourage, and mobilize the voices of men in political decision-making, including politicians, party members and civil servants, in support of gender equality and women's engagement, including in international relations, global processes of peace, reconciliation, and post-conflict reconstruction.

49. Develop and support targeted and focused training sessions for high-level political decision-makers, especially men, in human rights, gender equality and non-violence to counter unconscious biases and raise awareness about challenges and existing bias and to

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Commented [TZWBH26]: If we are stressing the need for engagement of men in power, it should be specified elsewhere that there should be developed a broad engagement of men based on the mutual enforcing ideals of democratic participation and gender equality.

The wave of anti-gender equality movements is a self-evident example for the need to engage and include all men in process towards gender equality. Otherwise, marginalised men risk being pushed towards these groups as a result of an exclusive approach towards men and boys issues of gender equality.

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foster non-toxic political leadership. Encourage decision-makers to communicate about participating in such training and the commitment it entails, so as to foster peer participation.

50. Encourage and support the setting up of internal actions and compulsory training on gender equality, [sexual harassment](#), sexism and violence in the workplace, targeting particularly men and managers in private and public companies, and in public services.
51. In the context of government initiatives, issue clear public statements on why men and boys should be involved in gender equality strategies, and the reasons for men and boys to support gender equality.

### III. **Measures to reduce the negative impacts of gender inequalities on men and boys**

[52. Men are statistically overrepresented at the top of society in for example, management. They are, however, also overrepresented and at the bottom of society, for example when it comes to health and social problems. Especially the unskilled and single men are challenged; they die earlier, earn less and have fewer children. Men thus also need special gender equality initiatives, \*inter alia\* when it comes to health, fathers' access to paternity leave and the education of boys and young men.](#)

53. The proportion of early leavers from education and training in 2020 in the EU was 3.8 percentage points higher for young men (11.8 %) than for young women (8.0 %). [Inequality in education is closely correlated with a long range other inequalities including health, gender-segregated jobs, risk of loneliness and childlessness, poverty, etc. The rate at which boys are falling behind in education therefore speaks of persistent problems in meeting the pedagogical needs of boys alongside with mitigating the negative effects of social inheritance that affect girls and boys differently.<sup>2</sup>](#)

[54. Men are predominately the victims and perpetrators of interpersonal violence. The estimated homicides rates are more than twice as high for men as for women in the WHO European Region.<sup>3</sup> Young men are especially at risk of suffering violence in the streets. Furthermore, the normalization of violence between men is foundational for men's violence against women<sup>4</sup>. Therefore the socio-economic conditions and gender stereotypes that further violence between men constitute serious issues of gender equality not only for men but for women as well. Men's violence against women and](#)

<sup>2</sup> Esping-Andersen, G. (2004). "Untying the Gordian knot of social inheritance" in *Research in social stratification and mobility*, 21(1), 115-138.

<sup>3</sup> WHO (2020). Global health estimates 2019: Estimates of rate of homicides (per 100 000 population) [online database]. Geneva: World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/estimates-of-rates-of-homicides-per-100-000-population>).

<sup>4</sup> WHO (2018). *The health and well-being of men in the WHO European Region: better health through a gender approach*. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.

**Commented [TJHN27]:** In general we find this section very flawed.

This section is on the issues where men can be beneficiaries of gender equality policies. It does not need qualifiers.

We should not mention women's problems here.

Some of the main male problems center around;  
Education  
Health  
Men's violence against men – although men are victims of violence from women as well as other men. Important to recognise that gender stereotypes also condone male violence against men.  
Men as care givers in the home and in the care sector

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**Deleted:** However, figures on social inclusion and employment rates, and job quality indicators show that women in the EU remain at greater risk of social exclusion, unemployment and low-quality jobs. Thus, the long-term consequences and challenges of early school leaving are different for women and men and should be addressed separately.

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men are interrelated, and measures against violence women and men will therefore benefit from being developed and conducted in tandem.

55. Men live on average shorter lives than women. The suicide rates for men are more than double that of women in the WHO European Region.<sup>5</sup> In addition, more men suffer from substance abuse and homelessness than women and men in general consistently report less unmet healthcare needs than women<sup>6</sup>. This highlights the need for recognizing gendered inequalities in health care policies, and stresses the need for combatting the traditional masculinities that promote risk-taking, poor health-seeking behavior, and expose men to violence.

