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Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Activities in 2012-2013

Memorandum by Ms Tina Acketoft, Chairperson, Sweden, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

1. Introduction

1. Two years have passed since the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men became the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, with a mandate to consider questions of equality and non-discrimination on any ground, the issue of national and other minorities as well as all forms of racism and intolerance.

2. The expansion of the mandate was decided in the context of an overall reform of the Parliamentary Assembly, aimed '*to strengthen its political relevance and effectiveness, to make it more visible and to increase its members' involvement.*' An additional objective was '*to reinforce the interaction between the Assembly and national parliaments and to strengthen interparliamentary co-operation*'.¹

3. In this memorandum, I would like to assess the evolution of the work of the Committee since the entry into force of the new mandate, and formulate recommendations for the members' consideration. The period under examination coincides with my chairmanship of the Committee.

2. Taking stock of the situation

2.1. Diversification of the subject matters

4. In 2012, the Committee set itself as its primary objective the diversification of its work programme so as to cover a broad range of issues and fulfil its new mandate. It acknowledged that it would be a transitional year, as all the reports under preparation at the time concerned exclusively gender equality and violence against women. The diversification was achieved thanks to the combined effect of motions tabled by the Committee and initiatives of individual members.

5. In the period 2012-2013, the Committee presented 13 reports which were debated in the plenary Assembly and Standing Committees, of which:

- 5 dealt with gender equality,
- 4 dealt with violence against women,

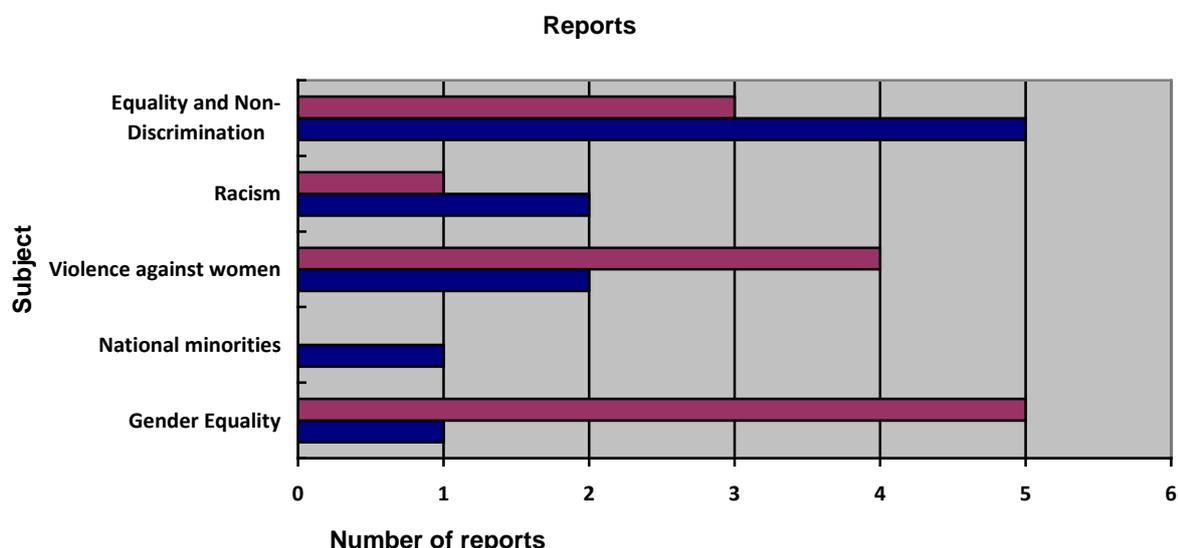
¹ Assembly Resolution 1822 (2011), paragraph 3.

- 3 dealt with discrimination on grounds other than gender or cumulative discrimination (Muslim women, age, sexual orientation and gender identity),
- 1 dealt with racism and intolerance.

