

HANDBOOK FOR GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEURS



**Gender equality and
gender mainstreaming
in practice**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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gender mainstreaming
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French edition:
*Manuel destiné aux rapporteur-es
pour l'égalité de genre*

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Introduction

The Council of Europe launched its Transversal Programme on Gender Equality in 2012. The Programme aims to increase the impact and visibility of gender equality standards and bring us closer to the goal of real equality between women and men.

Since its introduction as a concept in the 1990s, [gender mainstreaming](#) together with specific actions for the advancement of women's rights (the so-called "dual approach" to gender equality), has been an important part of the Council of Europe's work on gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is also one of the objectives of the Council of Europe [Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023](#).

A solid institutional setting at the Council of Europe facilitates gender mainstreaming across the Organisation. This includes the [Gender Equality Commission](#), an intergovernmental steering committee, composed of member states' representatives, and more than fifty [Gender Equality Rapporteurs](#) (GERs) appointed by steering committees and monitoring bodies. These rapporteurs serve as gender mainstreaming "ambassadors" in their respective entities. Co-ordination through specialist staff members, an internal staff Gender Mainstreaming Team, the production of concrete tools and targeted training complement the Council of Europe gender mainstreaming architecture.

Using a variety of methods such as tests, definitions, concrete examples and good practices, this Handbook responds to the expressed need for guidance on how to apply a gender perspective in all areas of the work of the Council of Europe. The Handbook serves as a guide and an accessible tool for the GERs in their daily work and contributes to the achievement of the objective of the Council of Europe to make gender equality a reality.

The thematic work of the different entities of the Council of Europe in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming is showcased on a special [gender mainstreaming website](#).

Test

Warm up: Test your knowledge on mainstreaming a gender equality perspective

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE	Correct	Incorrect
1. Women represent 40% of members of parliaments in Europe.		
2. Women and men have equal access to resources (for example, money, time, networks).		
3. Public policies are neutral; they affect everybody – women and men, girls and boys – in the same way.		
4. Gender roles are socially constructed; they change over time and differ between and within cultures.		
5. Gender mainstreaming requires the equal participation of women and men in all programmes and activities.		
6. Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective entails new duties and practices for ministries and civil servants.		
7. Gender mainstreaming should replace specific policies for the advancement of women and positive actions.		
8. All ministries have duties in relation to the integration of a gender equality perspective.		
9. Data and statistics on people should be broken down by sex only if sex-disaggregated information is readily available.		

FOR ANSWERS PLEASE GO TO PAGES 36-38.



Chapter I

The basics

Obtaining formal equal rights (*de jure* equality) is not enough to eliminate all inequalities between women and men. Despite the improvement of women's legal status in Europe, effective gender equality is still far from being a reality (*de facto* equality).

Facts and figures:

- ▶ Women represent more than **50%** of the **European population**.
- ▶ In Council of Europe member states, men still represent **69%** of members of **national parliaments (2021)** and **77%** of ministers (2016).
- ▶ Women on average **earn 14%** less compared to men (EU-27, 2019).
- ▶ The average gender **pension gap** is as high as **29%** (EU-27, 2019).
- ▶ In 2020, women represented only **28%** of news subjects and **24%** of experts in the **media** in Europe.
- ▶ Although **conviction rates** for rape cases vary significantly between member states, in several countries they are as low as **5%**.
- ▶ **1/3** of women in the EU has experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** since the age of 15 (EU-28, 2012).

Gender inequality is not about biological differences but about the unequal position of women and men in society that is a result of centuries of inequalities. These inequalities exist in all areas of life, including decision making, physical integrity, work, income, property, education, health, access to justice, visibility, culture or roles attributed to women and men in society. These differences are disproportionately to the detriment of women.

In addition, when looking at gender inequalities, it is necessary to look at both the private and the public sphere. Indeed, inequalities in relation to the private sphere (unpaid domestic and care work, violence against women), and the different roles that women and men have, impact on their involvement and position in the public sphere, including paid employment and participation in decision making.

Inequalities are also reflected in the visibility of women and men in society. This is true in quantitative terms. For example, there are fewer women in the media (28% women in the news media in Europe in 2020), fewer cultural productions by women in museums, a marginal presence of women in history books and school manuals, etc. It is also true in qualitative terms: for example, women and men are described in stereotypical ways in popular culture, educational material, advertisements, and the labour market is structured by gender (care professions are dominated by women and less well-paid, technical and management professions generally more male-dominated).

The link between gender mainstreaming and violence against women

Violence against women is the most flagrant violation of women's human rights. It impairs the enjoyment by women of their fundamental rights to life, security, freedom, dignity and physical and psychological integrity. This may include domestic violence, sexual violence, harassment or sexual harassment at work, online violence (especially for young women, female journalists or politicians), harassment in public spaces (sports, street harassment), female genital mutilation, forced marriage or human trafficking (of women, mostly for sexual exploitation). It affects a lot of women in different ways and some groups of women and girls, such as migrants, those belonging to ethnic minorities, or with disabilities, are often at greater risk of experiencing violence or exploitation, both within and outside the home.

“Prevalence rates for Europe do not exist, but many member States have increasingly conducted surveys to measure the extent of violence against women nationally. (...) An overview of these surveys suggests that across countries, one-fifth to one-quarter of all women have experienced physical violence at least once during their adult lives and more than one-tenth have suffered sexual violence involving the use of force. Figures for all forms of violence, including stalking, are as high as 45%. The majority of such violent acts are carried out by men in their immediate social environment, most often by partners and ex-partners. Secondary data analysis supports a conservative estimate that about 12% to 15% of all women have been in a relationship of domestic abuse after the age of 16.”¹

This violence has disastrous consequences for women as individuals, in terms of the impact on their physical and psychological health, but it can also limit their participation in the labour market, or cause them to withdraw from social networks or from certain areas, for example, areas that are strongly male-dominated and where sexism and harassment may be more common (including some places of power).

1. Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011).

Gender-based violence also has social consequences as it affects a large number of people (victims, witnesses -including children- and perpetrators) and because it is “both the cause and the result of unequal power relations based on perceived differences between women and men that lead to women’s subordinate status in both the private and public spheres. This type of violence is deeply rooted in the social and cultural structures, norms and values that govern society, and is often perpetuated by a culture of denial and silence”². The economic costs of this gender-based violence are also considerable (366 billion Euros per year in the EU, according to a 2021 study by the European Institute for Gender Equality, EIGE).

The issues of violence against women and gender-based violence must therefore be taken into account in the formulation of public policies in a large number of areas, particularly those relating to law and justice (access to justice for victims, training) but also in the areas of health, education, the media, labour law or when implementing projects or organising events (prevention of sexism and harassment).

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the most ambitious international standard in this area, offers a range of co-ordinated measures to combat such violence.



The continuum of violence against women

The historical imbalances between women and men pervade all types of human activities and institutions, including public policies. Even today, men are still seen (consciously or not) as being the norm, the “standard human being” in policy-making. To reach the goal of gender equality, strategies are needed which question these gender norms and take into account relevant gender differences (between women and men, among women and among men) at all stages of the policy-making process. Gender mainstreaming is such a strategy.

