

Council of Europe Recommendation on gender equality in media 2013

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Guidelines

A. Member States

1. Unless already in place, member States should adopt an appropriate legal framework intended to ensure that there is respect for the principle of human dignity and the prohibition of all discrimination on grounds of sex, as well as of incitement to hatred and to any form of gender-based violence within the media.
2. Member States should particularly ensure, through appropriate means, that media regulators respect gender equality principles in their decision making and practice.
3. Member States should support awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns on combating gender stereotypes in the media.

B. Media organisations

4. Media organisations should be encouraged to adopt self-regulatory measures, internal codes of conduct/ethics and internal supervision, and develop standards in media coverage that promotes gender equality, in order to promote a consistent internal policy and working conditions aimed at:

- equal access to, and representation in, media work for women and men, including in the areas where women are underrepresented;

- a balanced participation of women and men in management posts, in bodies with an advisory, regulatory or internal supervisory role, and generally in the decision-making process;

- a non-stereotyped image, role and visibility of women and men, avoidance of sexist advertising, language and content which could lead to discrimination on grounds of sex, incitement to hatred and gender-based violence.

C. Measures for implementation

5. The following mechanisms for the implementation of strategies and policies to achieve gender equality goals in the media should be considered:

Review and evaluation of gender equality policy and legislation

- i. Review and update the legal framework on media from a gender equality perspective on a regular basis.
- ii. Mandate media regulators and require the public service media to include an assessment of the implementation of gender equality policy in the media in their annual reports.

Adoption and implementation of national indicators for gender equality in the media

- iii. Discuss with relevant stakeholders the opportunity for and adoption of, if appropriate, national indicators based on international standards and good practices; holding public hearings and discussions in connection with this.
- iv. Carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the situation of gender equality in the media at national level, based on the adopted indicators.
- v. Update gender equality indicators regularly.

Provision of information and promotion of good practices

- vi. Encourage the media to provide information to the public in a clear way (e.g. online) on the complaints procedure in relation to media content which they consider contrary to the principles of gender equality.
- vii. Support and promote good practices through the development of networks and partnerships between various media outlets to further gender equality in the various activity areas of the new media ecosystem.

Accountability channels

- viii. Encourage non-governmental organisations, media associations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to consistently defend gender equality by bringing their concerns to self-regulatory bodies or other specialised bodies (e.g. press councils, ethical commissions, advertising councils, anti-discrimination commissions).
- ix. Encourage the updating of existing media accountability mechanisms and their effective use in cases of violation of gender equality in the media.

x. Encourage the establishment of new mechanisms for media accountability and civic responsibility, for example, fora for public debate and platforms opened online and offline, making direct exchanges possible between citizens.

Research and publication

xi. Promote active research into the issues of gender equality and media, particularly relating to media access, representation, participation (quantitative and qualitative profile) and working conditions in the media; research focused not only on women, but also on the relationship between genders; regularly publicising the outcomes of such projects.

xii. Promote active research from a gender equality perspective on media coverage of certain areas of particular concern in a pluralist democracy, such as reporting on politics and media coverage of election campaigns and publishing the results; organising discussions with a view to improving policy and legislation.

xiii. Promote research on the impact of the media in the shaping of values, attitudes, needs and interests of women and men.

Media literacy and active citizenship

xiv. Promote gender sensitive media literacy for the young generation, prepare young people to approach different forms of media content responsibly and enable them to acquire a critical view of media representations of gender and to decode sexist stereotypes; enhance the gender equality perspective in the media literacy programmes for young people of different ages as a factor for broad human rights education and active involvement in the democratic processes.

xv. Develop specific awareness-raising tools through and about the media for adults, including parents and teachers, as important factors for developing gender education and active citizenship in the information society.

xvi. Raise the awareness and strengthening the capacities of media professionals and media students by offering regular educational and vocational training programmes geared to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge of gender equality and its crucial role in a democratic society.