

Report on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism



GENDER EQUALITY
COMMISSION (GEC)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Report on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION (GEC)

French edition:

*Rapport sur la mise en œuvre de
la Recommandation CM/Rec(2019)1 sur
la prévention et la lutte contre le sexisme*

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Executive summary

Context

Sexism is a significant obstacle to the realisation of women's human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. It hampers equal opportunities and empowerment of women and girls in many domains, including access to power and decision-making, development of professional life, access to public space, inclusion in the digital world, choice of one's lifestyle and a life free from gender-based violence.

In March 2019, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism prepared by the Gender Equality Commission (GEC).

The Recommendation contains the first ever internationally agreed definition of sexism, covering any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex. It points out that sexist behaviour affects women and girls disproportionately, leading to discrimination and preventing their full advancement in society. The Recommendation addresses those acts that can be regarded as "harmless" but which can also have a profound impact on victims and perpetuate gender inequalities and violence against women. While sexism is closely related to both the notions of sex-based discrimination and of gender-based violence, it is a much broader concept that captures acts of "everyday" sexism that are considered by many as "less harmful", including speech and behaviour such as humour, jokes, false compliments, unwanted remarks by strangers or micro aggressions that are not identified or addressed by existing legal definitions of sex discrimination and violence against women. Thus, the objective of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) is to bridge the gap between international, national and regional standards guaranteeing the principle of gender equality and *de facto* gender equality in the Council of Europe member States.

Recommendation (2019)¹ asks member States to monitor progress in its implementation and to inform the competent steering committee(s) of the measures taken and progress achieved. Within this framework, the present report is based on the answers to a questionnaire addressed to the members of the GEC as well as to national and international NGOs, to assess the progress made since the adoption of the Recommendation, focusing specifically on general measures, including legislation and policies to address sexism.

Findings

Analysis of the answers to the questionnaire on the implementation of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) shows that some progress has taken place at the level of national legislation and policies to combat sexism and sexist behaviour. While only three countries have specific legislation on preventing and combating sexism – France, Belgium, and Cyprus – the majority of member States report addressing sexism within the framework of anti-discrimination law or laws on equality between women and men. In relation to legislation on sexist hate speech, the report shows a more positive picture given that almost all member States that responded to the questionnaire have some legislative provision addressing the “incitement of hatred, violence or discrimination” against a person or group of persons on various grounds, including on the grounds of sex.

In relation to comprehensive policies to address sexism and sexist hate speech, the report reveals that there has not been a uniform approach to the implementation of the Recommendation across member States. The most common approach identified among member States was to integrate policies and measures addressing sexism within a broader gender equality policy. These include policies and measures to address gender stereotypes and manifestations of sexism in various sectors, such as in education, the workplace, in politics, and the media.

However, the report reveals that the distinction between sexism and other gender equality issues – such as gender-based violence – is not always clear for the member States. While sexism is closely related to both the notions of sex-based discrimination and of gender-based violence, it is a much broader concept. Similarly, in relation to comprehensive policies to address sexism, the distinction between policies aimed at combating sexism and sexist hate speech and policies for the promotion of gender equality was not always clear to the respondents.

Despite shortcomings in the implementation of legislation and policies to address sexism in the member States, a number of promising initiatives to

address sexism and its manifestations have been identified and included in this report that can provide impetus and inspiration for further progress in this area.

The report also demonstrates the importance of the participation of civil society, in particular women's non-governmental organisations, in the implementation of the Recommendation. Women's NGOs carry out a range of activities including contributing to the development of policies at the national and EU level in line with the Recommendation, advocacy activities include through media interventions, awareness raising, data collection and research, and training of professionals.

While this report has documented some progress in implementation of the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), its impact has been limited and further action is needed at the national level to step up efforts to prevent and combat this phenomenon that continues to widespread and prevalent in all sectors and all societies. The support of the Council of Europe in this regard will be crucial moving forward, in providing technical support and guidance and in continuing to widen the awareness of the Council of Europe standards on sexism and sexist hate speech.

Recommendations

- ▶ Member States should step up efforts to pass legislation in compliance with the Recommendation (2019)1 that condemns sexism and criminalises sexist hate speech. In order to incentivise the adoption of specific legislation to combat sexism in member States, the Council of Europe should provide more clarification of the exact meaning of the concept of sexism, and further guidance in how to integrate it within national legal frameworks.
- ▶ It is fundamental to establish and make clear the links between gender stereotypes, sexism, male violence against women and girls and the achievement of equality between women and men, girls and boys, in line with the goals of Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023). To this end, policies to address sexism should be integrated in existing public policy instruments already in place in all the key areas identified in the Recommendation and in particular on equality between women and men (i.e. national action plans).
- ▶ In order to ensure that policy measures aiming at addressing sexism are evidence-based, member States should support the collection of robust data, as well as scientific research, on sexism, sexist behaviour,

- and sexist hate speech across policy sectors. Reliable and comparable data is essential to accurately assess progress on addressing sexism, as well to assess how sexism intersects with other forms of discrimination.
- ▶ Policies and measures to address sexism and sexist hate speech should be designed in co-operation with relevant organisations, particularly women's NGOs. This should also entail increased support to civil society organisations with experience and expertise on preventing and combating sexism to engage in actions to address sexism including awareness raising, research and data collection, and training of professionals.



**Sexism:
See it.
Name it.
Stop it.**

Introduction

In March 2019, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism prepared by the Gender Equality Commission (GEC).

The Recommendation contains the first ever internationally agreed legal definition of sexism, covering any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex. It points out that sexist behaviour affects women and girls disproportionately, leading to discrimination and preventing their full advancement in society. It also highlights the link between sexism and violence against women, since acts of “everyday” sexism are part of a continuum of violence creating a climate of intimidation, fear, discrimination, exclusion and insecurity that limits opportunities and freedom, affecting women first and foremost.

The Recommendation places an emphasis on what constitutes sexist behaviour and puts forward practical ways for member States to identify and deal with it. It comprises a comprehensive catalogue of measures to both prevent and combat sexism, and it calls for specific action in such areas as: general measures; language and communication; media, internet and social media; advertising and other means of communication; the workplace; the public sector; the justice sector; education institutions; culture and sport; and lastly the private sphere.

This innovative text, adopted in response to society's growing expectations in this area, calls on the Organisation's 46 member States to step up their fight against sexism in all walks of life, since it is widespread and prevalent in all sectors and all societies, and to pass legislation condemning sexism and making sexist hate speech a criminal offence. It also calls on countries to monitor the implementation of policies to combat sexism at national level and to submit periodic reports to the Council of Europe. The proposed measures are also directed to other relevant stakeholders for preventing and combating sexism such as NGOs, the media, academia, and private sector organisations.

The present report is based on the answers to a questionnaire addressed in 2022 to the members of the GEC well as NGOs to assess the progress made since the adoption of the Recommendation- focusing specifically on general measures, including legislation and policies to address sexism. Subsequent review reports will have a thematic focus, addressing one or more targeted areas.

Context and background on sexism in Europe

Sexism is rampant in Europe and is rooted in gender inequality and unequal hierarchies and power relations connected to sex and gender. Historically, over and above individual acts, dominant cultural norms – whether in language, art, history, law or political institutions – have been imbued with ideas and practices reflecting male domination over women and therefore sexism.

Sexism is harmful in ways that form inequalities between women and men and can lead to discrimination. Sexism produces feelings of worthlessness, avoidance strategies and self-censorship, changes in behaviour, and a deterioration in health. Individual acts of sexism create a climate of intimidation and insecurity, which can lead to tolerance of violence, especially against women and girls. While sexism affects everyone, women and girls suffer disproportionately. Most women have at some point experienced a sexist act. Nevertheless, sexism also affects men and boys, especially when they do not conform to traditional male stereotypes and societal roles.

Sexism functions to maintain patriarchy, or male domination, through ideological and material practices perpetrated at the individual, institutional and structural levels that oppress women and girls on the basis of sex or gender. The impacts of sexism and sexist behaviour are real and severe and include but are not limited to psychological, emotional and/or physical impacts. Sexist hate speech is one of the expressions of sexism and includes

expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on sex (Council of Europe 2016). Although it has taken a new dimension through the Internet, the root causes of sexist hate speech preceded the technology. The aim of sexist hate speech is to humiliate or objectify women, to undervalue their skills and opinions, to undermine or even destroy their reputation, to make them feel vulnerable and fearful, and to control and punish them for not following a certain behaviour. Sexist hate speech has the effect of silencing women, obliging them to adapt their behaviour and limit their movements and participation in diverse human activities.

Sexism is inextricably and profoundly connected to violence against women and girls, as sexism can also be manifested through direct physical and sexual interpersonal violence by boys and men against women and girls. As stated in the Recommendation, *“sexist behaviour such as, in particular, sexist hate speech, may escalate to or incite overtly offensive and threatening acts, including sexual abuse or violence, rape or potentially lethal action.”*¹ Thus, acts of explicit and subtle sexism are part of a continuum of inequality and violence against women and girls. They are connected in that they are all rooted in an imbalance of power and the intent to dominate, humiliate and control women and girls, either individually or collectively.

The true extent of sexism, including sexist hate speech, is partly hidden by the fact that the majority of women targeted do not report it. Furthermore, research and data on incidence and impacts of sexism and its manifestations are limited.

Despite this, research in this area has been picking up pace in recent years and can provide a snapshot of the prevalence and impact of sexism and sexist behaviour in various sectors, including more explicit forms of sexism, such as physical and sexual violence. One of the most recent surveys on sexism was carried out in France by the High Authority on Equality (Pierre-Brossolette et al. 2023). The report shows that sexism in France remains at “alarming” levels in all areas, and is actually getting worse, particularly for younger women. Women are being targeted by new forms of harassment including online violence, verbal abuse on social media and pornography with “barbaric” content. 33% of French women say they already had sex even though they did not want to, citing their partner’s insistence. More than a third of them, 37%, even say they had non-consensual sex. Yet only 12% of men admit to having insisted on having sex although they knew their partner did not want to. Among the women aged 18-24 questioned, 22% said they

1. Appendix to Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism, Context.

had suffered “psychological control or excessive jealousy” by a partner and 15% had been beaten by their partner or ex-partner. This rose to 20% among women aged 50-64.

Sexism undermines equal access to public services and the public space. It creates an oppressive environment, preventing mainly women from working there or participating fully in political and public life. Women who are public figures, in particular female politicians, find that their public status puts them at increased risk of sexism and sexist hate speech. A study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) (2018), showed that acts of sexism, abuse and violence against women impact women in public life, and particularly in parliaments in Europe. 58.2 per cent of female members of parliament (MPs) who took part in the study said that they had been the target of online sexist attacks on social networks, and 85.2 per cent had suffered psychological violence in the course of their term of office, and 58.2 per cent had been the target of online sexist attacks on social networks. Sexism, harassment and violence against female MPs had the short- and long- term consequences of hindering women’s access to leadership positions and their full contribution to political processes.

Moreover, sexism can take place also in the workplace, creating an intimidating and oppressive atmosphere and is damaging to everyone’s self-fulfilment. According to a survey of sexism and sexual harassment in the world of work (Fondation Jean-Jaurès and Foundation for European Progressive Studies 2019) covering France, Germany, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, 60% of women reported that they have been victims of at least one form of sexist or sexual violence during their careers. These include both subtle and explicit forms of sexism such as inappropriate or sexual remarks, comments or gestures, to more severe forms of sexism such as sexual harassment and sexual assault, demonstrating the link between sexist behaviour and violence against women. 21 percent had reported such cases in the previous 12 months, and more than 40 percent of the victims were under the age of 30. Furthermore, more than 10 percent of the 5,000 respondents – nine percent in France, 15 percent in Spain – said they were “forced into” unwanted sex by someone at work. Importantly, the study found that only a minority of victims of workplace harassment had spoken out about their experiences.