This Handbook aims to present key definitions and principles and to give you some guidance on how to mainstream gender in your daily work.

2. Ibid.

Gender and sex

What is gender?

Since 1985, the concept of gender has appeared in international fora and since the 1990s it has been included in international policy documents.

Gender, as understood at the Council of Europe,³ shall mean:

”The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men.

Gender relationships and gender roles vary from place to place and they vary over time; they change in response to altering circumstances. Sex, by contrast, identifies the biological differences between women and men, which remain generally the same.

The concept of gender is a social construction that shapes people’s identities. In most cases the social construction of gender roles is to the detriment of women, in the sense that these constructed gender roles impact more negatively on the situation and opportunities of women in society. In particular, the deep-seated stereotypes and beliefs related to the duties of women as the main carers for children and other dependants⁴ impact on many other social characteristics and opportunities. This includes notably women’s ability to engage in paid employment and to take up decision-making positions. Prevailing gender roles also impact on society’s views about who is considered to be a legitimate bearer of rights, knowledge and authority, which has consequences on other diverse issues that women and men are confronted with every day, such as professional choices, media presence, access to politics or to justice. Gender stereotypes prevent both women and men from fully enjoying their rights and they limit women and men’s opportunities and wellbeing.

Gender is:

- ▶ a social, ideological and cultural **construction**;
- ▶ **learned and internalised** by both women and men through socialisation;
- ▶ **not constant**: it varies within and across cultures and over time;
- ▶ a **power system** with an unequal power structure between women and men in the distribution of resources, wealth, paid and unpaid work, time, decision making, political power, enjoyment of rights and entitlements within the family and in all aspects of social, professional and public life.

3. Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention.

4. For example, in the EU, in couples with the youngest child under 7, women spend on average 32 hours per week on paid work but 39 hours on unpaid work (71 hours in total), compared to men who do 41 hours paid and 19 hours unpaid work per week (60 hours in total). Source: Eurofound (2016), Sixth European Working Conditions Survey, available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys/sixth-european-working-conditions-survey-2015>

Gender and other identities

Gender and sex interact with other factors in a person's identity to create multiple layers of opportunities but also of potential inequalities, violence and discrimination. These factors can be related to "sex, gender, 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" (Article 4§3 of the Istanbul Convention). An intersectional analysis aims at looking at how these different factors intersect and exacerbate inequalities, in order to eliminate them.

Gender equality

In the context of the Council of Europe, in particular in the work of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), the notion of gender equality most often refers to equality between women and men. It refers to a situation in which women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities not only in terms of equality in law, but also in practice. It requires that the behaviour, aspirations, wishes and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured. It also means an equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men. But gender equality can also refer to broader notions of equality in relation to gender identity (social expectations and norms attached to the feminine and the masculine and individual experience of gender) and sexual orientation (each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different sex/gender or the same sex/gender or more than one sex/gender).

” 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 standards of the Council of Europe mostly address "gender equality" as equality between women and men. However, the work of the Gender Equality Commission and Division includes an intersectional perspective. Issues directly related to gender identity and sexual orientation are dealt with by the Council of Europe more specifically through the work of the Unit on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI).⁵

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming was introduced as a new approach to policy making which takes into account both women's and men's situations and concerns. It was introduced in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action

5. More information: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi>. See also Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. The Council of Europe subsequently played a pioneering role in developing and implementing the concept of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is also an objective of the EU, as provided by Article 8 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU.

In 1998, the Council of Europe defined gender mainstreaming as:

”The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

Gender mainstreaming is based on the recognition that women and men have different needs and living conditions, including unequal access to, and control over, power and decision making, physical integrity, economic activity, money and other resources, human rights and justice. Gender mainstreaming therefore implies looking at the impact of any activity, highlighting the inequalities and differences between women and men as well as among women and among men. It thus allows to identify the potential differential impact of policies/activities on both women and men in their diversity. This leads to designing policies that are more likely to benefit girls and boys, women and men equally.

Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but an **instrument** towards the ultimate goal of achieving equality between women and men. In addition, there is a wide consensus among member states and international organisations that a **dual approach** is necessary to effectively achieve this aim:

1. **specific policies and actions** for the advancement of women, and
2. the promotion, monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation of a **gender mainstreaming strategy** in all policy and programmes.

Gender mainstreaming is **not** about:

- ▶ **“Adding women and stirring”**: ensuring the equal participation of women and men in decision making and in different activities or projects is a necessary first step and an objective on its own. However, merely having more women on board does not mean that a gender mainstreaming exercise was undertaken and it does not automatically lead to qualitative change towards gender equality in a policy or programme.
- ▶ **Including an introductory paragraph** in a document stating that a gender equality perspective will be integrated or simply mentioning “women and men” in the text: the aim is rather to include a gender equality perspective at all stages and throughout the policy measures, document or project at stake, not to make a statement of principle.
- ▶ **Speaking of “THE woman” or “THE man”**, which do not exist: it is necessary to take into account women’s and men’s multiple identities and personal characteristics, for example, in terms of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation/identity, social or migration status, (dis)ability, etc.

Different approaches to gender equality



Equality before the law



Positive actions



Gender mainstreaming

Source: <https://canadianequality.ca/equity-or-equality/>

Gender mainstreaming as an instrument for better policy-making

- ▶ Gender mainstreaming implies grounding policies on the concrete situation and needs of people. It will introduce among policy makers and the public a learning process of paying attention to the broad effects of policies on citizens' lives, aiming at the well-being of both women and men.
- ▶ Gender mainstreaming should lead to better informed policy making and therefore better government. It challenges the assumption that policies are gender neutral – which they almost never are when they concern people – and it reveals hidden assumptions about reality and values.
- ▶ It leads to a fairer allocation of resources and to greater transparency in the policy process.
- ▶ Gender mainstreaming brings gender equality into mainstream society.

Clarifying concepts:

GENDER BLIND	Ignoring/failing to address the gender dimension (as opposed to gender sensitive), which may maintain or exacerbate existing inequalities.
GENDER NEUTRAL	Having no differential positive or negative impact for gender relations or equality between women and men. There is always a risk, however, that policies which profess to be "gender neutral" are actually "gender blind".
GENDER SENSITIVE	Addressing and taking into account the gender dimension.
GENDER POSITIVE/ GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE	Challenging gender inequalities, stereotypes and harmful gender norms.

Example: Integrating a gender equality perspective in the regulation on occupational safety in Finland

A good example of the importance of integrating a gender equality perspective in preparatory work was the reform of the Finnish legislation on occupational safety and health at the beginning of the 21st century.

In Finland, as in most countries, the labour market is strongly segregated by sex, and work and working conditions differ between women and men. The committee on occupational safety and health legislation analysed these facts and figures and discovered that changes in workplace legislation inevitably had different consequences for women and men.

While preparing a legislative proposal, the committee therefore modified its approach, from one that focused on accidents in the workplace, towards one that focused more broadly on investigating hazards in the workplace. In this way, the law better responded to the typical risks found in women-dominated sectors (for example, harassment, workload and fatigue).

As a result of this gender-sensitive preparatory work, the concept of occupational safety was broadened and the law now better serves the occupational safety needs of both women and men.



