

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Conference
Warsaw, 11 to 22 September 2017
Contribution of the Equality and Human Dignity Department

A. Combating trafficking in human beings

Current status of signatures/ratifications of the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

There are at present 47 States Parties to the Convention (46 Council of Europe member states and Belarus; the Russian Federation is the only Council of Europe member state which has not yet signed and ratified the Convention).

Monitoring the implementation of the Convention

The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) has so far evaluated 43 out of the 47 Parties to the Convention under the first evaluation round. The first evaluations of the four remaining Parties (Czech Republic, Liechtenstein, Monaco and Turkey) will take place in 2018-2019.

GRETA is in the process of conducting the second round of the evaluation of the Convention and has established a [provisional timetable](#) for this round.

GRETA intends to launch the third round of evaluation of the Convention in the course of 2018.

On 30 March 2017 GRETA published its [6th General Report](#) which contains a thematic section of trafficking in children.

Co-operation between the Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR

Co-operation between the Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR in the field of action against trafficking in human beings has continued to take place in the areas of:

- awareness raising and advocacy (including, where relevant, the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the implementation of the OSCE political commitments);
- capacity building and assistance to Council of Europe member States and OSCE participating States, including to governmental and non-governmental actors responsible for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims;
- conducting assessments and monitoring and providing recommendations.

The OSCE has observer status with the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Convention.

To avoid duplication when it comes to country visits, the Council of Europe and the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) regularly co-ordinate their visit plans.

During country evaluation visits, GRETA delegations meet representatives of the local offices of the OSCE (where they have Field Operations and anti-trafficking Focal Points) and benefit from their presence on the ground to complete the collection of information necessary for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention.

GRETA's country evaluation reports and general reports are made public and are communicated to the OSR/CTHB. The reports issued after the country visits carried out by the SR/CTHB are also communicated to GRETA and are taken into account in the context of evaluating the respective states.

Members of GRETA and representatives of the Council of Europe Secretariat regularly participate in conferences and other events organised by the OSCE. By way of example, a member of GRETA and the Executive Secretary of the Convention participated in the OSCE Alliance Conference entitled "Trafficking in Children and the Best Interests of the Child", held on 3-4 April in Vienna, Austria. Further, the Executive Secretary of the Convention took part in the conference "The Public-Private Partnership in the Fight against Human Trafficking", organised by the OSCE in Moscow on 20-21 July 2017.

The Executive Secretary of the Convention also participated in the meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs from the OSCE Region, held in Vienna on 30 June 2017. Part of this meeting was dedicated to presenting the 2016 OSCE Survey Report on the implementation of political commitments to combat trafficking in human beings, which was peer-reviewed at its preparation stage by the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Secretariat.

B. Combating violence against women and girls

Current status of signatures/ratifications of the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ([Istanbul Convention](#))¹

- There are at present 24 parties to the Istanbul Convention².
- A further 20 states and the European Union signed the Convention and are taking steps towards ratification.

Monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention

The aim of the monitoring mechanism of the Istanbul Convention is to assess and improve the implementation of the Convention by parties. It consists of two distinct, but interacting, bodies:

- an independent expert monitoring body, **the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)**, which is composed of 10 members (and will subsequently become 15 members following the 25th ratification);
- a political body, **the Committee of the Parties**, which is composed of representatives of the parties to the Istanbul Convention.

In May 2015, the Committee of the Parties elected the first ten members of GREVIO. It held an exchange of views with the President of GREVIO, Ms Feride Acar, on two occasions, in December 2015 and April 2016.

GREVIO's first meeting was held in September 2015, during which the Group adopted its [rules of procedure](#). GREVIO launched the first country-by-country evaluation procedure in March 2016 after adopting a baseline [questionnaire](#) on the implementation of the Convention. The two first GREVIO reports on respectively Austria and Monaco were adopted by GREVIO during its 11th meeting in June 2017 and will be published by the end of September 2017. Two other reports on Albania and Denmark will be adopted before the end of the year 2017. The evaluation procedure with respect to Montenegro and Turkey was launched beginning of 2017.

In parallel to its evaluation procedure, GREVIO may initiate special inquiries in cases where action is required to prevent a serious, massive or persistent pattern of any acts of violence covered by the Convention. There has been no such case so far.

C. Equality between Women and Men

Achieving gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy, respect for the rule of law and economic growth and competitiveness.

The [Council of Europe's work in the fields of human rights and gender equality](#) has resulted in a solid legal and policy framework which, if implemented, would

¹ The Istanbul Convention entered into force on 1 August 2014.