The media is another area where sexism and gender stereotypes in language and communications is prevalent. Sexist messages in the media reinforce such stereotypes, lock women and men into limited roles and cause real harm. They can lead some people, for example young women, women

journalists or activists, to withdraw from social media in order to escape ridicule and insults. A study² looking at gender stereotypes in television advertisements in eight European Union member States found a rather balanced representation among the primary (adult) characters (48% men versus 52% women), but substantial imbalances when broken down by age with 63% of women in the 18-34 age span and 38% for the 35+ age span. This raises concerns about the objectification and sexualisation of women in advertising and the lack of visibility of women over 35 years of age.

As noted in the 2019 Recommendation, sexism and sexist behaviour are directly linked to gender stereotypes and inherent biases that shape societal norms, behaviour and expectations. The Gender Social Norms Index (2023)³ quantifies biases against women, capturing people's attitudes on women's roles along four key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity. The index, covering 85 percent of the global population, reveals that close to 9 out of 10 men and women hold biases against women. Nearly half the world's people believe that men make better political leaders than women do, and two of five people believe that men make better business executives than women do. These biases hold across regions, income levels and cultures demonstrating that gender bias is an issue of global proportions.

Scope and methodology

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) asks member States to take measures to prevent and combat sexism and its manifestations in a wide range of areas, and to implement appropriate legislation, policies and programmes drawing on the definition and on the concrete guidelines appended to the Recommendation.

The GEC developed and adopted two questionnaires to two different kinds of stakeholders (member States and civil society organisations). The questionnaires were circulated to member States, and to relevant specialised NGOs in the last quarter of 2022. Responses were received from 28 member States and nine NGOs. They aimed to evaluate the implementation of measures taken and progress accomplished by member States in the

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2. Study quoted in European Institute for Gender Equality, Beijing+25, the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, 2020, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/beijing-25-fifth-review-implementation-beijing-platform-action-eu-member-states>.
 3. UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2023. 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI): Breaking down gender biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality. New York.

implementation of the Recommendation, focusing on general tools and measures for addressing sexism and specifically legislation and policies. Respondents were asked to focus their answers on actions taken at the national level to prevent and address sexism, sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech specifically, rather than on general policies to promote gender equality which are reported separately within the framework of following up on the achievement of objectives of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.

One of the main challenges encountered in the analysis of data was to assess whether legislation, policies and measures reported by the member States were relevant to sexism and sexist behaviour specifically, or to gender equality policies in general. For example, in many instances, data provided referred to gender equality policies and anti-discrimination policy, as well as policies to prevent and combat gender-based violence, rather than policies and measures on sexism. This points to the need for more clarity among the member States in relation to the phenomenon of sexism and its distinct characteristics and manifestations. Another challenge was in assessing statements that came from respondents in the absence of sufficient evidence. Further, some respondents did not provide answers to all questions, resulting in some sections having less data for analysis than others.

Part 1

Implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 by member States

Tools to prevent and combat sexism can include legislative, executive, administrative, budgetary and regulatory instruments, as well as policies, action plans, and programmes. A variety of tools is needed to address the different manifestations of sexism, from implicit bias and sexist stereotyping to deliberate sexist behaviours. The former may be addressed through ‘soft’ measures such as awareness raising, and training and education while ‘hard’ methods are needed for deliberate and persistent sexist behaviours and sexist hate speech, such as legislative provisions criminalising sexism and sexist behaviour.

Table 1 – Responding member States

Andorra	Denmark	Luxembourg	San Marino
Austria	Estonia	Malta	Slovakia
Azerbaijan	France	Monaco	Slovenia
Belgium	Germany	Netherlands	Spain
Croatia	Greece	Poland	Switzerland
Cyprus	Latvia	Portugal	Sweden
Czechia	Lithuania	Romania	Türkiye

A. Legislation addressing sexism

This section of the report focuses on legislative measures in the member States to address sexism. Specifically, the Recommendation asks member States to consider enacting legislation addressing sexism, including definitions; a user guide; and an indication of the avenues of recourse and reparation for victims, and of the risks and ramifications for perpetrators. Importantly, legislation in this area should take into account intersectional forms of discrimination.

Sexism has proved to be an issue rarely covered by a specific piece of legislation in the Council of Europe member States. It is much more likely, however, to find it in the framework of other kinds of legislation, such as anti-discrimination laws that cover explicitly sexual discrimination, laws that cover gender equality in a broader meaning (therefore including sexism), or the constitution of a country. From the data analysed, it is apparent that the distinction between sexism and other gender-related topics is not always clear to respondents. Thus, member States would potentially need more clarity on the exact meaning of the concept of sexism vis-à-vis other offences, and more guidance in navigating its presence in legislation. Table 2 outlines the different kinds of legislation on sexism by country.

1. Type of legislation addressing sexism

Table 2 – Type of legislation

Country	Specific legislation on sexism	Gender equality law	Anti-discrimination law	Principle of gender equality – Constitution	Provisions related to sexism in the criminal code	No legislative provision reported
Andorra			X			
Austria						X
Azerbaijan				X		
Belgium	X					
Croatia		X	X			
Cyprus	X					
Czechia			X			
Denmark		X				
Estonia		X	X			
France	X	X	X			
Germany		X				
Greece		X	X			
Latvia					X	
Lithuania		X		X		
Luxembourg		X			X	
Malta		X				
Monaco					X	
Netherlands			X	X		
Poland			X	X		
Portugal						X
Romania			X	X		
San Marino				X		
Slovakia			X			
Slovenia			X		X	
Spain		X	X			
Switzerland			X			
Sweden			X			
Türkiye			X	X		
Total	3	10	15	7	4	2

As shown in Table 2, only three out of the 28 countries having answered the questionnaire reported having specifically addressed sexism in their legal frameworks (Belgium, Cyprus, and France). In 2014, Belgium passed a law to combat sexism in the public space⁴ making sexism a criminal offence. The law and definition adopted in Belgium focus on a specific field of application: the public space and public meetings in general. However, this scope can be broad as, according to Article 444 of the Belgian Criminal Code (mentioned in the definition), sexism can also cover acts taking place anywhere if committed in front of the victim and in the presence of witnesses, as well as acts directed at a person in a private place that is “open to a certain number of people who have the right to visit or meet there”.

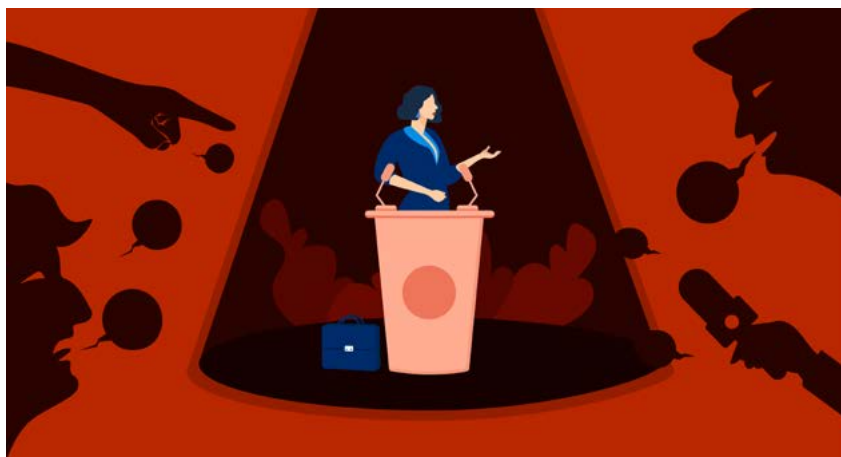
In France, sexist acts were initially addressed in the Labour Code through the so-called “Rebsamen” Law of August 17, 2015 (article L 1142-261 of the Labour Code): “no one should be subject to sexist acts, defined as any act associated with the sex of a person, with the aim or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”. Law No. 2018-703 on strengthening the fight against sexual and gender-based violence⁵ broadened the scope of sexual harassment to include the notion of sexist comments or behaviour and created a new fineable offence of “sexist contempt” to repress so-called “street” harassment and expanded the definition of online harassment. The scope of sexist contempt is not limited to the public space but can cover sexist acts regardless of its place in which it is perpetrated.

In Cyprus, Law (L.209(I)/2020) combating sexism and online sexism⁶ was adopted, providing a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention of sexism and sexist behaviour in the public and private sphere, including online sexism. The law, that includes specific reference to Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), makes acts of sexism online or offline a punishable offence.

In France and Belgium, legislation on sexism preceded the adoption of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#). In France the legal framework has progressively broadened in scope, from a focus on the workplace to covering

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4. Act to combat sexism in public spaces and amending the Act of 10 May 2007 to combat discrimination between women and men in order to criminalise the act of discrimination, https://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=fr&la=F&cn=2014052240&table_name=loi.
 5. Loi n°2018-703 du 3 août 2018 renforçant la lutte contre les violences sexuelles et sexistes, <http://www.justice.gouv.fr/bo/2018/20180928/JUSD1823892C.pdf>.
 6. The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and for Related Matters Law No.209(I) of 2020, [http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/\\$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf](http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf)

sexist acts in public spaces and online. In Belgium, the first country to provide a legal definition of sexism, the legal framework focuses specifically on sexism in public spaces and introduces some limitations, as the violation of the victim's dignity must be "serious", whereas the French law is broader in scope considering all sexist acts as reprehensible. The Cypriot law, adopted after adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1, is more closely aligned to the text of the Recommendation, adopting its definition of sexism and sexist behaviour, which focuses on the harm that results from sexist acts regardless of intent. This is in contrast to the Belgian law, where sexist acts must be intentional, with the clear purpose of harming the victim.



The majority of member States, however, report addressing sexism within the framework of anti-discrimination law or laws on equality between women and men. Thirteen member States refer to anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on a range of grounds, with explicit reference to discrimination on the grounds of sex. For example, Sweden's Discrimination Act (2008:567)⁷ prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of sex, among other grounds. In Andorra, Law No. 13/2019 on equal treatment and non-discrimination⁸, while not specifically devoted to gender equality, stipulates that it is aimed particularly at women because of the structural inequalities stemming from the unequal power relations between women

7. Discrimination Act 2008:567, <https://www.do.se/download/18.277ff225178022473141dda/1618941061391/discrimination-act-2018.pdf>

8. Law 13/2019 on equal treatment and non-discrimination, <https://www.consellgeneral.ad/fitxers/documents/lleis-2019/llei-13-2019-per-a-la-igualtat-de-tracte-i-la-no-discriminacio/view>

and men. Law No. 13/2019 requires the principles of equality and non-discrimination (direct and non-direct) to be applied across the board in the private and public sectors.

Ten member States refer to prohibition of sexism within the framework of laws on gender equality. In Greece, for example, Law 4604/2019 on promoting substantive gender equality⁹ provides definitions on types of discrimination including gender-based discrimination, and Article 12 prohibits the use of sexist language in administrative documents, while also providing for the promotion of gender equality in the media, with emphasis on combating gender stereotypes. Estonia's Gender Equality Act¹⁰ provides for the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex in the private and public sector. Spain's Organic Law 3/2007¹¹, of 22 March, for the effective equality of women and men ensures equal treatment and opportunities for women and men, in particular via the elimination of discrimination against women in all areas of life, specifically in the political, civil, occupational, economic, social and cultural domains. It also refers to sexism in different areas, such as education, health, communication, business and language.

Several member States report addressing sexism in their criminal code (Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovenia, and Monaco). For example, Article 454 of the Luxembourg Criminal Code provides for the prohibition of discrimination on sex, among other grounds. Others report criminalising some manifestations of sexism in their criminal code although no explicit reference to sexism is made. These include, for example, criminal code provisions covering violent acts against women and sexual offences.

Some member States refer to the general provisions included in their national constitutions framing gender equality as a core principle of a State's Constitution, therefore indirectly addressing sexism. For example, the Portuguese Constitution establishes a general principle of non-discrimination on several grounds. Sex is explicitly indicated as a discriminatory ground and sex discrimination is explicitly prohibited (Article 13(2)). In the case of Azerbaijan and San Marino constitutional provisions were the only legislative provisions on sexism reported.