6. A high proportion of reports dealt with violence against women, in line with the decision that this topic should be a top priority for the Committee. All the reports presented by the Committee included draft resolutions. Three included draft recommendations addressed to the Committee of Ministers.²

7. The overview of reports that are currently under preparation indicates that **the process of diversification is completed** and that in the two years to come the Committee will be able to ensure a broad and balanced coverage of the issues falling under its remit:

- 5 reports deal with equality and non-discrimination in general or grounds other than gender (religion, disability, transgender, equality and the crisis, cooperation between national human rights institutions and parliaments in the area of equality),
- 2 reports deal with racism,
- 2 reports deal with violence against women,
- 1 deals with national minorities,
- 1 deals with gender equality.



Current situation █

2012-2013 █

2.2. Diversification of activities and structures

8. In the past biennium, the Committee also met the objective of diversifying its activities, achieving a **balance between report-drafting and other activities aimed at giving more impact and visibility to its work.**

9. Great emphasis was placed on campaigning, especially in the context of the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence. This work picked up momentum thanks to the political engagement of Network members, and could be sustained thanks also to voluntary contributions, which were used mainly for the publication of visibility and information material.

10. An innovation was the organisation of five national events and one regional conference on violence against women addressed to national parliamentarians. These events were organised by Network members in their national parliaments, with the support and coordination of the Network Secretariat and often the

² See Appendix I for more details.

participation of the Political Co-ordinator of the Network. Most of the relevant costs were covered thanks to successive voluntary contributions by the German government.

11. The Committee had recourse to the new possibility introduced with the reform to set up general rapporteurs. It appointed one on violence against women; and one on the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender persons. The general rapporteurs contributed to awareness-raising on the subject matters under their remit, and to the visibility of the Assembly on such issues.

12. In 2012, the Committee set up three sub-committees: on gender equality; on the rights of minorities; and on racism and xenophobia. These sub-committees were re-established in 2013 and organised hearings and exchanges of views during Assembly sessions.

2.3. Better balance between reports and opinions

13. Prior to the change of mandate, the yearly number of opinions presented by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men equalled (and sometimes exceeded) the number of reports. This imbalance drained the Committee's resources while being detrimental to its visibility. In 2012-2013, the Committee met its objective to achieve a better balance between reports (13) and opinions (5).³

2.4. Synergy with other Assembly Committees and Council of Europe structures

14. In its working methods, the Committee attached great importance to synergy with other Assembly Committees, also taking into account that many of the issues falling under its mandate are eminently transversal.

15. In 2012-2013, the Committee organised joint meetings with the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (on the Arab Spring), the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights (on the modalities for the appointment of members of monitoring bodies), the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media (on intercultural dialogue) and the Committee on Migration, Refugee and Displaced Persons (on Refugee women and the Istanbul Convention and on trafficking and prostitution). In addition, the sub-committee on racism and xenophobia organised a joint meeting with the sub-committee on media of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media.

16. In addition, the Committee established good working relations with the main Council of Europe bodies working on issues falling under its mandate. It held exchanges of views on specific topics and/or mutual cooperation with:

- the Deputy Secretary General (especially on violence against women),
- the Commissioner for Human Rights,
- the Director General of Democracy (whose responsibilities include non-discrimination, racism and minorities; and from January 2014 also gender equality and violence against women),
- the Thematic Co-ordinator on Equality and Trafficking of the Ministers' Deputies,
- the Venice Commission (on issues such as constitutional reform in Tunisia, the Venice Commission's Opinion on legislation against homosexual propaganda – which was requested by the Committee -, and the prohibition of political parties),
- several judges of the European Court of Human Rights,
- the Chair and Secretariat of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities,
- the Chair of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,
- the Chair of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA),
- the Chair of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC),
- members and the Secretariat of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI),
- the Secretariat of the No Hate Campaign,
- the Secretary General's Special Representative on Roma and Travellers,
- the President of the European Travellers' Forum.

³ See Appendix II.

17. It has become a custom for the Committee to invite the members of relevant Council of Europe monitoring bodies and Gender Focal Points of the countries concerned to attend its meetings that are organised outside Strasbourg and Paris.