56. Men are underrepresented in the role as caregiver both professionally and domestically. This both furthers the gender-segregated labour market and results in men having a poorer relationship with their children while disproportionately burdening women with unpaid care work. The involvement of men in caregiving can have positive effects that include better physical and mental health outcomes for the father, partner and their children.<sup>7</sup> There is therefore need for dismantling the institutional and cultural barrier that prevent men from taking on a large role as caregivers.

57. ▾

The governments of the member States are encouraged to take the following measures:

58. Introduce evidence-based policies and measures to combat **boy's** school dropout rates and early school leaving, taking into account the gendered patterns at play. **Include**, an intersectional approach to explore how gender may intersect with other factors, **by** addressing the specific problems that limit boys success in education coupled with an attentiveness to gender stereotypes, social inheritance, and the ways in which education contributes to the gender-segregated labour market.

59. Ensure that comprehensive sexuality education, including the notion of consent and responsible behaviour in intimate relationships is provided for by law, and that it is sufficiently resourced, mandatory and mainstreamed across the education system from early school years.

60. Regularly evaluate and revise sexuality education curricula, in order to ensure that they are accurate, evidence-based and meet the existing needs of both girls and boys.

61. Make visible the societal and financial costs of harmful, restrictive masculinity, in terms of perpetrating and being subjected to violence, risk taking behaviour, ill-health, suicide, and life dissatisfaction.

<sup>5</sup> WHO (2020). Global health estimates 2019: Age-standardized suicide rates (per 100 000 population) [online database]. Geneva: World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mental-health/suicide-rates?bookmarkId=19d5b47c-805e-4e81-97f3-63c7d11bd9b9>)

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat (2018). Health care activities statistics – consultations. Luxembourg: Eurostat ([http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Healthcare\\_activities\\_statistics\\_-\\_consultations](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Healthcare_activities_statistics_-_consultations)).

<sup>7</sup> WHO (2018). The health and well-being of men in the WHO European Region: better health through a gender approach. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.

**Deleted:** Social norms also affect the health status of women and men differently. Women are less likely to engage in risky health behaviour and consequently face fewer of the related illnesses and disabilities as compared to men. Men also have substantial sexual and reproductive health needs, including the need for contraception, prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as cancers particular to men. Yet these needs are often unfulfilled due a combination of factors, including poor health-seeking behaviour among men. Comprehensive sexuality education has positive effects on both boys and girls, and can contribute to conveying strong messages in favour of equality between women and men, developing respectful social and sexual relationships, promoting non-stereotyped gender roles, and reducing risky behaviour, particularly among young men, in relation to sexual relationships, HIV and other STDs, and contraception.

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**Commented [TZWBH28]:** There's a risk of confusing the correlation between education and health with causation. It is not given that higher education leads to better health since the causation might be reversed or even considered a spurious correlation. (see for instance European Journal of Public Health, Volume 25, Issue 6, December 2015, Pages 951–960, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckv111>)

Health education should be promoted to all boys regardless of their educational level or trajectory.

Although combatting school dropout is a good in itself, it should not be the primary measure for improving men and boys' health.

Instead, the intersectional approach towards promoting health and self-awareness of vulnerability in boys could be highlighted and specified.

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62. Implement evidence-based public policies, and develop adequate health promotion programmes, that respond to the needs of men, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups.

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63. Promote the inclusion of gender aspects of health in the training and continuing education of all professionals in the health and care sectors.

64. Design and implement evidence-based initiatives targeting men and boys, such as awareness raising campaigns and informational activities, to improve men's use of health care services, including mental health, cancer screening, vaccination, and sexual and reproductive health services.

65. Promote services that prevent violence through offering support, guidance, or professional treatment to men with a readiness for violence.

66. Ensure services for men who are victims of violence in the form of professional help, housing offers, trauma treatment, etc. that take into account the gendered stigma involved with seeking help.

67. Implement legislation and institutions that enable and promote men as care givers by, for instance, ensuring equal opportunities for parental leave and equal rights in the family.