9. Law 4604/2019

10. Gender Equality Act (2004), <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/507032022002/consolide/current>

11. Constitutional Act 3/2007 of 22 March 2007 for effective equality between women and men, https://www.coe.int/t/pace/campaign/stopviolence/Source/spain_constitutionalact3_2007_en.pdf.

In several cases, an overlap between two or more of the above categories in terms of types of legislation can be found, such as in the case of the Netherlands, where the principle of anti-sexism is stated both in the Constitution as well as in the “General Equal Treatment Act”. However, the different categories of legislation should be intended as progressively ordered constituting a spectrum: from most specific (specific legislation on sexism) to the least (constitution), with mention of the cases with no provision.

Finally, in Austria and Portugal, the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex is dispersed in several pieces of legislation relating to different fields such as employment and maternity.

Promising practice – The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and for Related Matters Law,2020(L.209(I)/2020)) Law, Cyprus

Recognising that sexism is widespread and prevalent in all institutions and layers of society, reiterating stereotypes and gender-based discrimination, on a national level, a group of women Members of Parliament undertook the initiative to draft specific special legislation to combat sexism and online sexism. The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and for Related Matters Law,2020(L.209(I)/2020)) Law¹² was drafted based on Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) and constitutes a comprehensive legislative tool to effectively prosecute anyone behaving in a sexist manner, as well as to protect victims. The Law criminalises sexism in all its forms in both public and private spheres, including online sexism. More specifically, any form of public or private sexist behaviour which is perpetrated against a specific person or a specific group of people, and which consists of an action, a gesture, visual material, a practice, oral or written word based on the idea or concept that a person or group of people is inferior based on their sex constitutes sexism.

2. Type of legislation on sexist hate speech

Sexist hate speech is a daily phenomenon for many women,¹³ and is increasing steadily over recent years with the internet providing a new dimension for the expression and transmission of sexist hate speech.

12. The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and for Related Matters Law No.209(I) of 2020, [http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/\\$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf](http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf).

13. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism.

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)16](#) of the Council of Europe on combating hate speech defines hate speech as follows: *“hate speech is understood as all types of expression that incite, promote, spread or justify violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them, by reason of their real or attributed personal characteristics or status such as “race”;¹⁴ colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation”*.

While in the vast majority of Council of Europe member States sexist hate speech does not have a specific legal definition and it is not subject to specific criminalisation or comprehensive legal treatment, numerous countries report introducing criminal or other sanctions for sexist hate speech.

The analysis of responses illustrates that all member States have some legislative provision addressing hate speech. Not as common, however, is legislation that explicitly addresses/includes the sexist dimension of hate speech. Thus, there exists a complex legislative environment in relation to sexist hate speech, which includes cases of specific legislation criminalising sexist hate speech, as well as legislative provisions that cover sexist hate speech but are not specifically dedicated to it. These cases have been classified based on their explicit mention of sexist hate speech or of where sex is explicitly cited as a ground for hate speech. Where there is no explicit mention of sexist hate speech or hate speech on the grounds of sex, other hate speech legislative provisions may apply on a case-by-case basis. The classification should however be intended as progressively ordered constituting a spectrum: from most to least specific, with mention of the member States with no provision on the matter. Table 3 displays the different kinds of legislation against sexist hate speech by country.

14. Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Committee of Ministers rejects, as does the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), theories based on the existence of different “races”. However, in this document, the term “race” is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as “belonging to another race” are not excluded from the protection provided for by the legislation and the implementation of policies to prevent and combat hate speech.

Table 3 – Type of legislation on hate speech, including sexist hate speech

Country	Specific legislative provision on sexist hate speech	Provisions of the criminal code WITH specific mention of sex-based hate speech	Provisions of criminal code WITHOUT specific mention of sex-based hate speech	No legal provisions on hate speech
Andorra			X	
Austria		X		
Azerbaijan				X
Belgium	X			
Croatia		X		
Cyprus	X			
Czechia			X	
Denmark				X
Estonia		X		
France	X			
Germany			X	
Greece				X
Latvia		X		
Lithuania		X		
Luxembourg		X		
Malta		X		
Monaco				X
Netherlands		X		
Poland				X
Portugal		X		
Romania		X		
San Marino				
Slovakia		X		
Slovenia		X		
Spain		X		
Switzerland				X
Sweden		X		
Türkiye				X
Total	3	14	3	7

As shown in Table 3, only three countries out of 28 member States having replied, report having specific legislation criminalising sexist hate speech (Belgium, Cyprus, France). Interestingly, these same countries have specific legislation on sexism, as analysed above. While Cyprus does not specifically define sexist hate speech in its legislation on sexism, the definition of sexism is broad enough to cover “*publicly or privately expressed sexist behaviour... consisting of an action, gesture, visual presentation, practice, written or oral expression*”.¹⁵ Similarly, in Belgium, hate speech can be sanctioned on the basis of the law to combat sexism in the public space.¹⁶ In France, legislation defines and criminalises various manifestations of sexist hate speech across several pieces of legislation, namely sexist insults, defamation on the basis of sex, and incitement to hatred, discrimination, or violence on the basis of sex.¹⁷

The majority of member States, however, report criminalising hate speech through provisions of the criminal code, and specifically the crime of “inciting hatred, violence or discrimination” against a person or group of persons on various grounds, including sex. This applies to Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. In some cases, hate speech is considered as an aggravating circumstance to other crimes in the criminal code. For example, Croatia reported to define the crime of hate speech as an aggravating circumstance in the Criminal Code.¹⁸

Fewer member States have in place legislation concerning hate speech, without explicit specification for the grounds of sex. This applies to Andorra, Czechia and Germany. Nevertheless, this kind of legislation can sometimes apply to cases of hate speech on the grounds of sex, due to the composition of the specific piece of legislation. For example, Article 338 of the Criminal Code of Andorra covers the crime of discrimination, which includes acts such as publicly inciting violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of people. Such legislative frameworks can apply to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of sex, and more specifically to women as a group.

15. The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and for Related Matters Law No.209(I) of 2020, [http://www.olic.gov.cy/olic/olic.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/\\$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf](http://www.olic.gov.cy/olic/olic.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf)

16. Loi tendant à lutter contre le sexisme dans l'espace public et modifiant la loi du 10 mai 2007 tendant à lutter contre la discrimination entre les femmes et les hommes afin de pénaliser l'acte de discrimination, https://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.p?language=fr&la=F&cn=2014052240&table_name=loi

17. Law on the Freedom of the Press of 29 July 1881 (Articles 24-2, 32, 33, 39, 48-6).

18. Criminal Code (amended text), https://www.vsrh.hr/CustomPages/Static/HRV/Files/Legislation__Criminal-Code.pdf

Finally, for some member States, it was not possible to discern, based on the data provided, whether such provisions apply to hate speech on the basis of sex or report explicitly to not having any legislation on hate speech. This applies to Azerbaijan, Denmark, Greece, Monaco, Poland, Switzerland, and Türkiye.



3. Legislation adopted in response to Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1

Six countries expressly stated that they had adopted legislation in response to the adoption of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), namely, Cyprus, France, Greece, Monaco, Slovenia, and Spain. In line with the Recommendation, in 2020 Cyprus adopted a comprehensive law to prevent and combat sexism and online sexism.¹⁹ While in France legislation on sexism preceded the adoption of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), the legal framework has progressively broadened in scope, and in 2020 it adopted further legislative measures prohibiting sexist in the public services, as well as establishing a system for reporting sexist acts in the public service.²⁰ In 2019, Greece

19. The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and for Related Matters Law No.209(I) of 2020, [http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/\\$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf](http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/34F9B88314085CADC22587C900262F00/$file/The%20Combating%20of%20sexism%20Law.pdf).

20. Article L 131-3 of the general code of the public service: "No public official must be subjected to sexist action, defined as any action linked to a person's sex, the purpose or effect of which is to undermine their dignity or to create an intimidating environment, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive." and Decree No. 2020-256 of March 13, 2020 relating to the system for reporting acts of violence, discrimination, harassment and sexist acts in the public service.

adopted Law 4589/2019 that provides for the establishment of Gender Equality Committees at all Greek universities, which act as advisor bodies for universities to promote gender equality and anti-discrimination and to contribute to the prevention of sexism, sexual assault and harassment on university grounds. In Monaco, Law No. 1.523 of 16 May 2022²¹ on the promotion and protection of women's rights, modified and repealing obsolete or unequal provisions with regard to women, listed in all the Codes and non-codified provisions of Monegasque law.²² In Spain, Law 16/1983 on the creation of the Institute of Women was modified by Law 11/2020 on the General State Budget, to include among the Institute's functions the prevention and combating sexism.²³ Finally, in Slovenia the Higher Education Act was amended in 2022 to address sexual and other harassment and ill-treatment in higher education institutions.

4. Remedies for victims of sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech

A deeper analysis was conducted for some specific characteristics of legislation on sexism and sexist hate speech, and related laws. In particular, the dimension that was investigated was if the legislation in question had assistance-oriented features alongside its regulatory and criminal aim, and what categories of victim support are covered. Such features can include safe and accessible reporting mechanisms for victims of sexist hate speech, assistance for victims at all stages of criminal proceedings, sanctions for perpetrators, and compensation for victims. Interestingly, those countries with specific legislation on sexism and sexist hate speech (Belgium, Cyprus, France), do not report having specific remedies for victims, but refer to procedural assistance and rights established for the victims, including the right to compensation or legal aid.

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21. Law No. 1.523 of 16 May 2022 on the promotion and protection of women's rights, <https://www.global-regulation.com/translation/monaco/185384135/acts---act-no.-1.523-of-16-05-2022-on-the-promotion-and-protection-of-women%255cs-rights-by-amending-and-repealing-obsolete-and-unequal-provisions.html>.
 22. Loi n° 1.523 du 16 mai 2022 relative à la promotion et la protection des droits des femmes par la modification et l'abrogation des dispositions obsolètes et inégalitaires, <https://journaldemonaco.gouv.mc/Journaux/2022/Journal-8592/Loi-n-1.523-du-16-mai-2022-relative-a-la-promotion-et-la-protection-des-droits-des-femmes-par-la-modification-et-l-abrogation-des-dispositions-obsolètes-et-inegalitaires>.
 23. Law 16/1983: Ley 16/1983, de 24 de octubre, de creación del Organismo Autónomo Instituto de la Mujer, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1983-28126>.

Other member States also focused on remedies in a broader sense, reporting on remedies available for victims of crime including but not limited to sexist behaviour and hate speech.

The classification of types of remedies reported by the member States are presented in Table 4. Most member States report to have in place sanctions for perpetrators among other support mechanisms for victims of sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech. This applies to Andorra, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Spain and Sweden. Sanctions in place vary extensively from monetary fines to imprisonment.

Another common remedy for victims reported by member States is victim assistance: this applies to Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and Spain. The kind of assistance offered to victims of sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech varies widely. For example, in Austria²⁴ psycho-social assistance is available for victims, while in Croatia²⁵ individual assessment of the victim's needs is performed to determine appropriate support and protection measures, including for victims of hate crimes.

Specific reporting mechanisms for sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech are less common, as shown in table 4. Several countries report that victims of sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech can report to the police, as with any other crime (Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Romania, Belgium, Andorra, France, Slovenia, Spain). In Andorra,²⁶ Belgium,²⁷ and Spain however, there are legislative provisions to ensure that police are trained to handle reports of crimes related to sexism. In Belgium, the law provides that victims of offenses and their relatives must be treated correctly and conscientiously. A circular concerning police assistance to victims develops this principle, including the fact of avoiding giving rise to a feeling of guilt in the victim.