2.5. Cooperation with other international organisations and institutions

18. In 2012-2013, the Committee held exchanges of views or organised events with the participation of representatives of the following bodies:

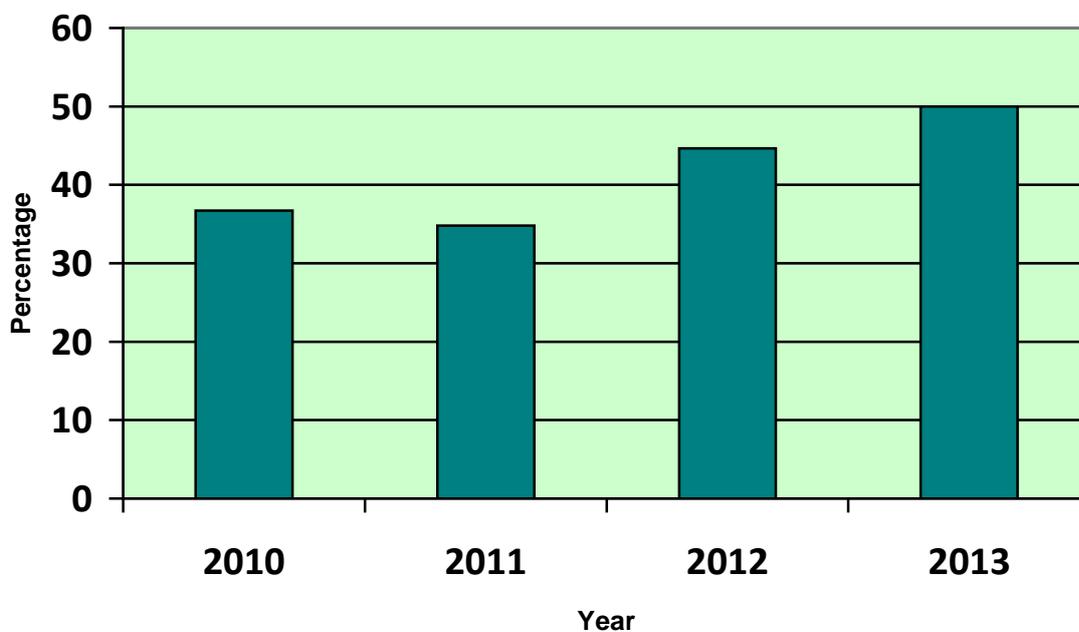
- European Parliament (FEMM Committee and LGBT Intergroup),
- EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA),
- UN Women,
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR),
- Committee of the Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW),
- Committee of the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD),
- Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
- UNDP,
- UNICEF,
- ODIHR,
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

2.6. Participation

19. In 2012, the average participation rate in Committee meetings was 44,64%; in 2013 it **rose to 50%**. This represents both a positive trend and a clear-cut improvement compared to previous years, when the average participation rate was 34,82% (2011) and 36,76% (2010).

20. The improvement in the participation rate continues to be largely due to attendance during Assembly sessions, which remained high and stable in the biennium (69,64% in 2012 and 69,04% in 2013). It was 47,62% in 2011 and 51,19% in 2010.

21. However, in 2013, the level of participation during Committee meetings outside Strasbourg also increased significantly to 35,7% (it was 19,44% in 2012; 22,2% in 2011; 22,32% in 2010).



Overall participation of members in meetings of the Committee

3. Proposals for future action

3.1. Subject matters

22. Despite the great efforts deployed to diversify the subject matters of reports and activities, the Committee did not deal with the issue of the **inclusion of persons with disabilities**. This will be partly remedied with the preparation of a report, for which a rapporteur has just been appointed. However, I believe that the issue should deserve greater attention and that members should have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the topic.

23. In terms of **priorities**, violence against women should remain a leading subject amongst those that are addressed by the Committee. At the same time, the fight against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as racism, intolerance and xenophobia clearly emerged as priority issues which require continued attention in the years to come, as particularly pressing problems in Council of Europe member states.

3.2. Diversification of activities and structures

24. The emphasis given to activities other than report-drafting is a specificity of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, which distinguishes it from nearly all the other Assembly Committees. The list of the activities conducted by the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence and its Political Co-ordinator suffices to give an idea of the extent of the campaigning and awareness-raising work carried out in 2012-2013.