68. Promote offers that target fathers by giving them equal opportunities in meeting with health professionals, socializing and exchanging experiences with other parents, and when communicating with public authorities regarding their children.

69.

#### IV. Measures to strengthen the role of men and boys in combating violence against women

70. Men and boys have an essential role to play in combating all forms of violence against women in their different roles, including as allies, witnesses and bystanders.

71. Recognise that not all men and boys are perpetrators and that they are key actors for changing violent behaviours and negative social norms as well as gender stereotypes condoning violence against women.

72. Impunity for perpetrators of acts of violence against women is still one of the major challenges to be addressed. The question of the effectiveness of sanctions as provided for in existing international standards, including the Istanbul Convention should be addressed in measures relating to men and gender equality.

Commented [TZWBH29]: Consider adding more concrete and positive pointers for combatting violence against women:

Supportive and nonviolent parenting has been shown to be effective in reducing male aggression, risktaking and risks in general related to peer violence (Kato-Wallace et al., 2016).

Educating men and women to be better parents and role models can reduce violence against women.

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73. Violence against women should be an essential factor in determining child custody, as required by Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention, as domestic violence has a direct impact on children's lives. GREVIO, the monitoring mechanism of the Istanbul Convention has

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noted in several baseline reports<sup>8</sup> that parties tend to give priority to the presumed best interest of the child, which is deemed to be to maintain contact with both parents at all costs, regardless of the violence children have witnessed. Furthermore, the non-scientifically recognised concept of ‘parental alienation’ has been successfully instrumentalised by “men’s rights” movements and is often invoked to deny child custody to the mother and grant it to a father accused or convicted of domestic violence.

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The text need to be based in and not supersede the Istanbul convention

The governments of member States [are encouraged to take](#) the following measures:

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74. Develop and implement violence prevention initiatives and interventions focused on encouraging bystander intervention – specifically among men and boys – in both formal education and community-based education programmes as well as among the general public.
75. Develop and implement interventions in education that contribute to creating peer environments, especially among young men, in which they feel safe to open up, promote non-violent masculinity and assume responsibility for men’s violence against women, including as witnesses and bystanders.
76. Address impunity for gender-based and sexual violence against women by taking measures to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement in state responses to violence against women, promote accountability of state agencies, and set specific and time-bound targets for increased reporting and conviction rates for offences covered by the Istanbul Convention.
77. Take measures to increase the levels of attendance of perpetrator programmes for domestic violence and sexual violence. This can be achieved by integrating referrals to perpetrator programmes into the criminal justice system as a tool to reduce recidivism, while ensuring that such referrals do not replace prosecution, conviction or sentencing.
78. Provide court appointed professionals, including health professionals, with systematic and mandatory initial and ongoing training on the different forms of violence, including the effects of such violence on victims and child victims and witnesses, in order to enable them to provide expert advice in legal proceedings concerning child visitation/custody rights.
79. [Raise awareness among relevant professionals on the absence of scientific grounds for so-called “parental alienation syndrome”, and consider banning its use in court proceedings on the determination of custody and visitation rights.](#)
80. Develop integrated and co-ordinated strategies to address the demand that fosters the trafficking and exploitation of women and girls, including conducting public surveys on

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<sup>8</sup> Council of Europe (2021), Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, Strasbourg.



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**22/04/2022**

the number and percentage of the population of men who have purchased sex, and through awareness raising and information campaigns targeting men and boys.

81. Encourage different stakeholders such as sports and cultural institutions, public services including transportation, commercial centres, restaurants, bars to develop communication and information campaigns targeting men and boys on the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence.

## V. Development and dissemination of scientific research and data on gender equality and women's rights

82. Sex- disaggregated data is still often not available across policy sectors. Accurate and comparable data is essential in assessing the scale and nature of gender inequalities and identifying those most affected, as well as how such gender inequalities intersect with other forms of discrimination. Robust data enables governments to better design, adapt, monitor and evaluate policies.

83. In addition, there is strong evidence in literature and statistics that research and higher education institutions reproduce social values leading to gender inequalities and that unconscious or implicit bias may impede objective research design and analysis. Such research bias leads to data being manipulated, including by "anti-gender movements" to undermine progress on women's rights and gender equality.