Chapter II

The role of Gender Equality Rapporteurs in the Council of Europe

Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) were first introduced in the Council of Europe through the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality (2012). GERs are important actors for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, which is one of the objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 (and of the previous strategy for 2014-2017). As of April 2022, 51 GERs had been appointed in the Organisation's intergovernmental committees and other intergovernmental bodies. This has led to sustained efforts to introduce a gender equality perspective in a growing number of policies and activities of the Council of Europe.

Know your role as Gender Equality Rapporteur

GERs in the Council of Europe play the role of ambassadors of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in their respective body.

The three roles of a Gender Equality Rapporteur:

1. Put on "gender glasses"

GERs contribute to ensuring that a gender equality perspective is introduced into the activities and policies of their committee or monitoring body. It is, above all, about promoting a change in approach, which does not necessarily require the development of new activities or the drafting of additional reports.

A number of GERs and their committees have initiated [innovative gender equality activities](#), which have attracted attention and have had a positive impact on the work and visibility of the committee. Examples of successful gender mainstreaming activities include work in the areas of [audio-visual policy](#), [sport](#), [media](#), [fight against drug abuse](#), [combating corruption](#) or [justice](#).

Example: A gender equality perspective in audio-visual policy – Eurimages, the European cinema support fund

Cinema plays a major role in shaping perceptions and attitudes. The Council of Europe cinema support fund (Eurimages) has addressed gender inequality in the European film industry since 2012. A Gender Study Group was set up to address the presence of women in the cinema sector at national and European levels and to analyse the under-representation of women as directors among eligible projects for Eurimages funding.

Eurimages adopted a first Strategy for Gender Equality in the European Film Industry 2014-2017, and in 2017 a new Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2018-2020 entitled “Aiming for 50/50 by 2020” was launched. In 2020, the Eurimages Board of Management renewed its commitment to gender equality by adopting its [third strategy for gender equality in the European film industry covering the period 2021-2023](#). The strategy's overall goal is to provide equal support for projects by women and by men film directors and to work to increase gender equality in the film industry. As a result, from 2012 to 2018, the proportion of projects submitted by women rose from 23% to 30%, the proportion of women directors from 17% to 29% and the proportion of women producers from 28% to 32%.

In September 2017, the Committee of Ministers also adopted a [Recommendation on gender equality in the audio-visual sector](#). In 2016, an annual prize for Best Female Director, the Audentia Award, was launched at the Istanbul Film Festival and it continues to be awarded at a different festival each year.

2. Multiply knowledge and inspire others

GERs can improve the gender-sensitivity of the work of their committee, as well as raise colleagues' awareness on gender equality issues. However, while GERs may be the initiators, they are not expected to work alone. Integrating a gender equality perspective in the work of the committee is the responsibility of the committee as a whole, including its leadership (president and bureau) and secretariat.

3. Be well-connected, maintain and develop interesting networks

- ✓ Liaise with other GERs (especially those working in similar or intersecting areas) to learn from one another and exchange good ideas and experiences. This can be done through informal and formal meetings (for example, training).
- ✓ Liaise with the Gender Equality Division (GED – gender.equality@coe.int) of the Council of Europe to seek assistance, advice, expertise and information and give feedback on your experience of being appointed and functioning as

a GER. Appointing GERs is a unique and relatively new initiative. Giving such feedback will therefore help the GED support you better and refine working methods in view of your experience.

- ✓ Connect with experts, other international organisations and non-governmental organisations working on gender equality issues within your field of work. The GED can help you identify relevant organisations and resources.
- ✓ Engage in regular exchanges of views with the Council of Europe [Gender Equality Commission](#) (GEC), which is required to maintain close links with the other elements of the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality. You can also get in touch with the GEC representative of your country (through the GED, for example).

How you can work as a Gender Equality Rapporteur

Use the programming process of the committee as an outline

- ✓ Keep in mind the terms of reference of your committee in relation to the gender mainstreaming obligation, as well as other commitments in this respect (Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy, Committee of Ministers' recommendations, etc.).
- ✓ Look at the long-term planning of the committee to identify priorities and make a plan of what you want to achieve. Prepare activity proposals with the help of supportive colleagues before discussing them among a larger group/within the committee.
- ✓ When there are elections in the committee, raise the issue of the need to achieve a balanced representation of women and men (a minimum of 40% of each sex according to Council of Europe standards; 50/50 parity would be ideal).
- ✓ We all hold assumptions and stereotypes based on gender that can impact our work; the first step is to acknowledge them in order to combat them. Check your own gender stereotypes and assumptions on the issues dealt with by your committee.

Prepare the meetings of the committee

- ✓ Before each meeting of the committee, look at the agenda and ask yourself on which topics and activities it might be relevant to raise issues related to gender equality.
- ✓ Look for allies and involve other members of the committee, find colleagues interested in the issue and who could provide suggestions.
- ✓ Look for an evidence-based approach in the work of the committee: research and disseminate data and information on the gender equality perspective in relation to the topic at stake. Be aware of the potential existence of good-quality research that you could build on.

Invest in terminology and common language

- ✓ Help colleagues in the committee know what they are talking about and use the same terminology (for example, the difference between “sex” and “gender”). The [Council of Europe Gender Equality Glossary](#) can be of help in this regard.
- ✓ Be aware of possible linguistic challenges with regard to the term gender and its translation in different languages. Be aware of the fact that a translation can contain sexist language that was not present in the original text.

Compile information, good examples and promising practices

- ✓ Check the gender equality website (www.coe.int/equality) of the Council of Europe to get acquainted with existing standards, publications and links.
- ✓ See in particular the webpage on gender mainstreaming in different policy areas, which may include a section on your area of work: www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-mainstreaming
- ✓ Check the resource section of this Handbook.
- ✓ Ask the Secretariat for information about previous gender mainstreaming activities of your committee.
- ✓ Get specialised information from committees or GERS (from the Secretariat or the GED) working on similar issues as yours. For example, committees with a strong legal content could join forces in gathering and obtaining specialised background training and/or information or carry out joint activities.
- ✓ Initiate the drafting of an information paper/study regarding relevant gender equality issues in your area of work.

Organise a training session, conference or other event

- ✓ Propose the inclusion of a session on gender equality or gender mainstreaming during a future committee meeting.
- ✓ Ask the Secretariat and/or GED to recommend potential experts or other relevant international organisations who could help to improve knowledge, support and ownership within the committee.
- ✓ Ask other committee members to present good examples from their country.

Your committee, gender equality, visibility and the media

- ✓ Do not underestimate the possible interest of other stakeholders in the committee’s activities with regard to gender mainstreaming. If you are working in an area where gender mainstreaming is new, you may attract interest and build new links with other organisations, such as United Nations agencies or universities.
- ✓ Some committees also attract media attention thanks to their work on gender mainstreaming. Keep this in mind when planning your activities, including an adequate communication plan. Be aware of the political and societal trends around your topic and gender equality. Use potential external and media interest to the advantage of the committee.

- ✓ Activities of your committee related to gender equality can also feature as news on the gender equality website, which will increase the visibility and recognition of your committee with a different audience (contact gender.equality@coe.int in this regard).