25. My assessment of this work is very positive:

- it enhances the Assembly's impact as it contributes to the implementation of Assembly texts;
- it enhances the active involvement of Assembly members and enables them to make full use of their dual mandate, as they are given tools to translate at national level what is done in Strasbourg;
- it increases the visibility of the Assembly in Council of Europe member states.

26. The addition of campaigning and awareness-raising to the ordinary activity of report-drafting contributes to the Assembly meeting the objectives it set itself with the recent reform. Therefore I have no hesitation in recommending that **the Committee continues this course of action**.

27. In fact, I believe that, in addition to violence against women, **campaigning and awareness-raising activities should be developed also for the other two priority subjects**: discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and the fight against racism and intolerance.

28. I encourage the General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTs to make proposals to this end.

29. I also invite the Committee to consider setting up a mandate of **General Rapporteur against racism and intolerance**, so as to have, at any given time, an Assembly spokesperson and a single interlocutor for all the different Council of Europe structures working on these matters. This is such a pressing political issue at the moment in Europe that it is necessary for the Assembly to have a strong presence and voice.

30. While seeing the advantage of having one single Assembly representative on the issue of racism and intolerance, I think that all the members of the Committee should become more engaged on this matter, and envisage the organisation of activities at national level, especially in cooperation with the national committees set up in the context of the Council of Europe's No Hate Campaign. In this case, the General Rapporteur against racism and intolerance could also act as a Co-ordinator of the members' activities in this area.

31. Finally, in order to better familiarise the members of the Committee with the issue of disability and create the basis for solid work in this area, I recommend setting up a **sub-committee on disability and inclusion**.

3.3. Synergies

32. The Committee should:

- continue to maintain good working relations with all the Council of Europe structures dealing with issues under its mandate, and
- strengthen dialogue and cooperation with other international organisations and bodies. In particular, it should explore the possibility of conducting joint campaigning and awareness-raising activities on priority subjects.

33. In 2012-2013, the national and regional events organised by Network members in their parliaments and the meetings of the Committee in Tirana, Warsaw and Madrid enabled the Committee to reach out to a wider parliamentary audience, as they were attended by parliamentarians of the national parliaments concerned. This practice should be pursued and the possibility of organising joint events and meetings explored. The Warsaw Conference, organised in cooperation with the Sejm, focused on freedom of expression for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, with the participation of parliamentarians, government representatives, organisers of banned pride marches, NGOs and international organisations.

3.4. Involvement of members

34. The participation of members in Committee meetings has been growing for the last two years. This is a positive trend which should be continued also by encouraging the active participation of the highest number of members in the work of the Committee, as rapporteurs, general rapporteurs, Committee representatives, Network members, Bureau members, and so on.

35. An issue on which greater vigilance is required is the gender distribution amongst rapporteurs, in particular rapporteurs for report and general rapporteurs. At the beginning of 2012, 5 rapporteurs for report were women, 3 were men; both general rapporteurs were men. At the end of 2013, the situation has radically changed. Nine rapporteurs for report are men while 5 are women. The two general rapporteurs are men.

36. I call on the members of the Committee and its future Chair to take into account the gender criteria in the allocation of reports, and to open a reflection on the causes behind this imbalance and the ways to redress it. I also call on women members of the Committee to put themselves forward, including for highly visible and demanding assignments.