² Austria, Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

considerably advance women's rights and bring member states closer to real gender equality.

The Council of Europe seeks to combat gender stereotypes, sexism and violence against women in its many forms, including sexist hate speech. It aspires to change mentalities and attitudes, promote balanced participation of women and men in political and public life and encourage the integration of a gender perspective into all programmes and policies.

The overall goal of the Council of Europe [Gender Equality Strategy](#) 2014-2017 is to achieve the advancement and empowering of women and hence the effective realisation of gender equality in Council of Europe member states by supporting the implementation of existing standards. This will be accomplished through the realisation of five strategic objectives:

1. Combating gender stereotypes and sexism
2. Preventing and combating violence against women
3. Guaranteeing Equal Access of Women to Justice
4. Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making
5. Achieving Gender Mainstreaming in all policies and measures

The third annual report³ on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy member states reflected the continued engagement of our member states in activities related to the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy. Many of them are developing new laws, policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, in line with the Istanbul Convention. In addition, many initiatives have been developed to address gender stereotypes in the education system and in the media. Increasing the participation of women in political decision-making and in public bodies have also been priorities for our member states, both through compulsory quotas and voluntary measures. Action to improve women's access to justice has been taken in a number of countries, including through new laws, improved access to legal aid and increased capacity of the judiciary and equality bodies. Member states are also actively addressing the need for gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures, including by adopting specific action plans and setting up institutional structures to co-ordinate gender mainstreaming efforts, by integrating gender budgeting in their decision-making process, and by providing relevant training to government officials.

Challenges to gender equality and women's rights continue to thrive in Europe and beyond, including the critical vulnerability of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, increasing sexist hate speech and other forms of violence against women, attacks to women's reproductive health and rights, reduced resources allocated to gender equality, barriers preventing women from disadvantaged groups to benefit from gender equality policies and standards, shortcomings to achieving women's balanced participation in political and public decision-making, and the spread of misconceptions about gender equality through the label of "gender ideology".

In June 2017, the Head of the Gender Equality Unit of the Council of Europe spoke at the 2nd OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference "From commitment to action", held in Vienna, to present the Council of Europe's experience in mainstreaming gender equality in the work and activities of other sectors and services of the Organisation.

³ <https://rm.coe.int/16806eeb7b>

In September 2017, the Chairperson of the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe spoke at the closing session of the International Forum on Women's Political Empowerment organised in Budapest by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

OSCE and ODIHR are part of consultations with external partners towards the preparation of the next Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.

In achieving its aims and objectives, the Council of Europe seeks to further develop and strengthen its co-operation with partner Organisations such as the EU, UN and its different agencies, in particular UN-Women, OSCE, OECD, OAS and the World Bank.

Gender equality standards and mechanisms developed by the Council of Europe, include:

[European Convention on Human Rights – Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination](#)
[Protocol No. 7, Article 5 – Equality between spouses](#)
[Protocol No. 12, Article 1 - General Prohibition of discrimination](#)
[The European Social Charter \(Revised\) of 1996](#)
[Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings \(CETS No. 197\)](#)
[Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \(CETS No. 210\)](#)
[Council of Europe – Key standards on gender equality and women's rights](#)

Committee of Ministers Recommendations:

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)2 on gender mainstreaming in sport](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2013\)1 on gender equality and media](#)
[Recommendation No. R\(98\)14 on gender mainstreaming](#)
[Recommendation No. R\(2000\)11 on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation](#)
[Recommendation Rec\(2002\)5 on the protection of women against violence.](#)
[Recommendation Rec\(2003\)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making](#)
[Recommendation Rec\(2007\)13 on gender mainstreaming in education](#)
[Recommendation Rec\(2007\)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2008\)1 on the inclusion of gender differences in health policy](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building](#)

For further information, see our website: <http://www.coe.int/equality> or send an e-mail to the Secretariat of the Gender Equality Unit: gender.equality@coe.int

D. Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities

The Council of Europe work in the area of the rights of persons with disabilities lies mainly within the equality and human rights framework. Persons with disabilities are entitled to have access to and enjoy the full range of human rights. These rights are safeguarded by the Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights, and the European Social Charter as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights

of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and other international human rights instruments.

Human rights: a reality for all - the Council of Europe Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities 2017-2023- was launched in Cyprus in spring 2017. It aims to achieve equality, dignity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. This requires ensuring independence, freedom of choice, full and active participation in all areas of life and society, including living in the community.