24. Section 66b para. 1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/503966>

25. Article 43a paragraph 3 of the Criminal Procedure Act, https://www.vsrh.hr/CustomPages/Static/HRV/Files/Legislation__Criminal-Procedure-Act.pdf

26. Article 47 of Law 6/2022, March 31st, for the effective application of the right to equal treatment and opportunities and non-discrimination between women and men, <https://www.consellgeneral.ad/ca/activitat-parlamentaria/lleis-aprovades/llei-6-2022-del-31-de-marc-per-a-l2019aplicacio-efectiva-del-dret-a-la-igualtat-de-tracte-i-d2019oportunitats-i-a-la-no-discriminacio-entre-dones-i-homes>

27. Article 3bis du Code d'instruction criminelle for a correct and conscientious treatment of victims, http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/img_l/pdf/1878/04/17/1878041750_F.pdf

Memorandum GPI 58 du 4 May 2007 concerning police assistance to victims, with article 5.2.1 specifying police need to not create a sense of guilt in the victim, https://etaamb.openjustice.be/fr/circulaire-du-04-mai-2007_n2007000523.html

In addition, police procedures on investigation and prosecution policy in matters of discrimination and hate crimes establishes a series of rules in relation to police intervention on discrimination-related crimes. In Spain, a protocol for law enforcement agencies has been developed for dealing with hate crime and other forms of discrimination. Denmark, on the other hand, has established the Equal Treatment Board,²⁸ which handles complaints about discrimination on any grounds, including gender, within and outside the labour market.

Table 4 – Type of remedies in legislation against sexist behaviour and hate speech

Country	Reporting mechanisms	Compensation	Victim assistance	Sanctions	No remedies reported
Andorra	X			X	
Austria			X		
Azerbaijan					
Belgium	X			X	
Croatia			X	X	
Cyprus				X	
Czechia					X
Denmark	X	X		X	
Estonia					X
France	X		X	X	
Germany	X		X	X	
Greece					X
Latvia			X		
Lithuania				X	
Luxembourg			X		
Malta				X	
Monaco					X
Netherlands			X		
Poland			X		
Portugal					X
Romania	X			X	

28. The Equal Treatment Board, <https://ast.dk/naevn/ligebehandlingsnaevnet>

San Marino					X
Slovakia			X		
Slovenia		X			
Spain	X		X	X	
Switzerland					X
Sweden				X	
Türkiye					X
Total	7	2	10	12	8

In relation to compensation, this was a less common remedy for victims of sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech and was reported by Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Slovenia, and Türkiye. However, these mostly refer to general provisions regulating claims for damages or compensation for victims of crimes and/or discrimination, and not specifically in relation to sexism. For instance, Denmark reports providing the possibility of compensation in the Act of Equal Treatment of Men and Women as well as in the Gender Equality Act, while in Slovenia the Crime Victims Compensation Act regulates access to compensation and the circumstances under which one can apply.

Promising practice – Protocol for Action by law enforcement agencies for hate crime, Spain

Spain adopted the Protocol for Action by law enforcement agencies for hate crime and conduct in breach of the legal provisions on discrimination.²⁹ This Protocol provides victims with a range of mechanisms for reporting hate incidents and hate crimes, including gender-based hate crimes. The Protocol includes, among others, indicators for identifying hate incidents to be included in police reports, guidance on the treatment of victims, criteria for recording incidents on different grounds of discrimination and guidance on managing relations with civil society organisations and communities. Point 6 of the Protocol specifically refers to hate speech and incidents committed via the internet and social media.

29. [Protocol for Action by Law Enforcement agencies for Hate Crime and Conduct in Breach of the Legal Provisions on Discrimination.](#)

Eight countries did not report having any mechanisms in place for the purposes described above. This applies to Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Monaco, Portugal, San Marino, and Switzerland.

Promising practice – Equal Treatment Board, Denmark

The Equal Treatment Board³⁰ was established in 2009 as an independent board that makes decisions in cases of discrimination for all groups that are protected against discrimination in Danish legislation. The Equal Treatment Board can decide on discrimination that occurs in and outside the labour on the basis of sex and other grounds, including gender identity, gender expression, and gender characteristics. Both direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment are covered. All persons who consider themselves wronged by failure to apply the principle of equal treatment lodge a complaint with the Board, without cost. The Board can award compensation and invalidate dismissals (to the extent provided for by certain acts and collective agreements).

B. Policies on preventing and combating sexism

The second section of this report is dedicated to the assessment of policies in place in member States to prevent and combat sexism and sexist hate speech. The complementary use of a policy measures alongside legislation can prove very fruitful in inducing change at all levels. Policies can touch upon range of areas of action and have different structures. In the following paragraph an analysis of the different kinds of policies reported among member States are illustrated and explained in detail.

1. Type of policy on preventing and combating sexism

The first distinction on policies against sexism that was investigated in the context of this report is the presence of a comprehensive policy on sexism. Recommendation Rec/CM (2019)¹ encourages member States to adopt a *“policy framework on the elimination of sexism and gender discriminatory stereotypes, with targeted objectives, benchmarks, timelines, progress and results indicators, as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess the impact of the steps taken.”* Thus, for the purposes of this report, comprehensive policies on sexism are those that include some or all these

30. Equal Treatment Board <https://ast.dk/naevn/ligebehandlingsnaevnet>

elements. Other policies considered are those addressing sexism within the framework of a national strategy on gender equality. It is important to mention that the distinction between policies aimed at combating sexism and sexist hate speech, and policies for the promotion of gender equality was not always clear to the respondents. Thus, the criteria adopted for the classification of policies presented in Table 5 include policies adopted explicitly to prevent and combat manifestations of sexist behaviour and/or sexist hate speech, or address root causes of sexism and sexist behaviour such as gender discriminatory stereotypes. Policies that do not fit either of these criteria were classified as not addressing sexism specifically, but rather gender equality issues more broadly.

As depicted in Table 5, only a few member States report having adopted a comprehensive policy to prevent and combat sexism. From the analysis of the data received, only Belgium, Spain, and Sweden can be said to fulfil the elements of comprehensive policies as defined by the Recommendation. These policy frameworks, while integrated in the framework of the national action plan on gender equality, address a vast range of manifestations of sexism within an overarching policy, including addressing discriminatory stereotypes that reinforce sexism. For example, in Spain the 3rd Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and Men (2022-2025)³¹ sets the policy agenda on gender equality, with the aim of combating hegemonic gender roles and stereotypes, while specifically addressing the behaviours and cultural patterns that maintain sexist violence, in areas such as the media, technological, audio-visual and cultural sectors, or the educational system.

31. La Moncloa (2022) The Government of Spain approves the Third Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and Men 2022-2025: https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2022/20220308_council.aspx

Table 5 – Type of policies against sexism in member States

Country	Comprehensive policy on sexism	Policy on sexism within gender equality policy	Policies that address aspects of sexism	No policies on sexism reported
Andorra		X		
Austria			X	
Azerbaijan				X
Belgium	X			
Croatia		X		
Cyprus				X
Czechia				X
Denmark		X		
Estonia		X		
France		X		
Germany		X		
Greece		X		
Latvia		X		
Lithuania		X		
Luxembourg		X		
Malta		X		
Monaco			X	
Netherlands				X
Poland				X
Portugal				X
Romania				X
San Marino				X
Slovakia				X
Slovenia				X
Spain	X			
Switzerland		X		
Sweden	X			
Türkiye			X	
Total	3	12	3	10

Within Sweden's 'National strategy for combating and preventing men's violence against women and honour-related violence and repression'³², the government adopted a national violence prevention programme. This programme includes policies and plans for several areas and agencies to combat sexism and stereotypical, sexist norms. The programme also explicitly recognises the importance of challenging the views of power and masculinity early to prevent stereotypical perceptions of masculinity and femininity which increase the tendency for violence. Belgium has committed through its National Action Plan to combat gender-based violence 2021-2025³³ to take action on sexism in the public space. Measures include evaluation of the implementation of the Sexism Act, facilitation of reports and complaints of sexism, promotion of ongoing training for law enforcement, evaluation and deployment of police initiatives to combat sexism, among others.

It is much more common among member States to have a policy on sexism within a broader gender equality policy. This case applies to 12 member States, namely Andorra, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, and Switzerland. This group includes all member States who reported to have policies that address aspects of sexism in their overarching national strategies on gender equality, but that do not claim to comprehensively address sexism. Rather, such policies are less ambitious and foresee the implementation of measures within specific sectors considered a priority at the national level. For example, in Switzerland a National Action Plan³⁴ for the period 2022-2026 was approved by the Federal Council for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, therefore addressing violence against women, a specific manifestation of sexism. This policy focuses on three thematic priorities (information and awareness of the population, basic training and continuing education for professionals and volunteers, and sexualised violence), targeting the root causes of violence against women by addressing sexist stereotypes that foster an environment conducive to violence. Other targeted actions addressing sexism include Latvia's Plan on the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men 2021-2023,³⁵

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32. <https://swedishgenderequalityagency.se/men-s-violence-against-women/national-strategy-to-prevent-and-combat-men-s-violence-against-women/>
 33. National Action Plan to combat gender-based violence 2021-2025, <https://sarahschlitz.be/wp-content/uploads/sites/300/2021/11/20211125-PAN-2021-2025-clean-FR.pdf>
 34. Federal Council adopts national action plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, https://www.ebg.admin.ch/ebg/fr/home/le-bfeg/nsb-news_list.msg-id-89386.html.
 35. Plan on the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men 2021-2023, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/325509-par-planu-sieviesu-un-viriesu-vienlidzigu-tiesibu-un-iespeju-veicinasanai-20212023-gadamn>.

that includes activities that target negative gender-based stereotypes that can promote sexist behaviour.

Some member States report having gender equality initiatives in place that, while general in nature, are relevant to preventing and combating sexism and worth mentioning. For example, in Austria the Federal Minister for Women, Family, Integration and Media, in cooperation with the Austrian Advertising Agency (Österreichischer Werberat), established the “Anti-Sexism Advisory Council”(Anti-Sexismus Beirat),³⁶ with the aim of addressing complaints of gender-discriminatory advertising. Denmark established the Alliance against Sexual Harassment, which aims to prevent and combat sexual harassment in the workplace and in society, by addressing gender stereotypes and negative social norms.

Finally, in ten cases there was no mention of a policy to prevent and combat sexism, nor any policy that contributed to this aim: this applied to Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Czechia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Promising practice – Alliance against Sexual Harassment, Denmark

In 2020, the Danish government launched a number of initiatives to strengthen efforts against sexual harassment. As part of this, the government and the social partners agreed in March 2022 on 17 initiatives that aim to contribute to a cultural change through better prevention and handling of sexual harassment in the labour market. One of said policies is the establishment of the Alliance against Sexual Harassment.³⁷ The goal is to create lasting cultural changes and maintain a focus on prevention and handling of sexual harassment, as well as ensure ongoing dialogue, exchange of experience and knowledge sharing in the area. In addition, the alliance can provide advice, tools and recommendations aimed at workplaces, educational institutions and organisations, as well as carry out joint activities, e.g. small campaigns, surveys, conferences, meetings. The alliance is expected to run for at least 5 years and is led by the Ministry for Equality.

36. Anti-Sexism Advisory Council, <https://www.werberat.at/antisexismusbeirat.aspx>.

37. The Alliance Against Sexual Harassment, <https://seksuelchikane.dk/en/>



2. Policies to protect groups in vulnerable situations

Women and men may be confronted with different and intersecting forms of sexism, based on a range of other factors including but not limited to ethnicity, minority status, age, religion, refugee or migrant status, disability, marital status, social origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or sexuality. Furthermore, they may be in more vulnerable situations or be targeted by different acts of sexism in different settings, such as young women and women active in a mostly male environment, for instance business, finance, the military or politics. Women in positions of power or authority, and women who are public figures in different sectors, may also be especially susceptible to sexism as they are perceived to have deviated from social gender norms that exclude women from public spaces or authority. Some circumstances can add to the seriousness or impact of sexist behaviours, or to the capacity of the victim to react. Such intersecting factors, context and differences between women, situations of enhanced vulnerability and aggravating circumstances need to be recognised and taken into account when developing policies and measures to prevent and combating sexism.