Prerequisites of gender mainstreaming

The prerequisites of gender mainstreaming describe the ideal situation, which is often not the real situation. The table below gives examples and ways to address challenges.

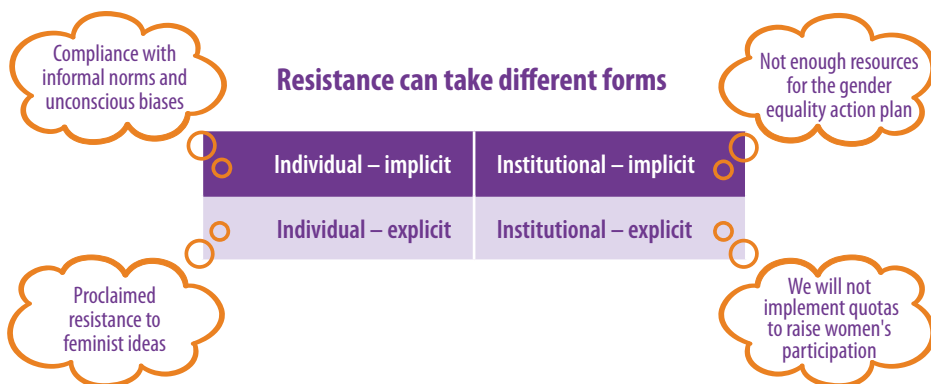
Prerequisites	What you can do in case of difficulties
1. Political will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Seek support among other committee members, including within the Bureau. ▶ Remind colleagues of official national and international commitments towards gender equality and gender mainstreaming. ▶ Give examples of successful gender mainstreaming exercises in other committees. ▶ Establish links with the Council of Europe GEC and/or with other GERs.
2. Gender-sensitive/sex-disaggregated data and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use Chapter IV of this Handbook to find such data and ensure relevant persons are aware of sources of gender-disaggregated data. ▶ Consult gender equality experts/services/organisations working in your area/the area of gender equality.
3. Some gender equality expertise and knowledge of the area where gender mainstreaming is being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consult gender equality experts and/or relevant services or non-governmental organisations. ▶ Organise a hearing about the topic in the committee, including when data is not available, in order to start addressing this issue. ▶ Participate in available training and encourage the participation of others in such training.
4. Necessary funds and human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Raise the issue with the Bureau. ▶ Train relevant committee members, experts or staff members in gender equality issues.
5. Knowledge of the functioning/procedures of the administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use existing commitments within the Organisation to integrate a gender equality perspective. ▶ Check the terms of reference of your committee. ▶ Get advice from the GED and/or from other GERs.

Prerequisites	What you can do in case of difficulties
6. Equal presence and contribution of women and men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Remind colleagues of policy commitments in this area (40% of each sex as a minimum standard in the Council of Europe, 50/50 parity would be ideal). ▶ Suggest an informal agreement for a gender-based rotation of the chair and vice-chair(s) of the committee. ▶ Critically review information/recruitment channels to ensure that both sexes are informed and encouraged to participate in the meetings/activities.

Dealing with resistance: questions and answers

As a GER, you may meet with resistance. The following table offers possible answers to arguments that are often used to challenge the need for a gender equality perspective on a given issue.

Arguments	Answers
<i>There is no information regarding the different situations of women and men so I cannot do anything.</i>	<p>Sex-disaggregated statistics are available in a wide range of areas and for most European countries. See Chapter III of this Handbook for sources of data.</p> <p>If statistics are not available in the area you are looking at, it may be an issue as such that could be raised with relevant authorities/bodies, to encourage sex-disaggregated data gathering.</p> <p>Relevant (qualitative) information can also be found in the country reports to the United Nations CEDAW (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm) and in the concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW to the country.</p> <p>In many countries NGOs, UN agencies (such as UN Women) and other international organisations or academics may have carried out useful studies.</p>
<i>We have reached gender equality; this is not an issue in my country/ city/organisation.</i>	<p>Figures about the situation of women and men show that structural inequalities exist in most areas and societies.</p> <p>It may be useful to recall general figures concerning the gender pay gap or the under-representation of women in parliament (as of January 2022, only three countries in the world had achieved parity: Bolivia, Cuba and Rwanda. See: Women in Parliaments: World Classification (ipu.org)).</p> <p>Legal and policy documents acknowledge this situation at the national, European and international levels and governments have committed to address it (for example, Council of Europe standards, UN CEDAW Convention and Beijing Platform for Action, EU legislation, national constitutions).</p>



Arguments	Answers
<p><i>We have a woman mayor/president/director so there is no problem with gender equality.</i></p>	<p>It is true that <i>some</i> women have reached <i>some</i> decision-making positions, but generally women are still under-represented in all aspects of decision-making (political, economic, social). This is a structural social issue, not a question of individuals. In addition, while the equal participation of both sexes in all fields of life is a condition for democracy and good governance, the sole presence of women as decision makers or in a project does not guarantee that policies or activities will take into account a gender equality perspective or improve the situation. What is also needed is a change in approach and active efforts towards gender equality, which can be undertaken by, and should be the responsibility of, both women and men.</p>
<p><i>Our public policies, laws and projects are gender neutral and thus benefit all people in the same way. We don't discriminate against women.</i></p>	<p>In most areas of life, when it comes to access to resources, power, justice, health or paid and unpaid work, women and men are in different situations and therefore have different needs. Public policies, laws and projects thus need to take these different situations and needs into account. For example, reducing the average length of a hospital stay in a country may be a legitimate aim, but it will have a differentiated and heavier impact on women. Indeed the care needs that are not covered by hospitals will have to be taken over by families. In practice, within families, it will often be mostly women taking on this additional work. This means that women will spend more time on unpaid work and possibly have fewer opportunities to engage in paid work and in turn, less revenue and autonomy, and less time to pursue other social, political or sporting activities.</p>

Arguments	Answers
<p><i>Gender quotas/ parity systems are not democratic. They limit the choice of the electorate and women will be chosen only because of their sex. No woman will want this.</i></p>	<p>Positive action, gender quotas and parity systems put in place for decision-making positions (political or otherwise) are, in fact, legal and are encouraged by various standards at European and international levels, notably by Council of Europe recommendations, Article 157 of the EU Treaty and Article 4 of the CEDAW Convention.</p> <p>In addition, the idea of universality of democracy is based on abstract individualism, whereby voters and representatives are seen as devoid of any social attributes (for example, gender, class or ethnic or social origin). This view emerged during the French revolution in 1789 and was originally the basis for the exclusion of women from all citizenship rights. Universal citizenship is therefore a partial concept that, under the guise of neutrality, has served the purposes of dominant social groups. True equality presupposes acknowledging and catering for differences among citizens. Parity systems and quotas allow for more diverse representation of society.</p> <p>A passive approach to progress in the field of gender equality, allowing progress to take its “natural” course, will not be enough to change the historical relations of power imbalance between women and men and to end the discrimination of women in the world of politics and the economy. Women who aspire to political office/decision making face numerous structural and cultural obstacles and quotas are a means to counterbalance these obstacles. When such barriers exist, it is the State in the name of citizens which is best placed to implement measures in favour of a more just situation. In addition, the “freedom” of the electorate is equally circumscribed by other factors, such as electoral systems and choices of candidates by political parties, often based on opaque and gender-blind procedures.</p> <p>To claim that politicians or decision makers should be elected/nominated based on their qualifications and not on the basis of their gender, is to be dismissive of women's qualifications: in many countries, at least as many women as men are university graduates. Women face many obstacles which make their access to decision making much more difficult even with equal qualifications.</p> <p>Finally, other types of “quotas” not based on gender are used in other instances – for example the nationality/size of the population, to define the number of representatives in the European Parliament – yet the capacities of the persons elected are not questioned.</p>