The Strategy has five rights based priority areas anchored in the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe standards. Each of them is also connected to corresponding Articles of the UN CRPD aiming at its implementation in practice. They are:

1. Equality and non-discrimination
2. Awareness raising
3. Accessibility
4. Equal Recognition before the law
5. Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

The Strategy also identifies five cross-cutting issues:

1. Participation, co-operation and coordination
2. Universal Design and reasonable accommodation
3. Gender equality perspective
4. Multiple discrimination
5. Education and training

The Strategy does not create legal obligations to member states. It aims at guiding and supporting the work and activities aimed at implementing the UN CRPD carried out by the Council of Europe, its member states and other stakeholders, both at national and local levels.

In achieving its aims and objectives, the Council of Europe seeks to further develop and strengthen its co-operation with partner Organisations, in particular the EU and the UN, national human rights institutions, equality bodies and ombudsman offices, disability NGOs, service providers and other civil society organisation representatives in this field.

Standards and mechanisms on the rights of persons with disabilities developed by the Council of Europe include:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

[Resolution 2155 \(2017\)](#)

The political rights of persons with disabilities: a democratic issue

[Resolution 2039 \(2015\) PACE](#)

Equality and inclusion for people with disabilities

[Recommendation 2064 \(2015\) PACE](#)

Equality and inclusion for people with disabilities

[Resolution 371 \(2014\) Congress](#)

Promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their participation at local and regional levels

[Recommendation 361 \(2014\) Congress](#)

Promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their participation at local and regional levels

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2013\)3](#)

Ensuring full, equal and effective participation of persons with disabilities in culture, sports, tourism and leisure activities

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2013\)2](#)

Ensuring full inclusion of children and young persons with disabilities into society (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 October 2013 at the 1181st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2012\)6](#)

on the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls with disabilities

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2011\)14](#)

The participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)2](#)

Deinstitutionalisation and community living of children with disabilities

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2009\)9](#)

The education and social inclusion of children and young people with autism spectrum disorders

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2009\)8](#)

Achieving full participation through Universal Design

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2009\)6](#)

Ageing and disability in the 21st century: sustainable frameworks to enable greater quality of life in an inclusive society

[Resolution ResAP\(2007\)4](#)

The education and social inclusion of children and young people with autism spectrum disorders

[Resolution ResAP\(2007\)3](#)

Achieving full participation through Universal Design

[Recommendation Rec\(2006\)5](#)

To promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015

[Resolution ResAP\(2005\)1](#)

Safeguarding adults and children with disabilities against abuse

[Resolution ResAP\(2001\)3](#)

Towards full citizenship of persons with disabilities through inclusive new technologies

[Resolution ResAP\(2001\)1](#)

The introduction of the principles of universal design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment ("Tomar Resolution")

[Resolution AP\(95\)3](#)

Charter on the vocational assessment of people with disabilities

[Recommendation N° R\(92\)6](#)

A coherent policy for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities

REPORTS AND STUDIES

1. [Promoting equality and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities;](#)
2. [Awareness raising on the rights of persons with disabilities;](#)
3. [Accessibility of information, technologies and communication for persons with disabilities;](#)
4. [Equal Recognition before the law for persons with disabilities;](#)
5. [Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse of persons with disabilities.](#)

The studies aim to highlight and expand information, evidence, data and good practices about the five rights based priority areas of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy.

For further information, see our website: www.coe.int/disability or send an e-mail to the Secretariat of the Disability Unit: disability@coe.int

E. Children's Rights

Overview

The transversal programme “[Building a Europe for and with Children](#)” protects and promotes the rights of the child in Council of Europe member states. Co-ordinated by the Children's Rights Division, more than 35 organs and entities of the Organisation implement activities targeted at children and young people under the age of 18. The Council of Europe's work on children's rights is anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe legal standards.

On 2 March 2016, the Committee of Ministers adopted a new Council of Europe [Strategy for the Rights of the Child](#). This Strategy sets out five priority areas on which the organisation will focus in the period 2016-2021:

1. Equal opportunities for all children
2. Participation of all children
3. A life free from violence for all children
4. Child-friendly justice for all children
5. Rights of the child in the digital environment

Within these priority areas, the Council of Europe

- develops legal standards (www.coe.int/en/web/children/legal-standards);
- monitors the protection of children's rights under Council of Europe conventions (www.coe.int/en/web/children/monitoring);
- conducts co-operation activities with member states and countries of the neighbouring regions (www.coe.int/en/web/children/co-operation);

- promotes children’s rights to policy makers, professionals, parents and children (www.coe.int/en/web/children/7).