This section highlights the levels to which policies take into account the needs of individuals in vulnerable situations, and more specifically if policies on sexism adopt an intersectional approach. Different levels of compliance with an intersectional approach were identified in the course of the analysis. Therefore, the categories in which policies were classified should be intended as progressively ordered, constituting a spectrum. Table 6 presents the different levels of adherence to the intersectional approach, by country.

An analysis of the data received, show that a few member States have adopted an intersectional approach in policies to prevent and combat sexism, in that they report taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups in policies to prevent and combat sexism. The member States that were identified as adopting such an approach either reported it explicitly or were categorised as such due to their reporting policies that address multiple grounds of vulnerability therefore constituting an approach that can be considered intersectional. This applies to Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Malta, Spain and Switzerland. For example, Belgium reports that the intersectional approach is integrated both in the National Action Plan to Combat Gendered Violence,³⁸ as well as in specific programmes such as the Project Safer Cities³⁹ that aims to combat sexual harassment.

Furthermore, four member States while reporting addressing some vulnerabilities in state policies (such as national action plans dedicated to specific population groups), did not report addressing multiple vulnerabilities in the context of policies to prevent and combat sexism. This applies to Andorra, France, Germany, Lithuania, and Sweden. For example, Lithuania reports measures in its action plan on gender equality that target the specific needs of migrant and disabled women, without elaborating on an intersectional approach or mentioning grounds of vulnerability.

This previous approach was distinguished from member States who reported addressing the needs of individuals in vulnerable situations without offering concrete examples (Greece, Romania, Slovenia, and Türkiye). Greece, for example, reported having the fourth axis of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021 – 2025⁴⁰ dedicated to gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies that addresses women who face multiple discrimination, social exclusion, and belong to vulnerable groups, but no specific measures are reported.

38. National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence 2021-2025, <https://sarahschlitz.be/wp-content/uploads/sites/300/2021/11/20211125-NAP-2021-2025-clean-NL.pdf>.

39. Safer Cities: Safer and More Inclusive Cities, <https://www.planinternational.be/fr/safer-cities>

40. National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025, <https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/National-Action-Plan-for-Gender-Equality-2021-2025.pdf>.

Table 6 – Type of policies taking account of needs of vulnerable individuals

Country	Intersectional approach	Some vulnerabilities covered	Vulnerabilities are covered but no examples are provided	No policies addressing the needs of vulnerable groups reported
Andorra		X		
Austria				
Azerbaijan				X
Belgium	X			
Croatia				X
Cyprus				
Czechia	X			
Denmark	X			
Estonia				X
France		X		
Germany		X		
Greece			X	
Latvia				X
Lithuania		X		
Luxembourg				X
Malta	X			
Monaco				X
Netherlands				X
Poland				X
Portugal				
Romania			X	
San Marino				X
Slovakia				X
Slovenia			X	
Spain	X			
Switzerland	X			
Sweden		X		
Türkiye			X	
Total	6	5	4	10

The majority of member States did not report having adopted any policy that takes into account the needs of individuals in vulnerable situations or adopting an intersectional approach in an effort to do so. Ten countries belong to this group, namely Azerbaijan, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Poland, San Marino and Slovakia. Austria, Cyprus and Portugal did not provide any data for this question. The data provided by the member States did not refer to measures to address vulnerability in the context of policies to prevent and combat sexism.

3. Monitoring and evaluation of policies on sexism

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 asks member States to monitor progress in its implementation and to inform the competent steering committee(s) of the measures taken and progress achieved. In this regards, member States are asked to provide information on legal and policy frameworks, measures and best practices that address sexism and its manifestations, including reporting procedures and sanctions; policies adopted to eliminate sexism and sexist behaviour, including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place; research and data collection undertaken on the incidence and consequences of sexism and sexist behaviour; and on any national awareness-raising measures and campaigns undertaken, including the types of media used.

Thus, monitoring and evaluation is a key commitment of member States in order to comply with reporting requirements of the Recommendation. This section presents mechanisms in place in the member States to monitor and evaluate policies on sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech.

Promising practice – Recommendation of the Institute for the equality of women and men No. 2022-R/010 concerning the law aimed at combating sexism in the public space, Belgium

In 2022, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men published a report evaluating the implementation of Belgium's law on sexism.⁴¹ The assessment was followed by concrete recommendations for improvement of the legislative framework, the training of legal professionals and the judiciary, as well as awareness raising campaigns and educational programmes to change attitudes and behaviours in society.

41. Recommendation of the Institute for the equality of women and men No. 2022-R/010 concerning the law aimed at combating sexism in the public space, https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/recommandation_loi_sexisme.pdf.

Consistent with the findings presented above, only France and Belgium report mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of legislation and policies on sexism. In Belgium, within the framework of the National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence 2021-2025, the Federal Secretary of State for Gender Equality has instructed the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men to assess the law of 22 May 2014 aimed at combating sexism in the public space. In Flanders, the Flemish gender equality body (*Genderombuds*) has set up a contact point for all people who have questions or complaints about sexist behaviour (#metoo helpline). As part of the Women's Rights Plan, the French Community has set up a Monitoring Committee made up of representatives of the administration, ministerial cabinets and members representing civil society. This committee assesses the implementation of the strategic objectives and measures relating to women's rights, meets at least 4 times a year and issues an interim and final report on the implementation of the Plan. In France, the High Council for Equality between Women and Men (HCE) is the body responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of public policies on the prevention and fight against sexism. Within this framework, the HCE is responsible for publishing an annual report on the state of sexism in France.

Other member States that do not have specific legislation or policies on preventing and combating sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech, reported monitoring and evaluation mechanisms embedded in their national action plans or strategies on gender equality and/or violence against women and domestic violence.

Promising practice – The work of the High Council for Equality between Women and Men (HCE) to collect data on the state of sexism in society, France

The High Council for Equality between Women and Men (HCE) was created in 2013 by decree of the President of the Republic and was included in the law relating to equality and citizenship of 27 January 2017, which mandates it with the task of drafting an annual report on the state of sexism in France. The most recent annual report on the state of sexism in France was published in March 2022⁴² and was based on the results of a "sexism barometer", an annual survey on the prevalence of sexism in society. In this way, the HCE contributes to the evaluation of public policies concerning equality between women and men by ensuring the collection and analysis of data on the phenomenon of sexism and the impact of relevant laws and making policy recommendations to the Prime Minister.

42. Rapport annuel 2022 sur l'état du sexisme en France, https://medias.viepublique.fr/data_storage_s3/rapport/pdf/284289_0.pdf.

4. Involvement of stakeholders in policies on sexism

Among other characteristics of policies on preventing and combating sexism, data was analysed on the level and extent of involvement of relevant stakeholders in the process of drafting and implementation of policies. This is an important element of policymaking that enhances the quality, outreach and impact of policies and measures, and ensures that they address the needs of its target groups. It should be noted, however, that data provided by the member States was not always related specifically to policies to prevent and combat sexism, but to the level and extent of involvement of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of gender equality policies in general. Table 7 outlines the different levels of involvement of stakeholders that were reported among member States, by country.

Table 7 – Type of stakeholders involved in drafting and implementation of policies on sexism

Country	All relevant state agencies, local and regional authorities	Civil society organisations	Other relevant stakeholders
Andorra		X	
Austria		X	
Azerbaijan		X	
Belgium	X	X	X
Croatia	X	X	X
Cyprus			
Czechia		X	X
Denmark		X	X
Estonia			
France			
Germany			X
Greece			
Latvia			
Lithuania			
Luxembourg	X	X	X
Malta	X	X	X
Monaco	X		
Netherlands			
Poland			

Portugal			
Romania	X	X	X
San Marino			
Slovakia		X	
Slovenia			
Spain		X	
Switzerland	X	X	
Sweden	X	X	
Türkiye	X	X	
Total	9	15	8

As depicted in Table 7, the extent and level of involvement of various stakeholders in policies on sexism varies greatly among States.

Nine member States having replied reported involving all relevant State Agencies, alongside local and regional authorities, in the drafting and implementation of policies to prevent and combat sexism. This applies namely to Belgium, Croatia, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Romania, Switzerland, Sweden, and Türkiye. The process put in place to involve stakeholders varied by country. For example, Romania reports an extensive consultation process for the drafting of policies on equality between women and men and policies on gender-based violence, and that such consultations took place involving central and local institutions, as well as county commissions, and other actors. An example of engaging local authorities in policies on sexism is in Sweden, where the Swedish government collaborated with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to pilot the implementation of a policy to challenge gender stereotypes and violence against women. Following the pilot, the policy was then rolled out in other municipalities.

Furthermore, 15 member States having replied reported involving civil society organisations in the drafting and implementation process of policies to prevent and combat sexism. This applies to Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and Türkiye. The involvement of civil society takes place in different ways, as opposed to the involvement of State bodies, which is somehow similar in its procedure across member States. For example, in Austria cooperation and coordination with civil society is ensured by a yearly exchange between the Federal Ministry and NGOs according to the

Equal Treatment Act and the Federal Equal Treatment Act (NGO Dialogue).⁴³ In Belgium, following consultation of civil society Organisations for the drafting process of the National Action Plan, a National Platform of Civil Society was established, to foster an environment that enables coordination and cooperation.

Eight member States having replied reported the involvement of 'other relevant stakeholders' in policies to prevent and combat sexism. This applies to Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta, and Romania. Other stakeholders include entities that do not belong to the public or NGO sector but that pursue the same interests and collaborate with State and non-State institutions on the prevention and combating of sexism such as educational institutions, trade unions, and private sector organisations. For example, Romania reported cooperation between national and county commissions for equal opportunities with relevant stakeholders such as academia and trade unions, while Denmark reported cooperation in place with a variety of different stakeholders in the public and private sector.

5. Financial support for the implementation of policies on sexism

Besides involvement and strategies of cooperation at various levels, it is also important to assess the commitment that member States were able to make towards the achievement of objectives of legislation and/or policies for the prevention and combating of sexism. This commitment needs to be substantial in order to be effective, and is therefore financial in nature.

Financial support for the implementation of policies and measures to combat sexism is often provided to NGOs for a number of reasons. Firstly, financial support is provided within the framework of existing mechanisms of collaboration and cooperation with NGOs for the promotion of gender equality policies and secondly, it is widely recognised that NGOs have the relevant experience and expertise, as well as direct contact with beneficiaries at the local and national level. In addition, due to limited resources, NGOs do not always have the capacity to implement wide-scale projects without financial support. Financial support, however, can also involve other actors or other stakeholders relevant to preventing and combating sexism, such as trade unions, education institutions, sports organisations, media organisations, among others.

43. Equal Treatment Act, version of 28.08.2023, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20003395>.

It should be noted that data provided by the member States on financial support includes support provided for the implementation of actions within the framework of national action plans and other strategies to promote gender equality, rather than specifically for actions to prevent and combat sexism. While such support is important, for the purposes of this report the analysis below is limited to those initiatives for the support of policies on sexism.