Arguments	Answers
<p><i>It is not a question of discrimination; women do not want to be involved in politics/ decision-making/ media work.</i></p>	<p>Women (or under-represented groups) can only be expected to decide to participate in different fora in a sustained way if they are given the opportunity to do so and if the context does not make their participation difficult (working methods and time management, existence of rules against sexual harassment, etc.). Clear communication through the right channels is an important starting point, as are transparent and inclusive nomination/promotion methods. In addition, it may be difficult for newcomers to find their place within bodies where the same group of persons has been working together for decades, because newcomers may challenge existing habits and stereotypes and are not always welcome. This applies to women entering male-dominated areas, but also to young people or people from minority groups.</p> <p>In addition, even when they are qualified and have the necessary skills, women often have fewer resources to access decision-making positions, in terms of fewer economic but also symbolic resources (networks, contacts) and less time (including because women still bear most of the responsibilities for domestic and care work in most countries). Women are also more subject to scrutiny and to sexism or even hate speech in the media (or sometimes in elected assemblies),⁶ which makes it personally more difficult to enter the public arena. Regarding media work, as in many other areas, journalists often tend to contact the persons with whom they have been previously working and do not always think outside the box when contacting experts, etc.</p>
<p><i>This is our culture and gender equality is an idea imposed on us by foreign donors and international organisations. We cannot go against our traditional beliefs and values.</i></p>	<p>Gender equality is a human right that is included in several international conventions and instruments to which each Council of Europe member state has subscribed, notably Council of Europe standards and CEDAW. Culture and traditions cannot be used to go against legal and policy commitments towards gender equality and human rights. In addition, a reduction of inequality will improve the well-being of both women and men.</p> <p>Furthermore, these standards and policies do not aim at the abolition of traditions. They aim at the elimination of practices or behaviour that result in harm and suffering to individuals, families and societies, including discrimination, exclusion or gender-based violence. A case in point is the Istanbul Convention, which provides that culture and traditions should not be a justification for violence against women. In the context of the debate on the Istanbul Convention, it is important to stress that gender inequality is a cause and a consequence of violence against women and that removing discrimination against women will lead to gains in ending violence against women, thus helping to realise the rights of women and girls to live a life free from violence.</p>

6. A 2018 joint Study of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe revealed that more than 85% of women parliamentarians interviewed had experienced psychological violence, and among them more than 46% had received threats of death, rape or beatings during their parliamentary term and more than 67% had been subject to sexist remarks.

Arguments	Answers
<p><i>We already consider “sex” in our policy. There is no need for us to mention “gender” or to apply a “gender” perspective.</i></p>	<p>Looking at an issue from the perspective of sex-based difference, i.e. differences in how it effects women and men, will only give us a partial answer. Applying a gendered perspective adds a layer of reflection and analysis which is important to understand the full picture, because our societies, legislation and policies are not only shaped by biological differences between women and men but by what we consider appropriate behaviours, attributes and attitudes for women and men, girls and boys.</p> <p>For example, data on the number of criminal proceedings for cases of intimate partner violence, disaggregated according to the sex of the victim and the sex of the perpetrator, will tell us how many women and men are being tried for this offence, and, in the context of such proceedings, how many women and men claim to be victims. Such data will not offer insights into the reasons why the numbers might be very low, i.e. why some women and men may not report in the first place or why investigations may be discontinued. To truly understand how the criminal justice system serves women and men as victims, it is important to assess its different components from the point of view of how procedures and the professionals that apply them are shaped, not by biological differences between women and men, but by differences that have to do with the socially constructed roles and attributes for women and men. Gender-sensitive analyses – as opposed to disaggregation by sex alone – have, for example, revealed that, instead of offering a supportive approach, law enforcement officers may be minimising the violence women have experienced at the hands of their spouses, because of strong stereotypes and beliefs around traditions, cultural norms and prejudice that condone violence. A gender-sensitive approach to such data has also, for example, revealed law enforcement officers' tendency to discourage women from reporting, by reminding them of their care responsibilities towards their children.</p>

Gender mainstreaming step-by-step

New activity proposal? Identifying priorities? Preparing a legislative text? Giving advice on legislation? Monitoring a convention? Assisting member states in the promotion, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of national measures? Hereunder you will find practical support to implement a step-by-step gender impact assessment.

Put on your gender glasses

To find out if **gender matters in your project/programme**, answer the following four questions and undertake a gender impact assessment.



Question 1: Do you see a possible correlation between the goal or expected impact of the policy/project and gender inequalities in society?

To be able to answer this question, you will have to establish which gender inequality and discrimination patterns exist regarding the issue or the country/region/municipality, where the policy/project will be implemented.

Make an inventory of possible social, cultural and material differences between women and men/girls and boys for the issue you are seeking to address. Find out about the situation of women and men/girls and boys in the given area (for example, in terms of participation, access to resources and to institutions). Collect and analyse facts and figures: which sex-disaggregated statistics, research results, qualitative surveys are available on the topic? Consider also differences in relation to ethnicity, age, level of education, etc. Look at the work of other institutions and gender equality experts, including non-governmental (women's) organisations and whether good practices and experiences are available from other countries.

The most common gender inequalities in societies are:

- ▶ Inequalities in **power** (access to political, economic and social decision-making, representation)
- ▶ Differences in access to **resources** (inequalities in employment, material and financial means, but also time, information and contacts)
- ▶ Differences in legal/social/financial and employment **status** (for example, do women have the same rights as men regarding ownership of property, inheritance, networks, etc.?)
- ▶ Prevalence of **violence** against women.

There are two possible answers to question 1

YES – Your gender analysis shows that there are gender inequalities in the area you want to act upon. If this is the case, these inequalities will **ALWAYS** affect the desired impact of your policy/project and there is a correlation. → **Question 2**

NO – No gender specific actions are needed in this instance; but monitoring is essential. If a possible correlation appears at a later stage, undertake a new gender analysis and take remedial actions if needed.



Question 2: Will reaching your policy/project objective(s) affect women and men in different ways?

YES – Your gender analysis has shown gender inequalities in the area you want to address. Make an inventory of possible different (intended or unintended) effects of the policy/project on women and men/girls and boys. It is always helpful to look at earlier projects/programmes on the same topic, to organise hearings or to discuss the issue with colleagues, gender equality experts (for example, the Council of Europe Gender Equality Division) or women's NGOs. → **Question 3**

NO – No gender specific actions are needed in this instance; but monitoring is essential. If a possible correlation appears at a later stage, undertake a new gender analysis and take remedial actions if needed.