Appendix I

Main recommendations included in the Committee's reports debated in 2012-2013

Subject	Adopted texts	Main recommendations
Gender equality	Resolution 1860 (2012) on advancing women's rights worldwide	The Secretary General of the Council of Europe to develop and formalise the existing co-operation between the Council of Europe and UN Women. Council of Europe member states should step up efforts to combat discrimination against women and encourage political decision-makers to take into account the gender dimension in the development of policies and legislation.
	Resolution 1873 and Recommendation 1996 (2012) on Equality between women and men: a condition for the success of the Arab Spring	Despite the absence of tangible improvements in women's lives since the beginning of the Arab Spring, the vast process of constitutional and legislative reform which has been undertaken by several countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean represents a unique opportunity for strengthening equality between women and men. The measures taken by the authorities in Morocco and Tunisia not only to keep a line of continuity with past <i>acquis</i> , but to go even further in the promotion of women's rights should inspire the other countries in the region. To have a tangible impact on the status of women, they should be followed by action to bring legislation into line with international human rights standards, to ensure the effective and consistent enforcement of the law and to remove the legal and practical obstacles which limit women's access to justice. The evolution of law and policy can have a durable and effective impact only if it is accompanied by an evolution of mentalities.
	Resolution 1898 (2012) on Political parties and women's political representation	As key protagonists in pluralist democracies, political parties have a decisive role to play to enhance women's political representation: in addition to ensuring strict compliance with electoral legislation, including on legislated quotas, and introducing voluntary measures, they are well placed to promote a change of culture conducive to gender equality, in politics and in society at large. On the basis of the positive experience of some of them, the Parliamentary Assembly should recommend good practices on how to increase women's representation in parliament to political parties in Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as partners for democracy.
	Resolution 1921 (2013) on Gender equality, reconciliation of personal and working life and co-responsibility	A legislative framework and appropriate policies are needed to achieve equality between spouses and to facilitate women's access to work. Beyond the action of public authorities, a profound change of mentality is needed. Indeed, the organisation of work should allow all those who so wish to engage in paid activity and be able to reconcile their work with their personal lives. Moreover, the principle of co-responsibility, which means that women and men go beyond the traditional division of roles and share responsibilities in the home, should be the benchmark for the development and implementation of effective reconciliation policies.
	Resolution 1939 (2013) on Parental leave as a way to foster gender equality	Parental leave cannot have a lasting impact on gender equality unless a significant share of men take it up. To encourage more fathers to do so, Council of Europe member States should organise information and awareness-raising campaigns and put in place incentives.

Subject	Adopted texts	Main recommendations
Violence against women (Rapporteur: Mr Mendes Bota, Portugal, EPP/CD)	Resolution 1861 (2012) on Promoting the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence	The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching binding instrument in the world providing a comprehensive framework to prevent violence against women, protect its victims, prosecute the perpetrators and set up a wide range of measures to address this scourge in all its complexity. This convention needs to enter into force as soon as possible and be ratified by as many states as possible.
	Resolution 1963 (2013) and Recommendation 2030 (2013) on Violence against women in Europe	The Council of Europe and its member States should intensify their efforts to ensure that 2013 is the year of the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention. Once this objective has been achieved, the Parliamentary Assembly should continue to promote further signatures and ratifications, in particular through its Parliamentary Network "Women Free from Violence". The Assembly should also strengthen its own capacity as well as the capacity of national parliaments to monitor the implementation of the convention.
	Resolution 1962 (2013) on Stalking	Council of Europe member States should introduce the notion of stalking into their legal system as a specific offence, organise training for law-enforcement officials on how to identify and respond to stalking cases, instruct the police to investigate and keep a record of cases of stalking, allocate sufficient funding for the creation and functioning of support services for stalking victims, make prevention of stalking, including cyberstalking, a priority and organise awareness-raising campaigns, develop and implement rehabilitation programmes for stalkers and conduct research on the prevalence of violence against women, including stalking
Racism and intolerance	Resolution 1910 (2012) on NGOs' role in combating intolerance, racism and xenophobia	Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are the natural allies of parliaments in the performance of their function of oversight, prevention and awareness-raising in this matter. Member and observer States, in particular parliaments, are invited to take concrete action to support and promote the role of NGOs in order to improve policies and legislation in the field of racism and xenophobia and to ensure that the point of view of minority groups is taken into account in their preparation, implementation and monitoring.
Multiple discrimination	Resolution 1887 (2012) on Multiple discrimination against Muslim women in Europe: for equal opportunities	Many Muslim women want to be actors of change and empowerment. Rather than being isolated, stigmatised or forced into a stereotype, Muslim women should be encouraged in their quest for equal opportunities in society. Positive measures should be introduced to make it possible for Muslim women to be protagonists of their own empowerment. Investing in education, encouraging networking and the participation in civil and public life, as well as accompanying them in their professional development are key actions in order to raise Muslim women's awareness of their rights.
Roma	Resolution 1927 (2013) on Ending discrimination against Roma children	It is crucial to address the material living conditions of Roma families, introduce policies and affirmative measures to ensure non-discriminatory access to health care and education, while promoting knowledge and respect for Roma identity, culture and language, also through political discourse. Policies must be developed and implemented with the involvement of Roma communities themselves.