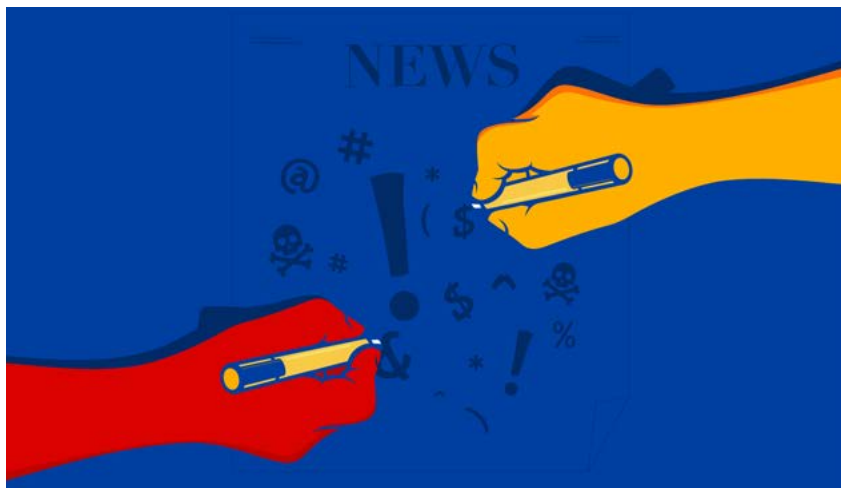
Eight member States reported allocating resources to support the implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat sexism (Andorra, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, and Sweden). All report to supporting NGOs to implement activities and projects for the prevention and combating of sexism. Among these, the mechanisms for providing support differ greatly: for example, in the Czechia,⁴⁴ projects on sexism and gender stereotypes are implemented by NGOs and supported through a grant funded by the Iceland Norway Liechtenstein Fund for active citizenship. In Sweden, the system of funding involves the State interacting with an umbrella organisation (Swedish Women's Lobby), which ensures the national coordination of local initiatives (for example, *Swedish MeToo: Samordning MeTooUppropen*). In Belgium, there is a specific budget for associations active in the field of gender equality, as well as a normative framework adopted by decision "Go for Equality", that establishes structural support for civil society, and for organisations active in preventing and combating sexism in particular.⁴⁵ In Spain, in compliance with the General Subsidies Law (Law 38/2003, of November 17), the Spanish Government has allocated 0.7% of GDP to the development of NGO programmes. In 2022, the Institute of Women participated in the evaluation commission that authorised the financial support of 66 programs, with a total budget of €4,392,359.1, to develop equality in several areas.

Only Spain has reported devolving funding to other stakeholders to implement projects to eradicate and combat sexism. For example, the Institute of Women provided a grant to the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, aimed at promoting reconciliation of work and private life from a gender perspective.

The majority of member States, therefore, as stated previously, did not report allocating financial resources on policies and measures specifically focusing on preventing and combatting sexism.

44. Prevention of domestic and gender-based violence, <https://www.eeagrants.cz/cs/programy/lidska-prava/vyzvy/2021/prevence-domacicho-a-genderove-podmineneh-3436>.

45. Press release: 51st National Women's Day, <https://www.furiavzw.be/netwerk/abortion-right/item/387-persbericht-51ste-nationale-vrouwendag>.



6. Awareness raising measures and training of professionals

The different types of measures aimed at preventing and combating sexism include of actions to increase awareness and understanding among the general public. As stated in the Recommendation, sexism is a systemic problem, that is rooted in social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men, and gender stereotypes and biases. Therefore, targeted measures to produce a shift in the collective consciousness is essential to efforts to preventing sexism in all its manifestations. This can be achieved in a number of ways: among these, national awareness-raising initiatives at all levels and through diverse forms of media, as well as training of professionals, including for educators in all spheres and at all levels of education. In addition, policies to prevent and combat sexism that encompass awareness raising measures present the crucial advantage of being able to reach the general public across different demographics, as well as the possibility of tailoring the scope of a campaign to reach specific target groups. Systematic training of professionals not only allows for raising awareness but also contributes to changing the outlooks and the conduct of these professionals, particularly in relation to victims of sexism and sexist behaviour, but also on how to recognise and address sexism, prejudices and biases, and how to challenge stereotypes.

The analysis on these two types of policies implemented by the member States was conducted together due to their common aim off bringing about change in the collective culture of sexism. The extent to which the Recommendation was used in awareness raising efforts of the member States was also assessed.

It is worth mentioning that member States reported awareness raising measures implemented by State actors, as well as others initiated by other bodies such as NGOs and other stakeholders. This should be taken into account when evaluating results, as confusion may arise on which actor is the funder and/or promoter of a specific measure.

Table 8 outlines the results of this section of the questionnaire, by country. The majority of member States report having implemented awareness raising initiatives to prevent and combat sexism and sexist behaviour. These include Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Among these, different techniques were employed by the member States. A common means used by the member States is audio-visual material. For example, in 2021 the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs published a series of 10 short video-lectures with an aim to raise awareness on gender equality, violence against women, including digital violence, equal treatment of minorities and on promoting diversity. Also in Monaco, the Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights used video as a means to raise awareness on how to challenge sexist behaviour on the occasion of International Women's Day 2022. Similarly, in 2022 the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Digital Transformation launched the media campaign whereby short video clips featuring Slovenian athletes speaking out against hate (including sexist hate speech) were prepared and published on social media. Finally, in Malta sexism and sexist behaviour were addressed through a previous campaign led by the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence entitled 'Consent Matters: Stop Sexual Violence'.⁴⁶ The campaign's focus on sexual harassment (including cyber harassment and harassment at the workplace) and active bystander intervention was meant to highlight sexist assumptions and stereotypes and how witnesses to these attitudes can intervene on behalf of the victim.

A number of member States also reported collaborating with the Council of Europe in their awareness raising efforts. For example, Azerbaijan reported awareness raising initiatives and seminars on gender stereotypes and other topics related to sexism that was the result of a cooperation between the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs (SCFWCA), the European Union and the Council of Europe.⁴⁷

46. Consent Matters. Stop Sexual Violence, <https://www.stopviolence.gov.mt/consent-matters-stop-sexual-violence/>

47. Workshop on gender stereotypes and violence against women in a village school in Azerbaijan, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/-/workshop-on-gender-stereotypes-and-violence-against-women-in-a-village-school-in-azerbaijan>.

Table 8 – Awareness raising campaigns or initiatives

Country	Countries implementing awareness-raising initiatives on sexism	Countries that used the Recommendation in their awareness raising activities	Countries who shared or promoted the Recommendation	Countries who provide support, and fund training for public/private professionals on sexism
Andorra	X	X	X	X
Austria	X			
Azerbaijan	X			
Belgium	X		X	X
Croatia		X	X	
Cyprus	X		X	X
Czechia				
Denmark				
Estonia	X			
France	X	X		X
Germany		X		X
Greece	X		X	
Latvia				
Lithuania				
Luxembourg	X	X		
Malta	X		X	X
Monaco	X			X
Netherlands	X			
Poland				
Portugal	X	X		X
Romania	X		X	X
San Marino				
Slovakia	X		X	
Slovenia	X			
Spain	X	X		
Switzerland				
Sweden	X	X		
Türkiye				
Total	18	8	8	9

In other cases, member States reported translation and dissemination of the Recommendation as part of their awareness raising efforts. This applies to eight member States, namely Andorra, Croatia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. The dissemination took various forms, depending on the national context of the member State in question: in some cases, such as Andorra, the dissemination process involved both the translation of the Recommendation to the national language and the dissemination of its content through a video produced by the Council of Europe. In other cases, such as in Croatia,⁴⁸ the Recommendation was translated to the national language and distributed in hard copy in public events and activities.

In relation to training, nine member States reported using this method in their efforts to prevent and combat sexism. This applies to Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, and Romania.

The characteristics of the training initiatives implemented in member States differ widely: for example, Slovakia reported holding trainings on gender equality and gender stereotypes for public and private sector employees with the financial support of the Ministry of Justice, while Malta reported implementing trainings for the education sector and among frontline professionals on gender based violence and domestic violence, as well as training for professionals from the public and private sector with the support of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality. In Azerbaijan, local authorities and municipalities play an important role in conducting training on a wide range of issues related to gender equality and sexism and disseminating content to protect women and girls with the support of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the German Cooperation Organization⁴⁹.

In some member States the contents of the Recommendation is used as a resource in trainings for various professionals, such as in the case of Portugal that reported disseminating the content of the Recommendation in the context of annual trainings held for public administration workers by the National Institute of Administration.

48. Seksizam: Uočite ga. Imenujte ga. Zaustavite ga. <https://human-rights-channel.coe.int/stop-sexism-hr.html>.

49. "Practical Recommendations for Implementing Gender Equality Policy in Municipalities", <http://scfwca.gov.az/en/post/2028/belediyelerde-gender-beraberliyi-siyasetini-heyata-kecirmek-ucun-praktiki-tovsiyeler-adli-beledci>.

Promising practice – Launching an information and awareness campaign on sexism, Luxembourg

In November 2022, the Ministry for Equality between Women and Men launched the new information and awareness campaign entitled “Sexismus: Erkenn und. Schwätz and. Stopp et!”. It aimed at providing a definition of sexism, showing its different facets and encouraging changes in behaviour. The campaign consisted of seven audio-visual clips broadcast in a targeted manner on TV, radio, cinema, certain websites and social networks, an action website, and a brochure to illustrate the multidimensional aspect of sexism and its presence in the various areas of our lives. The campaign ran until 31 January 2023.

Cooperation with the Council of Europe was a key factor in demonstrating that the fight against sexism should not be limited to the national context. Tools made available by the Council of Europe and the key messages conveyed through the “Sexism: See it. Say it. Stop it” campaign were used to develop the campaign.

7. Research and data collection on sexism and sexist hate speech

As stated in the Recommendation, member States are asked to monitor progress on sexism through data collection and research.⁵⁰ Reliable and comparable data is essential to accurately assess progress on preventing and combating sexism and identify trends as well as those most affected. Robust data enables governments to better design, adapt, monitor and evaluate policies, addressing the specific needs of both women and men as well as different and intersecting forms of sexism and sexist behaviour.

Due to the direct link between sexism and gender equality, relevant data to document the current state of sexism can be found in various specific sub-fields, such as sexism in the workplace, sexism in the public space, sexist hate speech, gender-based violence, among others. It is possible, however, to conduct *ad hoc* studies specifically on the various manifestations of sexism and sexist behaviour. In both cases, it is crucial that the data is age and sex-disaggregated to allow for a more comprehensive picture of the state of play, and to track trends over time. Importantly, research and data collection should be financially supported and carried out systematically, whether carried out by State authorities or outsourced to other bodies.

50. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), p. 29.

Eight member States having replied to the questionnaire reported having carried out research and data collection according to the criteria outlined. These include Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden. Naturally, the answers provided highlight differences among member States in the techniques used and scope of the initiatives reported.

For example, Belgium funded a survey at the federal level to map citizens' opinions and experiences on sexism, thanks to Federal Institute of Equality between Women and Men. The target group was partially specifically selected and partially randomized, and the questions administered regarded several subfields, such as sexual harassment in the workplace, street sexual harassment directed at transgender people.⁵¹ Furthermore, the Institute of Criminology also conducted a survey on police practices in dealing with report of sexism and sexist behaviour.

Promising practice – Using diverse media to raise awareness on sexism, Belgium

Belgium used diverse media in awareness raising efforts to prevent and combat sexism. Different techniques have been employed including a video on the notions and implications of sex and gender,⁵² a guide on respectful way of using such terms,⁵³ a website on unconscious social norms that might perpetrate stereotypes,⁵⁴ a campaign based in schools,⁵⁵ as well as more specific initiatives such as a toolkit to promote equality in journalism,⁵⁶ awareness raising websites to inform young people on cyber – harassment,⁵⁷ and a brochure on masculinity in media.⁵⁸ Such measures have been implemented at different levels: some belong to the federal level, some to each of the federated regions (Wallon and Flanders), as well as to independent bodies such as NGOs.

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51. Enquête #YOUTOO? https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/discrimination/sexisme/enquete_youtoo.
 52. "Les notions de sex et gender", 2020. Available in Dutch, German and French, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isV1HJPgarc>
 53. «Petit guide pour une écriture respectueuse du genre» (2022), <https://fedweb.belgium.be/fr/actualites/2022/petit-guide-pour-une-%C3%A9criture-respectueuse-du-genre>.
 54. Genderklik. Zie de rollen, www.genderklik.be.
 55. MoveMen: A partnership approach to gender justice work in Belgium, <https://menengage.org/stories/movemen-a-partnership-approach-to-gender-justice-work-in-belgium/>
 56. Association des journalistes professionnels Union professionnelle reconnue, <https://www.ajp.be/campagne-zero-sexisme/>
 57. #Arrete. C'est de la Violence, <https://arrete.be/>
 58. «Sexisme, médias et société» as part of the project Pop Modèles, <https://media-animation.be/Sexisme-medias-et-societe.html>.