Question 3: Will this cause or deepen gender inequality in society?

YES – If it is clear that your policy/project’s activities will cause or deepen existing gender inequalities in society, remedial steps must be taken. → **Question 4**

NO – No gender specific actions are needed in this instance; but monitoring is essential. If a possible correlation appears at a later stage, undertake a new gender analysis and take remedial actions if needed.

There are occasions in which activities that you undertake will differentiate between women and men in the **policy/project itself**. When the policy/project aims at addressing an unequal situation in a particular domain in society, differential treatment is justifiable. The end result of the policy/project will be to contribute to the elimination of existing gender inequalities in that particular domain (see example hereunder).



Question 4: How to solve these inequalities?

1. What?
2. Who?
3. How?

In this phase you will look at which mitigation measures should be taken (=what?); which actors are relevant to bring about the mitigation measures (=who?); and what you will change in the intended policies, measures or activities (=how?).

Example: positive actions in universities

In country X, despite years of specific measures and positive action by the national government, the percentage of women professors is still very low: around 19%. Universities simply continue to select men as professors much more often. Old boys’ networks seem difficult to break. The government decides to take more rigorous action and introduces a subsidy scheme that supports universities in appointing more women professors. The money can only be spent on projects targeting women candidates. There is a great deal of protest by some men in the media. They feel discriminated against because they have fewer chances to be selected.

Let’s make a gender impact assessment of this measure:

Question 1. Is there a correlation between the goal of the measure (subsidy scheme) and gender inequalities in society? Answer: yes. The percentage of women in decision-making positions in academia is shockingly lower than that of men. In addition, the fact that there are more women than men as students makes it difficult to believe that there are not enough qualified women candidates available.

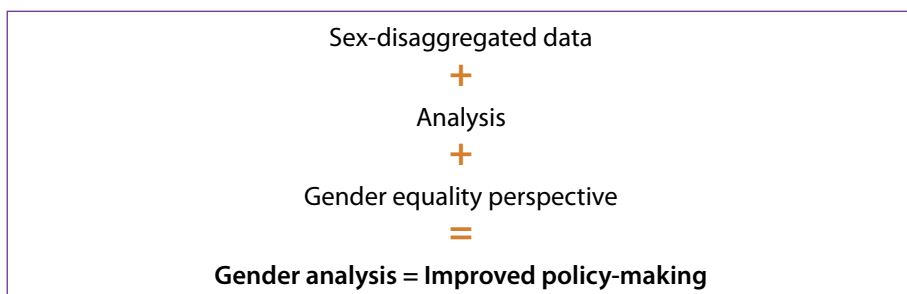
Question 2. Will the effects of the subsidy scheme affect women and men in a different way? Answer: yes. Women will have more chances to be selected. Men less so.

Question 3. Does this lead to inequalities? Answer: in the project itself: yes. But in society: no. Women are clearly under-represented in senior positions in universities. Diverse European and international policy instruments including Article 157§4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Article 4 of the UN Convention on Combating Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) encourage or permit member states to take temporary measures to support the under-represented sex.

Question 4. Conclusion: No need to act differently, no changes need to be made to the subsidy scheme. The intention of the subsidy scheme is to correct persistent inequalities between women and men in this area.

Example of a gender analysis

A gender analysis is based on the following three components:



Step 1: Collect facts and figures

Data not disaggregated by sex	Data disaggregated by sex
156 residents of an apartment block complex attended a meeting on new waste and water management systems for their community. A total of 750 adults live in this complex.	156 residents of an apartment block complex attended a meeting on new waste and water management systems for their community. 133 participants were men and 23 were women (17%). A total of 750 adults live in this complex, with an approximately even split between women and men.

Step 2: Analyse the facts and figures

The analysis refers to the interpretation of existing data. It is done by asking: “What does this information mean?”. The following provides a basic interpretation of the above data:

Analysis

Approximately one in five residents attended the meeting, which is viewed as reasonably good participation. However, nearly six times as many men attended as did women.

While the above analysis notes the difference between men and women, it does not analyse the causes or consequences of this difference. Adding a gender equality perspective implies using existing knowledge about the social situation and roles of women and men, as well as established sociological (or other) theories about relations between women and men. Providing this perspective is crucial so that the analysis can lead to better policy formulation and decision-making.

Step 3: Add a gender equality perspective to the analysis

Consider the difference between the following two possible interpretations of the above data :

Analysis of gender differences that does not consider existing knowledge about the situation of women and men and established knowledge about gender	Analysis of gender differences that includes a gender equality perspective based on existing knowledge about the situation of women and men and established knowledge about gender
<p>Women were in low attendance at the meeting because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Women are not interested in waste and water management. ▶ Women have no knowledge about waste and water management. ▶ Men are better decision makers and leaders than women on issues of waste and water management. <p>Women’s low participation in the meeting will not have any (negative) consequences, since they will benefit from the new solutions anyway.</p>	<p>It is known that women take charge of many tasks involving waste and water management (cooking, cleaning, health). It is known that women participate less in political decision-making. Their low attendance must be due to other factors than lack of interest or knowledge. The following questions therefore need to be asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Did the meeting take place at a time when women could attend (including in view of care issues)? ▶ Were women informed about the meeting? ▶ Are women systemically (or involuntarily) shut out of, or proactively involved in, community decision-making processes? <p>As primary managers of waste and water in the home, women’s low participation at the meeting is likely to result in less effective and sustainable solutions and in low ownership of the decisions taken.</p>

Step 4: Use a gender equality analysis to improve policy making

Taking into account the needs and views of all people and all users of public services helps to make better decisions. In the example about waste and water management, it would be crucial to make sure that women are properly consulted, for the policy

adopted to be accepted and adapted to the needs of primary users. The following are some solutions to improve information gathering and subsequent policy making:

- ✓ Make sure that women are aware of the meeting, of how relevant the topic is, and actively encourage them to participate. If necessary, adapt and improve existing information channels (posters in schools, building halls, etc.) and the way the information is presented (including using gender-inclusive visuals and language).
- ✓ Specifically indicate in all communication and invitations that both women's and men's participation in the consultation is desired.
- ✓ Provide child-care solutions during the meeting or accept children.
- ✓ Consult people through means other than a public meeting, for example, individual interviews or questionnaires.
- ✓ Inform women's groups, or groups in which women are involved, about the ongoing consultation (for example, school parents' groups).

Longer-term measures:

- ✓ Systematically review, adapt and improve information and communication channels in line with the needs and situation of women locally, based on a needs assessment involving women themselves.
- ✓ Implement measures to encourage the participation of women in decision making at local level and within local organisations.

Gender-sensitive or gender-inclusive communication

Integrating a gender equality perspective in policies and activities means doing so also in relation to any communication about these activities. This will ensure that the messages do not contradict the objectives of the activities and strengthen the impact in terms of changes in mentalities.

What is gender-sensitive or gender-inclusive communication?

Communication related to public policies or projects can take many forms: campaigns, social media, websites, speeches, posters, leaflets, publications, photos, videos, etc. All aspects of communication policies should be gender-sensitive. Without a conscious effort to include a gender equality perspective, communication is likely to reinforce gender stereotypes, or simply to make gender equality issues or women invisible.

