

## Intro

Thank you very much Madame moderator.

It is a privilege for me to chair the Gender Equality Commission at the Council of Europe, and also a privilege to represent the Gender Equality Commission here at the UN.

I have been asked to tell you about the work of the Council of Europe in the area of freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes.

As I only have 5 minutes, I will focus on just three areas. There is plenty more information on our website. There you will see how effectively the CoE mainstreams gender equality throughout their work.

## European Court of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights

*The European Convention on Human Rights* is a regional instrument that promotes and protects human rights. The convention, and the case law of the court, provides a strong legal framework for the promotion of gender equality.

Women's rights and gender equality are areas of particular interest for the *Commissioner for Human Rights*.

She has made recommendations on:

- Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination
- Representation of women in decision making
- Closing the gender pay gap

She has also placed a special focus on violence against women and girls.

In particular she has called on all members states, who have not yet done so, to ratify the *Istanbul Convention*.

Which brings me on to my next subject.

## The Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention, properly known as the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, is the most advanced, legally binding regional treaty on violence against women.

It is a holistic and comprehensive legal framework that requires state parties to put in place systems to prevent violence against women and domestic violence.

It also protects victims and witnesses, and requires the prosecution of perpetrators.

Of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, 34 have now ratified the convention.

GREVIO, who are the monitoring body for the convention, have now finalised their reports on 9 states parties. They have 4 more in the final stages.

The convention addresses multiple areas within the Beijing Platform for Action apart from violence against women. These include:

Poverty, education, health, armed conflict, economic empowerment, human rights, the media and the girl child.

So you can see how much the convention will contribute to the delivery of the BPfA.

### Sexism

Also contributing to the delivery of the BPfA is the *Council of Europe Recommendation on Preventing and Combatting Sexism*.

This was produced by the Gender Equality Commission and adopted by the Committee of Ministers earlier this year.

The recommendation provides the first international definition of sexism:

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, which occurs in the public or private sphere.

The recommendation comprises a comprehensive catalogue of measures both to prevent and combat sexism. And it calls for action in the following areas:

Language and communications  
Internet and social media, and online sexist hate speech  
Media and advertising  
The workplace  
In the public sector, and the justice sector  
Education  
Culture and Sport  
The private sphere

So this recommendation, as it is taken forward by member states, will contribute to the delivery of the BPfA.

To finish, I would like to show you a video that explains a bit more about why we developed the recommendation.

<https://vimeo.com/356636533>