Subject	Adopted texts	Main recommendations
Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity	Resolution 1948 (2013) and Recommendation 2021 (2013) on Tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity	The introduction of legislation or draft legislation on the prohibition of so-called homosexual propaganda in countries such as Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine is at variance with these countries' legal obligations. It would also legitimise the prejudice against LGBTs which all too often is fuelled by inconsiderate discourse by politicians and other authoritative figures. Council of Europe member States should take measures to prevent discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, promote equality and tackle homophobia and transphobia. The Republic of Moldova, Poland and the Russian Federation should give full execution to the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The Committee of Ministers should continue to strengthen its activities in this area with a view to ensuring the full implementation of its Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5.
Discrimination on the grounds of age	Resolution 1958 (2013) on Combating discrimination against older persons on the labour market	In order to tackle age discrimination, the member States of the Council of Europe should establish effective legal provisions to include age among the criteria of non-discrimination and to ensure the implementation of non-discrimination legislation. They should also introduce positive action for older persons wishing to enter or re-enter the labour market, as well as for older employees, while duly taking into account the particularly vulnerable position of certain groups affected by multiple forms of discrimination, owing to their age as well as other criteria.

Appendix II

List of Opinions presented by the Committee in 2012-2013

Roma migrants in Europe (*Rapporteur for opinion: Mr Ferenc Kalmár, Hungary, EPP/CD*)

For more democratic elections (*Rapporteur for opinion: Ms Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin, Sweden, EPP/CD*)

Trafficking of migrant workers for forced labour: time for a closer look (*Rapporteur for opinion: Ms Pirkko Mattila, Finland, NR*)

Evaluation of the Partnership for Democracy in respect of the Parliament of Morocco (*Rapporteur for opinion: Ms Sahiba Gafarova, Azerbaijan, EDG*)

Putting an end to coercive sterilisations and castrations (*Rapporteur for opinion: Ms Fatiha Saïdi, Belgium, SOC*)

Appendix III

List of the activities of the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence and the General Rapporteur on violence against women and Political Co-ordinator of the Network (Mr Mendes Bota, Portugal, EPP/CD)

Network meetings

- 25 January 2012, Zero tolerance for so-called “honour crimes”, Strasbourg
- 25 April 2012, Police response to women victims of violence, Strasbourg
- 28 June 2012, Marital rape, Strasbourg
- 18 September 2012, Conference on Legislators to make freedom from violence a reality, Tirana
- 4 October 2012, A strategy to campaign for the Istanbul Convention, Strasbourg
- 23 January 2013, Refugee women and the Istanbul Convention, Strasbourg
- 24 April 2013, Prostitution and trafficking, Strasbourg
- 26 June 2013, Women, violence and art, Strasbourg
- 16 September 2013, The economic dimensions of violence against women, Madrid
- 2 October 2013, Violence against women: does the rehabilitation of perpetrators work?, Strasbourg

National and regional parliamentary events to promote the Istanbul Convention

- Sarajevo, 21 November 2012 – followed by the approval of the ratification by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina (23/07/2013)
- Rome, 22 November 2012 – followed by the ratification of the Convention by Italy (10.09.2013)
- Brussels, 30 November 2012
- Lisbon, 3 December 2012 - Followed by the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Portugal (5/02/2013)
- Baku, 7 May 2013
- Bucharest, 25 November 2013 (regional)