Gender-sensitive communication means using inclusive language, which promotes gender equality (including in terms of diverse and non-stereotyped gender roles) and the equal visibility of women and men. The Council of Europe has been committed to using inclusive language for over 20 years, with the adoption of [Instruction No. 33 of 1 June 1994 concerning the use of non-sexist language at the Council of Europe](#). The Committee of Ministers [Recommendation No. R \(90\)4 on the elimination of sexism from language](#) also recommends that member states use language reflecting the principle of equality.

[Recommendation CM\(2019\)1 on preventing and combating sexism](#) reaffirms the importance of non-sexist/gender-inclusive language. It requires member states to take measures aiming at "eliminating sexist expressions, using the feminine and

masculine or gender-neutral forms of titles, using the feminine and masculine or gender-neutral forms when addressing a group, diversifying the representation of women and men, and ensuring equality of both in visual and other representations.” It asks member states to promote “the use of non-sexist language in all sectors, particularly in the public sector” and to “undertake a systematic review of all laws, regulations, policies, etc., for sexist language and reliance on gendered assumptions and stereotypes with a view to replacing them with gender-sensitive terminology”. These measures also apply to the Council of Europe bodies and administration.

The use of gender-inclusive language has different implications depending on the language and many member states have their own guidelines and/or practices regarding this issue. The Council of Europe Gender Equality Division makes a conscious effort to consistently use gender-sensitive language. All Council of Europe services should strive to do so, in conformity with the above-mentioned standards of the Organisation. GERs can offer guidance and support to their committees in this regard.

Gender-sensitive communication also relates to choosing images that are inclusive of both women and men, that reflect diversity among women and men and that promote a non-stereotypical image of both sexes and support gender equality.

Why is it important?

Communication forms an integral part of policy-making and project management, especially when it comes to how messages, objectives, results and impact are communicated to citizens and other stakeholders. This part of policy and project work needs to fully reflect gender equality, given that efficient communication tools, including visual communication, can have a very powerful effect on the public.

Gender stereotypes manifest themselves in three different ways: 1) women (or men, depending on the context or topic) can be under-represented or not featured in communication tools; 2) women and men can be represented in stereotypical roles and situations, which reflects a *de facto* more limited vision of their opportunities; 3) a more or less subtle hierarchy of status or functions can be observed in communication tools, most often to the detriment of women (for example, images of men as speakers and women as listeners).

Principles of gender-sensitive/inclusive communication

1. Use gender-sensitive language

Do not use the masculine form as if it were neutral or inclusive, especially if the sex of the people involved is known.

For example, when reporting about speakers who are women, use “she” when they are mentioned.

When the sex of the person concerned is not known, avoid gender-specific pronouns altogether.

For example:

- ✓ **Use the plural form:** use “Children and their rights” instead of “The child and his rights” or “Doctors must inform their patients” instead of “A doctor must inform his patients”.
- ✓ **Reword the sentence:** use “On arriving at the Council, a staff member must ...” instead of “When a staff member arrives at the Council, he must ...”
- ✓ **Delete the pronoun:** use “Anyone disagreeing should give reasons” instead of “Anyone disagreeing should give his reasons.”

Avoid “man” words:

Instead of:	Use:
Chairman	Chair, chairperson
Chairmanship	Presidency
Spokesman	Spokesperson
Ombudsman	Ombudsperson
Craftsman	Craft worker
Businessmen	The business community, industry, business managers, businesspeople, executives
Man, mankind	People, the human race, human beings, humanity
Manpower	Workforce, workers, personnel
Manmade	Artificial, synthetic, manufactured, constructed, of human origin
To man	To operate, to be on duty, to manage

Recommendations that apply to the French language:⁷

- ✓ Eliminate sexist expressions, such as words that relate to men only or which give information about the marital status of women (for example, “droits de l’homme” to be replaced by “droits humains”, “mademoiselle”⁸ to be avoided and replaced by “madame” for women of all ages).
- ✓ Use the feminine and masculine form in messages addressed to all both orally and in writing (for example, “citoyennes et citoyens” or use the “middle dot” (as in “représentant-es”)).
- ✓ In French, use the terms “droits des femmes” and “journée internationale des droits des femmes” (plural and not the singular “droit de la femme”).

7. For further suggestions regarding the French language, please consult the French version of this Handbook.

8. The form “mademoiselle” has been banned from administrative documents in France since 2012, in favour of “madame”. “Madame” is used inclusively with no distinction as to women’s marital status, as is the case for men with the use of “monsieur” for men of all ages.

2. Avoid gender stereotypes

Instead of:	Use:
Ambassadors and their wives	Ambassadors and their spouses or partners
A woman doctor, a male nurse	A doctor, a nurse

These stereotypes can also manifest themselves in the way people are presented or represented as individuals or in the reinforcement of preconceived ideas about women or men as a group.

- ✓ Always present women and men giving their full name and function (often women are presented by their given name only) unless the informality is consistently applied to all.
- ✓ Do not represent or quote women only in relation to social issues/family issues to challenge gender stereotypes by quoting women in relation to “power” topics that are usually addressed by men (for example, criminal matters, defence, technology) and by quoting men in relation to social issues, childcare or education.
- ✓ In interviews, avoid asking women questions about their private life. Doing so – and not asking similar questions of men – tends to undermine women's professional achievements.

3. Ensure gender balance in communication

Women are often under-represented in all forms of communication. Minority groups in society are also under-represented. For example, according to the most recent Global Media Monitoring Project, in 2020 women represented only 28% of people read, or heard in the news and 24% of experts.⁹ It is therefore very important for all policy makers and communicators to make a conscious effort to balance the situation, including projecting diversity amongst women and men in all forms of communication.

- ✓ Ensure a gender balance among the people portrayed on images, publications, posters, websites, videos.
- ✓ Ensure a gender balance among speakers at events and in terms of speaking time in general, avoid men-only panels and be mindful of the persons who most often take the floor.
- ✓ Use the databases of women experts that exist in different member states or contact women's organisations who could be sources of information to identify women experts in specific areas/roles.
- ✓ Try to give preference to women/men in non-traditional roles.

9. More information: [Who Makes the News | A Day in the World's news](#)

4. Ensure a diverse representation of women and men

- ✓ Try to portray women and men of different ages, origins, backgrounds, etc.
- ✓ Colours: avoid using pink/blue for women/men, and dark colours for men, light colours for women.
- ✓ Avoid the systematic representation of women in caring positions or situations and of men in decision-making positions or in scientific/technical roles.
- ✓ Clothing: avoid the representation of men in practical clothes and women in sexy clothes or in clothes not adapted to the communicated topic.
- ✓ Beware of the positioning and behaviour of people in images: avoid systematically putting women in passive or submissive positions in relation to men and in the way they act (standing/sitting, foreground/background, etc.) and make sure that women are not always in the background/men in the foreground.



Chapter III

Useful resources to support your work

Data and indicators

Using sex-disaggregated data is one of the preconditions for the integration of a gender equality perspective in your work. Various sources can help you find relevant data at national and European level. The gender mainstreaming section of the Council of Europe's website contains links to [different sources of data and indicators](#) on topics related to gender equality including socio-economic and population issues, the participation of women and men in decision making, gender equality in the justice system, and violence against women.