Denmark reported conducting several surveys covering different areas where sexism is manifested. For example, a survey on sexual harassment in the workplace was conducted by the National Research Centre for Working Environment (National Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø – NFA), while another was conducted by the Ministry of Children and Education on harassment in the school system. Another survey is planned around the topic of street sexual harassment and the role of bystanders. In Türkiye, a study entitled “Violence against Women with Prevention, Intervention and Policy Dimensions and the Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic was conducted in order to assess the current data on the impact of the pandemic on violence against women and domestic violence.

In France, the Ministry responsible for equality between women and men finances research each year in all fields related to equality (or inequalities) between women and men. It also publishes annually “Key figures – Towards real equality between women and men”, a collection of statistics which aims to gather and make accessible in a hundred infographics the most significant data in France, in relation to the world, on employment, remuneration, job diversity, political parity, social rights and precariousness, health, sexist and sexual violence, education and vocational guidance, culture, sports, media, etc. More specifically on sexism, the High Council for Equality between Women and Men in France publishes its sexism barometer in its annual report on the state of sexism in France.⁵⁹

In Germany, a pilot study was conducted by the Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, called “Sexism in everyday life”,⁶⁰ that provides insight on a variety of factors, such as how society perceives sexism, what environments and forms of sexism are most common, and how it is understood among different social groups.

59. Rapport 2023 sur l'état du sexisme en France : le sexisme perdure et ses manifestations les plus violentes s'aggravent, <https://haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/stereotypes-et-roles-sociaux/travaux-du-hce/article/rapport-2023-sur-l-etat-du-sexisme-en-france-le-sexisme-perdure-et-ses>.

60. Sexism in everyday life. Perceptions and attitudes of the German population, <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/sexismus-im-alltag-141250>.



Spain and Sweden provide examples of systematic and comprehensive data collection on gender equality which are relevant to sexism. In Spain, the Institute of Women, an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Equality through the State Secretariat for Equality and Against Gender-Based Violence, collects and publishes data called “Women in Figures” (Mujeres en Cifras⁶¹), which is made up of a set of indicators that reflect the situation of women in different spheres of society in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics. The specific disaggregated framing of these data-gathering initiatives that compares men’s and women’s experiences allows for an interesting narrative to emerge, clearly highlighting differences and disparities between them. Similarly, Statistics Sweden publishes its report ‘Women and men in Sweden – facts and figures’⁶² every two years. All statistics in the reports are sex disaggregated and present the results from analysis and surveys about men and women in several different areas, for example unpaid home and care work as well as men’s violence against women. Furthermore, in 2020 Statistics Sweden was commissioned to carry out a pilot study with the aim of testing a new approach for a time-use survey among women and men that has been conducted every ten years since 1990. The statistics from the survey provide a picture of people’s everyday lives and show how the population divides their time into various activities, such as leisure and care activities.

61. Mujeres en Cifras, <https://www.inmujeres.gob.es/MujerCifras/Home.htm>.

62. Women and Men in Sweden – Facts and Figures 2022, <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/living-conditions/gender-statistics/gender-statistics/pong/publications/women-and-men-in-sweden---facts-and-figures-2022/>

Promising practice– Making use of the Council of Europe resources in awareness raising activities on sexism, Spain

Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) was translated into Spanish and broadly disseminated to, among others, the media, universities, NGOs, Ministries and Autonomous Communities. It is available in Institute of Women’s website. The Institute also published in 2019 and disseminated the Recommendation as a brochure. In addition, a report on the Recommendation was presented to the Spanish Council of Ministers for information, on 7 June 2019.

The campaign materials developed by the Council of Europe “Sexism: See it, Name it, Stop it!”, consisting of a video, an action page and a quiz, were also translated into Spanish as “Sexismo. Detéctalo. Ponle nombre. Páralo” with the hashtag #ParaSexismo. They were also broadly disseminated and are all available at the main page of the website of the Institute of Women.

In addition, the Institute of Women collaborated in 2020 in the webinars organised by the Spanish branch of the European Women’s Lobby, the NGO which developed the Council of Europe project “Take action against sexism” together with eight other countries of the Council of Europe. The topics of the seminars were sexism in the media and in the justice sector.

Part 2

Activities implemented by civil society organisations to prevent and combat sexism

This section presents the experience of NGOs and civil society organisations in preventing and combating sexism, sexist behaviour and sexist hate speech. The questionnaire dedicated to civil society organisations aimed to gather information on general awareness and use of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) among NGOs, activities implemented by NGOs in the area of preventing and combating sexism, NGO participation in policy formulation and implementation at the national level, and examples of “promising practice” on preventing and combating sexism.

As illustrated in the table hereafter, nine organisations responded the questionnaire, six of them being national NGOs and three European/regional.

Table 9 – NGO Respondents

Organisations/Institutions	
Name	Country/Region
European Women’s Lobby (EWL)	European
Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)	Cyprus
Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights	Portugal
Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)	European
University Women of Europe	European
Romanian Women’s Lobby	Romania
Dutch Council of Women	Netherlands
Bulgarian Platform European Women’s Lobby	Bulgaria
European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW)	Belgium

The data collected illustrates that all nine NGO respondents are active in more than one area or sector. The sectors in which the respondents are active are presented in Table 10. All NGO respondents reported working in the areas of women’s rights and violence against women and girls. Most of the organisations also reported working in the human rights sector (8 organisations) and on anti-discrimination and equality (7 organisations). Five organisations provide services for migrant women and asylum seekers, with four working in the field of education as well. Regarding social rights and justice, four out of nine organisations implement activities in these sectors. Fewer organisations reported working on LGBTQI+ rights, youth/children’s rights, culture, media, journalism and sports.

Table 10 – Sectors of work

Sectors of work \ Civil Society organisations	European Women’s Lobby	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies	Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights	Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community	University Women of Europe	Romanian Women’s Lobby	Dutch Council of Women / NVR	Bulgarian platform of the European Women’s Lobby	European Network of Migrant Women
Women’s rights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Violence against women and girls	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Human rights		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Media and journalism				X				X	
Social rights				X	X		X	X	
Anti-discrimination /equality		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Migration /asylum		X			X		X	X	X
Sports				X					
Education		X			X		X	X	
Culture				X	X			X	
Justice		X					X	X	X
Youth/ children’s rights		X			X			X	
LGBTQI+ rights				X	X			X	

Regarding the type of activities implemented, most NGOs carry out a range of activities, combining several methodologies in pursuing their objectives. All reported working on advocacy and awareness raising, while eight facilitate trainings for their beneficiaries, and eight NGOs reported carrying out research and data collection in their areas of work. Four organisations implement interventions in education, and only one reported providing victim support services and legal support.

Activities on preventing and combating sexism by NGOs

Most NGO respondents indicated a moderate to high level of knowledge of the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) (six organisations), also implementing actions in line with the Recommendation, and while three indicated a low level of knowledge.

Eight of the nine NGO respondents reported using and/or promoting Recommendation in their work. Actions to promote the recommendation mainly involve lobbying and advocacy, awareness raising, and training. For example, member-based organisations such as University Women of Europe and the European Women's Lobby have distributed the Recommendation to their members and have used it in the development of advocacy actions, as well as training of their members. The European Network of Migrant Women reported using the Recommendation in its advocacy work regarding the proposed EU Directive on violence against women and domestic violence, and specifically to draft amendment proposals and provide justification for them. They also reported using the recommendation in hearings and position papers to defend women's sex-based rights.

Promising practice – Bulgarian Platform of the European Women's Lobby

The Bulgarian Platform of the European Women's Lobby⁶³ coordinated at a national level the MAS Project in 2019-2020, as the leading organisation for the project implemented in Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, Spain Portugal and the Netherlands. As a result, the Recommendation became a priority in the Bulgarian national strategy for 2021-2030 on equality between women and men. During the last 3 years they have translated and disseminated the awareness raising materials, organising a social media

63. Bulgarian Platform of the EWL, <https://www.womenlobby.org/Bulgarian-Coordination-of-the-EWL>.

campaign against sexism and lobbying for specific actions to be taken by institutions and organisations in Bulgaria, and currently they are monitoring the implementation of the project.

1. Research and data collection on sexism

While the majority of NGO respondents reported carrying out research and data collection, only five reported focusing these activities specifically on sexism and sexist hate speech. Furthermore, data collection is carried out for the purposes of advocacy actions and to influence policy. For example, while the European Women's Lobby does not carry out research, it collects data on sexism from its members across Europe to inform awareness raising and policy advocacy actions. The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) carries out research on various manifestations of sexism, including gender-based violence against women, gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes in various sectors, including in the workplace and in education. MIGS also systematically monitors the media and has established a database of media content and uses this as a resource monitor trends in sexism in media reporting over time. Similarly, the Bulgarian Platform of the EWL monitors the media and makes interventions when they identify sexist incidents and/or reporting. The Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community (EL*C), focuses their efforts mainly on the intersection between gender and sexual orientation and collects and analyses cases of lesbophobia that encompasses misogyny, sexism and stigma towards lesbians.

Promising practice – Observatory on Lesbophobia 2019-2022

EL*C – EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community works to improve the rights, visibility, and well-being of lesbians throughout Europe and Central Asia. The EL*C Observatory on Lesbophobia⁶⁴ was launched in February 2022 and collected cases from 50 collaborators. This report focuses on lesbophobic violence and discrimination, with a special focus on lesbophobic aspects of harmful practices. The EL*C also makes recommendations to policymakers and public authorities to address lesbophobia, gender-based violence and hate crime against lesbians. Their recommendations include: explicitly identify lesbophobia as violence at the intersection of homophobia and misogyny; adapt the psychological support and training of healthcare professionals to the realities and difficulties experienced by lesbians; ensure that all incidents

64. Observatory on Lesbophobia 2019-2022, <https://europeanlesbianconference.org/observatory-on-lesbophobia-2019-2022/>

of gender-based violence and domestic violence against lesbians are properly and effectively recorded; ensure adequate, accessible, and reliable funding for projects and activities implemented by organisations focused on the led by lesbians; and to ensure that the training of relevant professionals include sensitisation on the specific needs and challenges faced by lesbians.

2. Initiatives to raise awareness on sexism

Six of the responding NGOs have implemented or promoted awareness-raising initiatives aimed preventing and combating sexism. The Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights for example, has focused their efforts on young people, implementing actions in schools, universities, and other informal youth gatherings. The EL*C reported often engaging in campaigns aimed at preventing sexism against lesbians, including the development of an awareness raising toolkit. University Women of Europe reported several awareness raising initiatives, including collective complaints for violations of the Social Charter, webinars, conferences, and a survey on sexism covering different countries in Europe. The Dutch Council of Women reported widely disseminating the Council of Europe campaign on Sexism: See It. Name It. Stop It⁶⁵, including MPs/MEPs, policy makers, civil servants on a local, regional and national level, the media, schools and universities, the health sector, cultural institutions and NGOs.

Promising practice – EWL Mobilise Against Sexism project

To raise awareness on sexism and how to combat all forms of sexism in key sectors, the EWL launched a collaborative project 'Mobilise Against Sexism'⁶⁶ together with nine national coordination members from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, and Spain. The 'Mobilise Against Sexism' project was supported by the Council of Europe, with the goal to raise awareness on sexism and influence member States to pass legislation in line with the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism.

65. Sexism: See It. Name It. Stop It, <https://human-rights-channel.coe.int/stop-sexism-en.html>.

66. Mobilise against Sexism, <https://www.womenlobby.org/Sexism>.

EWL members in the nine countries actively implemented activities in the target sectors as mentioned in the Recommendation , namely on the:

- ▶ Legislative measures (ban on sexism and criminalisation of sexist hate speech)
- ▶ Digital space
- ▶ Workplace
- ▶ Public sector
- ▶ Justice sector
- ▶ Educational institutions
- ▶ Culture and sport
- ▶ Private sphere

Meetings with national decision-makers were organised; gatherings with key sectors were conducted, such as with local members, women's organisations, civil society organisations, academics, lawyers, journalists, young feminists to name a few; webinars promoting the Council of Europe campaign on Sexism: See It. Name It. Stop It. were organised, and visibility plans on social media and on other communication tools were implemented.