The implementation of the Strategy is guided by an Ad hoc Committee of Experts ([CAHENF](#)) which is composed of representatives of all member states.

Prevention of violence against children

“A life free from violence” is one of the five priority areas of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child. Through the Strategy, the Council of Europe promotes an integrated approach to the elimination of all forms of violence, as well as targeted actions to address specific forms of violence. These include sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, corporal punishment, bullying (including cyber-bullying) and gender-based violence. Children’s rights are also better protected thanks to the promotion of child friendly justice, health care and social services. Particular attention is dedicated to counseling and reporting mechanisms for child victims. All this work is the result of a wide and inclusive mobilization counting governments, parliamentarians, ombudspersons, professional networks, children, young people and civil society at large. The Children’s Rights Division and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), jointly with Wilton Park, organised an international conference on “[Protecting children from violence: next steps for effective strategies](#)”. (November 2016). The event took stock of advances made in combating violence against children, but also focused on the challenges ahead, namely: corporal punishment, sexual violence, alternative care, over-sexualisation of children, female genital mutilation, forced early marriage, violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism, and violence in the digital environment. A first thematic exchange on the implementation and effectiveness of the national strategies to protect children from violence was held by the CAHENF in March 2017. France, Italy and Norway shared their experience in developing national strategies to protect children from violence and monitoring their impact and implementation.

The Council of Europe is committed to make Europe a corporal punishment-free area in all settings and a majority of its member states have now committed to put an end to all corporal punishment of children. Slovenia and Lithuania became, respectively, the 30th and 31st Council of Europe member state to apply the ban. To support governments in their efforts to promote positive and non-violent parenting, the Council of Europe set up an [online repository](#) compiling more than 50 videos, publications, campaigns, and parenting programmes from 13 member states.

A full array of projects and initiatives is also dedicated to protecting children from violence in various settings and forms, such as violence in schools, violence against girls, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, trafficking of children. The Children’s Rights Division implements projects on the protection of children against violence, including sexual violence, in Ukraine and Georgia and is exploring the feasibility of developing new projects in a number of additional member states. Projects are also conducted in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia to further promote and protect children’s rights in the region, building also on the Strategy. In Tunisia, for instance, media representatives were trained on child violence media coverage, the Arabic version of Kiko and the Hand has been distributed in all the schools of the country and a training programme for the child monitor inspectors has been developed on *A life free from violence for all children*.

The Council of Europe is a regional driver in promoting a culture of zero tolerance of any form of violence against children. This goal is very much aligned with Target 16.2

of the Agenda for Sustainable Development which calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against children by 2030. At global level, the Organisation supports in various ways the UN High Time Initiative to End Violence against Children, which offers one platform for governments, organisations, institutions, children and adults to express their commitment to children's freedom from violence and support initiatives to prevent and respond to violence. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe is a "Time Raiser", while the PACE is an active member of the Global Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children, which is one of the "Time Givers".

Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

The [Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#), also known as "the Lanzarote Convention", requires criminalisation of all kinds of sexual offences against children. It sets out that states in Europe and beyond shall adopt specific legislation and take measures to prevent sexual violence, to protect child victims and to prosecute perpetrators.

The Committee of the Parties to the Lanzarote Convention (the "Lanzarote Committee") is the body established to monitor whether Parties effectively implement the Convention. The first monitoring round focused on "the protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust". A second implementation report on the same theme is expected by the end of 2017. The second monitoring round will focus on "the dangerous effects of the child's interaction through ICT".

Given the high risk that many migrant children who arrive in Europe have or may become victims of sexual violence, the Lanzarote Committee launched an urgent monitoring round in 2016 on protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. A [Special Report](#) was adopted on 3 March 2017 putting forward a number of recommendations to support the implementation of the Convention with a focus as regards data collection, prevention, protection and co-operation. It also identifies promising practices to meet the challenge of better preventing and protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

In July 2017, a visit was carried out by a delegation of members of the Lanzarote Committee to Hungary to assess the situation of children in the transit zones of Röske and Tompa in the south of the country, following the call made in March 2017 by the Council of Europe for Hungary to reconsider a new law that risks exposing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to sexual violence.

Finally, the [second edition of the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#) (18 November 2016) was an opportunity for Council of Europe partners to raise awareness on this issue. Activities were carried out in 16 countries with 70 video and written statements delivered by key personalities in 23 different languages.