Gender mainstreaming handbooks and tools

- ✓ [Council of Europe Toolkit on gender mainstreaming in sport](#) (2019)
- ✓ [Council of Europe Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Co-operation Projects](#) (2019)
- ✓ [Council of Europe Gender Equality Glossary](#) containing mostly definitions emanating from Council of Europe standards or other reference documents on gender-equality related concepts (2016, revised in 2022, bilingual document French/English entries)
- ✓ [Gender mainstreaming platform of the European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#)
- ✓ [EIGE Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit](#)
- ✓ [Toolkit on gender-sensitive communication](#) (2019, EIGE)

- ✓ [Let's Speak Gender: 10 principles of gender-responsive communications](#) (2018, UNDP)
- ✓ [Guide on public policy communication without gender stereotypes](#) (2016, Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, France, French only).
- ✓ [I Know Gender: An Introduction to Gender Equality for UN staff](#) (free online course developed by UN Women)
- ✓ [Guidance note for staff of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime "Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC"](#) (2013)

Visual tools

- ✓ **Video and action page on sexism of the Council of Europe:** [Sexism: See it. Name it. Stop it. \(coe.int\)](#)
- ✓ **Infographics on UN gender data:** [Thematic Areas | World's Women 2020 \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- ✓ **UN Women infographics:** [Multimedia | UN Women](#)
- ✓ **OECD video on gender equality:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j85fGU3PeeY>
- ✓ **Video on gender mainstreaming at local level** (Snowploughing – Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udSjBbGwJEg>
- ✓ **Video on the gender pay gap** (European Commission): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKylyIqgSbl&feature=youtu.be>
- ✓ **Video on violence against women** (Care Norway): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP7OXDWof30>
- ✓ **Videos on austerity measures and the gender pension gap** (European Women's Lobby): <http://www.womenlobby.org/European-Women-s-Lobby-launches-video-clip-A-she-re-cession-What-does-austerity?lang=en>
- ✓ **Web documentary on the construction of gender stereotypes** (French only): <http://www.ecoledugenre.com>
- ✓ **Video on subtle sexism** (Huffington Post): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/48-subtly-sexist-things-women-hear-in-a-lifetime_us_566595d2e4b08e945feff668
- ✓ **Video "Women, not objects!":** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J31AT7vqiq>
- ✓ **Video on the under-representation of women in decision-making** (ELLE UK): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEKo22ryWxM>

Answers to the test

1. Women represent 40% of members of parliaments in Europe.

Incorrect. On average, women represent only 31% of members of parliaments in Council of Europe member states (2021). Council of Europe [Recommendation Rec\(2003\)3 on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making](#) provides that “the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%”. Data per member state: [Gender Equality in parliaments](#).

2. Women and men have equal access to resources.

Incorrect. Statistics and research show that women and men are in different situations in most areas. This is particularly true in relation to access to resources. In EU countries, women earn on average 14% less than men and the average gender pension gap is as high as 29%, which is the result of gender inequalities in employment over the life cycle. Beyond wages, there is also a gender gap in relation to access to other assets; for example, women represent only 30% of farm holders on average in 34 European countries. Men also have more access to symbolic resources like networks, which impacts on employment or decision-making opportunities, and women have less free time, due to the higher share of unpaid care and household work they carry.

3. Public policies are neutral, they affect everybody in the same way.

Mostly incorrect. In most areas, regarding paid and unpaid work, access to resources and to power, women and men are in different situations. Public policies therefore need to take this into account, in order to reach their aims. For example, promoting part-time work for women only may improve work-life balance for women in the short term, but it will not help to close gender gaps in relation to employment, pay or pensions in the long run. It can also be a counter-productive measure as it does not encourage the equal sharing of unpaid care work between women and men.

4. Gender roles are socially constructed; they change over time and differ between and within cultures.

Correct. The term “gender” refers to socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and for men. Gender roles are not biologically determined or fixed in time, they depend on what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context and at a given time. There can be significant differences in gender roles depending on country, social class, family status, age, ethnic or religious background and moment in history. In addition, gender roles are not neutral. They are characterised by a hierarchy of values, rights or decision-making power between women and men. For

example, the social value given to care work (traditionally attributed to women) is lower than the value attributed to technical work. Gender equality aims at promoting less stereotyped gender roles, which should make it easier for women and men to make free choices in the public and private sphere and to have equal access to, and control over, resources and power.

5. Gender mainstreaming requires the equal participation of women and men in all programmes and activities.

Correct. Ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all programmes and activities is a principle of justice and an aspect of gender mainstreaming. However, the mere presence of women is not enough to ensure the integration of a gender equality perspective in the content of a policy, activity or project. To do this, a gender analysis and consequent integration of gendered aspects is also needed. For example, the equal presence of girls and boys in an educational activity will not guarantee their equal participation in practice (speaking time, etc.), nor the fact that the activity will be adapted to the needs of girls and boys, nor that the activity will promote more equality between girls and boys.

6. Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective entails new duties and practices for ministries and civil servants.

Partly correct. When carried out properly and in a planned manner, in particular if support tools and training have been made available, gender mainstreaming does not necessarily entail unreasonable amounts of extra work. However, some reading and/or training is necessary at the beginning. Gender mainstreaming entails a change of approach in policy making and challenging existing practices and stereotypes.

7. Gender mainstreaming should replace specific policies for the advancement of women and positive actions.

Incorrect. Gender mainstreaming is a tool with the final aim to reach real equality between women and men. In most national and international policy contexts, including the Council of Europe, gender equality policies are built upon a so-called “dual approach” combining gender mainstreaming and specific policies for the advancement of women, including positive actions. The aim of positive actions is to correct existing discriminations and unequal situations, which are mainly to the detriment of women (wage and pension gaps, gender-based violence, under-representation in decision making, etc.).

8. All ministries have duties in relation to the integration of a gender equality perspective.

Correct. Most ministries are implementing policies that affect people; therefore, these policies are likely to affect women and men. In this context, taking into account the situation and needs of all people is a condition for efficient policy making. The idea behind gender mainstreaming is also to transform the (unequal) gendered way in which most public institutions have often been working, and to ensure that all policy making takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns. It may

also involve implementing policies concerning the functioning of ministries: introduction of care leave for women and men, of codes of conduct and training against sexism and violence, the revision of texts in inclusive language, more transparent modes of promotion and/or the introduction of quotas.

9. Data and statistics on people, in general, should be broken down by sex only if sex-disaggregated information is readily available.

Mostly incorrect. Data and statistics on people should always be broken down by sex and, if possible, by other factors, such as age. If it is unreasonably difficult to access the information, it may be useful to find out why. If sex-disaggregated statistics are not available at all, aiming at making them available or raising awareness about existing gaps are legitimate and important policy goals and a first step towards gender mainstreaming.

CONTACT

Do not hesitate to contact the Gender Equality Division of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe gender equality website contains information about existing standards, policy issues, publications, activities and contacts at national level as well as useful links.

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The Council of Europe Gender Equality Rapporteurs act as ambassadors for gender equality and gender mainstreaming within their respective institutional bodies.

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