Activities of the Political Co-ordinator

- 2-3 July 2012, visit to Georgia and participation in the Roundtable discussion on “Gender Quota” organised by the UNDP, in partnership with the Gender Equality Council and the Central Electoral Commission of Georgia in Tbilisi
- 7 July 2012, Conference ‘L’approche genre dans le développement de la femme en Méditerranée’, Tétouan, Morocco, organised by the Moroccan authorities
- 9 July 2012, Visit to Rabat
- 24-25 September 2012, Regional Conference on preventing and combating violence against women, Rabat, organised by the Moroccan authorities and the Council of Europe
- 8-9 October 2012, Seminar on violence against women, European Women's lobby, Brussels
- 18 October 2012, 14th WAVE Conference, London

4-6 November 2012, International Conference on “The Political and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women based on Women’s Stories”, Istanbul, organised by the North-South Centre in co-operation with the Turkish authorities

15 November 2012, meeting of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), Strasbourg

17 November 2012, Conference organised by Soroptimist International on “The Istanbul Convention: for women free from violence”, Lisbon

21 November 2012, Seminar on “25 November: International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women”, Sarajevo, organised by the Parliamentary Network “Women free from violence” in co-operation with the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

30 November 2012, Seminar on “Violence against women and the Istanbul Convention: on the way to ratification”, Brussels organised by the Parliamentary Network “Women free from violence” in co-operation with the Belgian Senate

3 December 2012, International Conference on “Violence against women and the Istanbul Convention”, Lisbon, organised by the Parliamentary Network “Women free from violence” in co-operation with the Portuguese Parliament

5 December 2012, International Conference on “The role of the international organisations in combating gender violence: international and regional juridical framework”, Lisbon

17-18 January 2013, Regional conference on the Istanbul Convention, Helsinki, organised by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Parliament and the Council of Europe

4-7 March 2013, 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York

7 May 2013, Parliamentary Seminar about the Istanbul Convention, Baku, organised by the Parliamentary network “Women free from violence” in cooperation with the Azerbaijani authorities

27- 28 June 2013: High level expert Conference “Vienna+20: Advancing the Protection of Human Rights”, United Nations

2 July 2013, Conference “Risk assessment saves lives”, E-Maria Final Conference, Lisbon

10 October 2013, Colloque on “Violences faites aux femmes: dévoiler ce qui est rendu invisible”, Strasbourg, organised by the city of Strasbourg

14 October 2013, Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Brasilia

10 November 2013, Conference on “Coordinated efforts – Towards new European standards in the protection of women from gender-based violence”, Belgrade, organised by the Autonomous Women's Center

11-12 November 2013, Conference on “How women’s movement influenced state policies”, Belgrade, organised by the Autonomous Women's Center

Appendix IV

List of the hearings/exchanges of views held by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

17 hearings/exchanges of views were organised in the context of Committee meetings to contribute to the preparation of reports and opinions, including on:

- Racial discrimination, with the participation of Ms Barbara John, Chair of the Berlin welfare organisation *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband*, Germany, and member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and Mr Alexander Verkhovsky, Director, SOVA Center, Russian Federation (March 2012);
- Women in the Arab Spring, with the participation of Ms Bassima Hakkaoui, Minister for Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development of Morocco, Ms Meherzia Labidi Maïza, First Deputy Speaker of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia and women who had played a direct role in the protests in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen (joint meeting with the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, April 2012);
- Muslim women in Europe: for equal opportunities, with the participation of Mr Marco Perolini, Amnesty International researcher on discrimination (April 2012);
- the NGOs' role in combating intolerance, racism and xenophobia, with the participation of Ms Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute, Florence, and Dr William Ejalu, European Network against Racism, Hungary (June 2012);
- Countering intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in Europe and launching event of the 'Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Addressing Islamophobia through Education', with the participation of Professor Lynn Davies, Emeritus Professor of International Education, Centre for International Education and Research, School of Education, University of Birmingham; Professor Kamel Meziti, Historian of religions, author, specialist of Islam, Adviser of COJEP (Council for Justice, Equality and Peace) and member of EMISCO (European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion); Ms Malika Hamidi, General Manager of the European Muslim Network, Researcher (joint meeting with the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, June 2012);
- Tackling racism in the police, with the participation of Ms Deborah Glass, Deputy Chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, United Kingdom, Mr Julien Le Gars, Deputy Director for public liberties, Ministry of the Interior, France, Ms Chantal Pons-Mesouaki, Deputy Secretary General of the Trade Union for Public Security Officers, France, and Ms Lanna Hollo, Open Society Justice Initiative, France (October 2012);
- Stalking, with the participation of Ms Alexis Bowater, Chief Executive of the Network for Surviving Stalking (United Kingdom) (January 2013);