3. Training for public or private professionals on sexism

Another key activity for addressing sexism in line with the Recommendation is training of public and/or private professionals. As Table 11 illustrates, the work of NGOs does not involve training on a large scale, highlighting the need for increased support to civil society organisations with experience and expertise on preventing and combating sexism to engage in training activities.

Table 11 – Training of professionals on sexism

Targets of training	Civil Society organisations								
	European Women's Lobby	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies	Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights	Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community	University Women of Europe	Romanian Women's Lobby	Dutch Council of Women / NVR	Bulgarian platform of the European Women's Lobby	European Network of Migrant Women
Educational staff		X	X			X			
Journalists and other media professionals		X							
Immigration/ asylum officials									
Police and other law enforcement personnel						X			
Justice sector professionals						X			X
Social services personnel						X			
Health professionals									
Military personnel									
Civil society organisations	X		X			X			X
Human resources personnel									
Other professional groups	X	X	X		X				
Total	2	3	3	0	1	5	0	0	2

4. Advocacy activities and participation in policy-making related to sexism

The data received show that nine of the organisations carry out advocacy activities directed at different sectors/stakeholders to prevent sexism. Their activities move along similar lines and all report having contributed to the development of policies at the national and EU level in line with the Recommendation. Advocacy activities include media interventions, holding public meetings and events with relevant stakeholders, and developing and disseminating policy recommendations. Three of the nine organisations reported organising advocacy activities within the framework of the EWL Mobilize against Sexism project, supported by the Council of Europe. For example, in November 2020, the Romanian Women’s Lobby organised a webinar on sexism against women in politics with the support of MP Senator in Romanian Senate Juridical Committee. The Portuguese Platform developed and widely disseminated national recommendations on the implementation of the recommendation aimed at the Government,⁶⁷ the Parliament,⁶⁸ as well as on youth and sports.⁶⁹

Promising practice – Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights

Following [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), the Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights⁷⁰, alongside with their website, has developed two online visual campaigns against sexism and, in collaboration with SONAE, which is one of the largest retail brands in Portugal, the videos were displayed in 300 stores, reaching an average of 569 thousand visitors per day. Furthermore, in partnership with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality and the School Libraries Network they promoted a national video contest, targeting youngsters from 12 to 8 years old. The outcome was the selection and submission of 62 videos, with the involvement of 153 students from a total of 24 schools or groups.

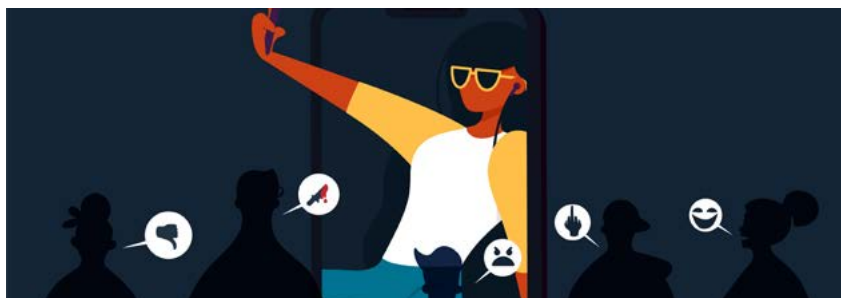
67. Prevenir e Combater o Sexismo: Recomendações ao Governo, <https://plataformamulheres.org.pt/site/wp-content/ficheiros/2022/01/Recomendacoes-ao-Governo.pdf>.

68. Prevenir e Combater o Sexismo: Recomendações ao Parlamento, https://plataformamulheres.org.pt/site/wpcontent/ficheiros/2021/12/Recomendacoes_Parlamento_6Dez2021_PT.pdf.

69. Prevenir e Combater o Sexismo: Recomendações na Área da Juventude e do Desporto, https://plataformamulheres.org.pt/site/wpcontent/ficheiros/2021/12/Recomendacoes_IPDJ_6dezembro2021.pdf.

70. The Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights, <https://plataformamulheres.org.pt/international/english/>

Six of the NGO respondents reported having been consulted in the design of policy aimed at combating sexism. The European Women's Lobby, for example, works with public authorities at the national level through their member organisations, and engages with public stakeholders at an EU level, most recently around the proposed EU directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence. In Cyprus, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies participated in several parliamentary committee meetings on the draft law on preventing and combating sexism. The Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights contributed to the design of the National Action Plan on Youth, which included a number of measures to prevent and combat sexism, drawn from the Recommendation. The Romanian Women's Lobby invited members from different women NGOs and participated in meetings with the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, between 2020-2022, within the framework of the EWL project Mobilise Against Sexism.



5. Activities to prevent and combat of online sexism

In relation to preventing and combating online sexism, online sexist hate speech and/or digital gender-based violence, seven out of 10 organisations have implemented activities in the field. The European Women's Lobby, for example, developed a training module for women candidates for elections, with a focus on cyber and online violence. They have also developed a standing observatory on violence against women, which brings together a group of women from 32 countries in Europe, each one coming from different fields. The EL*C developed a collaboration with UN Women, and they organised a public event focusing on online violence against women human rights defenders, with the participation of activists, politicians, and academics, to share analysis and good practices and reflect on common strategies.

Promising practice – Play 4 Your Rights project, Cyprus

The Play 4 Your Rights⁷¹ project aims to combat sexist hate speech, gender stereotypes and discrimination among adolescents through media education strategies and gamification practices. The project has worked with adolescents to produce two innovative educational games: a Card Game and an Urban Game, which will help students to understand and challenge sexist hate speech and gender discrimination.

The card game, entitled Strategic reactions, for male and female teenagers aged 12 to 18, aims to help teenagers identify the various forms and manifestations of sexist hate speech and reflect on how gender stereotypes and prejudices play a fundamental role in the construction of reality and in the language that describes it. The game also aims to stimulate boys and girls in activating strategies to react to the language of hate, working on the awareness of themselves, other people and their emotions.

Promising practice – Romanian Women’s Lobby – awareness-raising project for girls

Romanian Women’s Lobby introduces a slightly different perspective, as it works with young girls from rural areas and vulnerable groups from a city in the northeast Romania, facilitating meetings about meetings about sexism in relation with the field of justice, regarding the violence against women and girls. The outcome was that people from different backgrounds and occupations exchanged experiences and views on sexism and cyberviolence. Also, the role of traditional and social media was discussed, as a means of influence of the public sphere.

6. Actions on sexism implemented with public funding

Public funding of civil society is critical for the implementation of actions on preventing and combating sexism. The table below illustrates the type of actions implemented by each of the eight organisations that reported receiving public funding to prevent and combat sexism. The results demonstrate that awareness raising is most likely to receive public support, followed by the development of training materials, guidelines,

71. Play 4 Your Rights, <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/play-4-your-rights-project-card-game-application/>

and handbooks. Less public support was provided for research and data collection, and training of professionals. The fact that no NGO respondent reported receiving funding for the provision of victim support is likely due to the fact that only one NGO reported providing such support in their country.

Table 12 – Types of actions supported by public funding

Targets of training	Civil Society organisations								
	European Women's Lobby	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies	Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights	Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community	University Women of Europe	Romanian Women's Lobby	Dutch Council of Women / NVR	Bulgarian platform of the European Women's Lobby	European Network of Migrant Women
Research/data collection		X		X	X				
Awareness-raising campaigns	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Training of professionals	X	X							X
Provision of support services to victims									
Perpetrator programmes					X				X
Development of training materials, guidelines, handbooks, etc.	X	X			X				X
Other						X			
Total	3	4	1	2	3	2	0	1	4

Conclusions and recommendations

Sexism and gender (in)equality are not novel issues or phenomena, but they are increasingly being discussed and are at the centre of political agendas in various fora on an international level. This is because a slow, but strong, cultural change around women's rights and gender equality has been taking place in recent years, despite political setbacks and global crises.

Analysis of the answers to the questionnaire on the implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#) on preventing and combating sexism shows that some progress has taken place at the level of national legislation and policies to combat sexism and sexist behaviour. While only three countries have specific legislation on preventing and combating sexism – France, Belgium, and Cyprus – the majority of member States report addressing sexism within the framework of anti-discrimination law or laws on equality between women and men. In relation to legislation on sexist hate speech, the report shows a more positive picture given that almost all member States that responded to the questionnaire have some legislative provision addressing the “incitement of hatred, violence or discrimination” against a person or group of persons on various grounds, including on the grounds of sex.

However, it is clear from the analysis, that the distinction between sexism and other gender equality issues – such as gender-based violence – is not always clear-cut. While sexism is closely related to both the notions of sex-based discrimination and of gender-based violence, it is a much broader concept. Thus, in order to incentivize the adoption of specific legislation to combat sexism in member States some more clarification should be provided of the exact meaning of the concept of sexism, and more guidance issued on how to integrate the concept within national legal frameworks.

In relation to comprehensive policies to address sexism and sexist hate speech, the report reveals that there has not been a uniform approach to the implementation of the Recommendation across member States. The most common approach identified among member States was to integrate policies and measures addressing sexism within a broader gender equality policy. These include policies and measures to address gender stereotypes and manifestations of sexism in various sectors, such as in education, the workplace, in politics, and the media. However, similarly to legislation on sexism, the distinction between policies aimed at combating sexism and sexist hate speech, and policies for the promotion of gender equality was not always clear to the respondents. For example, in relation to stakeholder engagement, data provided by the member States was not always related specifically to policies to prevent and combat sexism, but to the level and extent of involvement of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of gender equality policies in general. Similarly, few member States reported addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups in the context of policies to prevent and combat sexism, but rather on other policies related to integration and social inclusion. Despite this, a number of promising initiatives to address sexism and its manifestations have been identified and included in this report that can provide impetus and inspiration for further progress in this area. Additional guidance on how to integrate the Recommendation in national policy frameworks would support these efforts.

Importantly, a number of member States as well as NGOs reported collaborating with the Council of Europe in their awareness raising efforts on sexism and sexist hate speech. These efforts by the Council of Europe should continue as through such projects valuable technical support and guidance on the implementation of the Recommendation could be provided. Also promising is that both member States and NGOs at national and European level reported translation and dissemination of the Recommendation as part of their awareness raising efforts, as well as using the Recommendation as a resource in trainings for various professionals, including the media.

While this report has documented some progress in implementation of the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)1](#), the Recommendation's impact has been limited and further action is needed at the national level to step up efforts to prevent and combat this phenomenon that continues to be widespread and prevalent in all sectors and all societies. The support of the Council of Europe in this regard will be crucial moving forward, in providing technical support and guidance and in continuing to widen the awareness of the Council of Europe standards on sexism and sexist hate speech.

Recommendations

- ▶ **Member States should step up efforts to pass legislation in compliance with the Recommendation (2019)1 that condemns sexism and criminalises sexist hate speech.** In order to incentivize the adoption of specific legislation to combat sexism in member States, the CoE should provide more clarification of the exact meaning of the concept of sexism, and further guidance in how to integrate it within national legal frameworks.
- ▶ **It is fundamental to establish and make clear the links between gender stereotypes, sexism, male violence against women and girls and the achievement of equality between women and men, girls and boys,** in line with the goals of CoE's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023). To this end, policies to address sexism should be integrated in existing public policy instruments already in place in all the key areas identified in the Recommendation and in particular on equality between women and men (i.e. national action plans).
- ▶ **In order to ensure that policy measures aiming at addressing sexism are evidence-based, member States should support the collection of robust data,** as well as scientific research, on sexism, sexist behaviour, and hate speech across policy sectors. Reliable and comparable data is essential to accurately assess progress on addressing sexism, as well to assess how sexism intersects with other forms of discrimination.
- ▶ **Policies and measures to address sexism and sexist hate speech should be designed in co-operation with relevant organisations,** particularly women's NGOs. This should also entail increased support to civil society organisations with experience and expertise on preventing and combating sexism to engage in actions to address sexism including awareness raising, research and data collection, and training of professionals.

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