The governments of the member States should adopt the following measures:

84. Promote gender equality in scientific research, as well as the integration of a gender dimension in research methodology and analysis, ensuring that such analyses are used and disseminated appropriately and feed into policies and measures to promote gender equality.

85. Promote scientific research that includes an intersectional approach to gender inequalities, by including other demographic variables in the research methodology, such as age, social origin, ethnicity, migration status, disability, civil status, or income level, in order to inform policy measures.

86. Build institutional capacity to collect robust and reliable sex-disaggregated data across policy sectors and allocate adequate funding to those bodies and organisations that collect such data, including national statistical offices and research institutes carrying out large scale surveys, as well as equality bodies, other public institutions and civil society organisations that carry out targeted surveys on the needs and experiences of women and girls, and men and boys.

87. Systematically collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data on the distribution of unpaid care work, including through time-use surveys at regular intervals, in order to better understand and monitor changes in men's and women's unpaid care work and their links with policies and programmes.

88. Conduct assessments at regular intervals of the economic value of unpaid care work as a percentage of GDP and disseminate widely.

89. Initiate, support and fund research on boys' and men's perceptions of women's rights and gender equality in order to inform equality policy stakeholders and raise public awareness, particularly among men, about both the pace of change and the diverse attitudes of men with regard to women's rights and gender equality.

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90. Initiate, fund, and support research on the interrelations between sex-related biological differences and socio-economic and cultural factors that affect the behaviour of women and men and their access to health services, to allow evidence-based interventions and gender sensitive policies.
91. Promote gender-sensitive language and communication, for example by producing training material and tools as provided for in relevant recommendations of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to member States.

## Reporting and evaluation

92. These Guidelines ask member States to monitor progress in their implementation and to inform the competent steering committee(s) of the measures taken and progress achieved.
93. Reporting should be regular and include information on:
- policies, measures, programmes and best practices that address the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women,
  - research undertaken and supported to provide data on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and policies to combat violence against women, as well as the outcomes of any such research,
  - national awareness-raising measures and campaigns undertaken at all levels, including regarding the media through which they were conducted.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Key concepts

94. The terms “**masculinity/masculinities**” and “**femininity/femininities**” can be used to describe the range of behaviours, psychological features, social roles and practices which are assigned to men or women in a given culture at a given time. Masculinity and femininity are social constructs, which reflect a desire to differentiate between women and men, often leading to unequal power relations and gender inequalities. The economic, social, cultural and political structures that sustain, reproduce and reinforce masculine and feminine norms and roles constitute the “gender system”.
95. “**Feminism**” can be defined as one or several social movements whose aim is to end sexism, gender discrimination, and violence against women, and achieve full equality between women and men in law and in practice.
96. The terms “**anti-gender movements**” are used to describe regressive or reactionary ideologies and social movements that oppose women’s rights and gender equality and consider that disproportionate attention, action and resources have been dedicated to women and their rights to the detriment of men and their rights. These movements are diverse and range from “**fathers’ rights**” movements, initiatives **highlighting men’s**

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education and health issues, to more violent online and offline movements. Such movements have a capacity to espouse conceptual and societal and technological developments and trends in order to adjust their discourse, operating ground and methods. These movements have driven the backlash against women's rights and gender equality and are often well funded and organised.

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Deleted: <#>The so-called "crisis of masculinity" can be defined as the confusion that some men claim to experience because of progresses towards gender equality and women's improved position in society, and the resulting changes in societal norms. This concept, which dates back to the 1960s, has helped to fuel "men's rights" and anti-gender movements, and calls into question the benefits of gender equality in society. ¶

The concept of the "cost of male domination" can be understood as the negative consequences caused by male domination for men and society, linked for example to suppressing emotions and affection and rewarding risky behaviour. The concept is often manipulated by "men's rights movements" to obscure the position and privileges of men in society.¶

The concept of "male privilege" can be defined as a system of advantages and rights – whether recognized/conscious or not – associated with the male sex, such as a greater feeling of security and bodily autonomy (less exposure to sexual violence), legitimacy and confidence (in conversations), more and easier access to work opportunities and material resources (power, money, property), and greater freedom (occupation of public space, availability of free time).

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