- Criminalising the purchase of sex to combat the trafficking of people for sexual exploitation, with the participation of Mr Nicolas Le Coz, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (January 2013);
- Ending discrimination against Roma children, with the participation of Ms Isabela Mihalache, Independent Expert for Roma Affairs, Consultant with the Council of Europe - Children's Rights Division and Office of the Special Representative of the General Secretary for Roma issues (January 2013);
- Request for partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, with the participation of Ms Asiya Sasykbaeva, Vice-Speaker of the Kyrgyz Parliament, Mr Almazbek Baatyrbekov, Mr Nurgazy Aidarov and Mr Daniyar Terbishaliev (April 2013);
- Addressing age discrimination on the labour market, with the participation of Ms Anne Sonnet, Senior Analyst of Employment, Analysis Division and Employment Policy, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (April 2013);
- So-called 'honour' crimes in the North Caucasus, with the participation of Dr Anna Neistat, Associate Director for Programme and Emergencies Divisions, Human Rights Watch, Paris (Paris, May 2013);
- Tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, with the participation of Mr Thomas Markert, Director, Secretary of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) (June 2013);
- Prostitution and human trafficking in Europe, with the participation of Mr Jorge Fernández Díaz, Minister for Home Affairs of Spain (Madrid, September 2013);
- The situation and rights of traditional national minorities in Europe, with the participation of Ms Athanasia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, President of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and Mr Stefan Oeter, Chair of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Committee also held a discussion on the Spanish language policy with the participation of Mr Rafael Rodríguez Ponga, Secretary General of Instituto Cervantes and Mr Fernando Rey Martínez, President of the Council for the promotion of equal treatment and non-discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin (Madrid, September 2013);
- A strategy to prevent racism and intolerance in Europe, with the participation of Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of DGII (Directorate General of Democracy) of the Council of Europe, Mr Marc Leyenberger, member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in respect of France and Mr Thomas Markert, Director, Secretary of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) (October 2013);
- The situation and rights of traditional national minorities in Europe, with the participation of Ms Michèle Akip, Head of Secretariat, Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and Professor Stefan Wolff, Director of Research and Knowledge Transfer, College of Social Sciences, University of Birmingham (October 2013).

In addition, the Committee organised 19 hearings/exchanges of views on matters falling under its mandate or as a follow-up to its previous work, on:

- Advancing women's rights worldwide, with Ms Michele Bachelet, UN Women Executive Director; Council of Europe Monitoring Mechanisms: the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention on National Minorities and the European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (joint meeting with the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, January 2012);
- National anti-discrimination bodies: the case of France, with the participation of Ms Maryvonne Lyazid, Deputy Rights Defender and Vice-Chair of the College in charge of combating discriminations and promoting equality (June 2012);
- Prenatal sex selection (follow-up to assembly Resolution 1829 (2011), with the participation of Mr Christophe Guilmoto, Director of research in demography, Centre Population and Development (CEPED), University Paris Descartes (June 2012);
- Exchange of views with the Albanian authorities, with the participation of Ms Jozefina Topalli, Speaker of Parliament, Mr Spiro Ksera, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ms Filloreta Kodra, Vice-Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ms Irma Baraku, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, and Ms Iva Zajmi, former National Co-ordinator of the Government for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings (Tirana, September 2012);
- Equality and non-discrimination in the access to justice – a regional perspective, with the participation of Ms Yesim Oruc, UNDP Albania Country Director; Ms Gordana Igrić, Regional Network Director (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network), Bosnia and Herzegovina; Professor Aurela Anastasi, Executive Director of the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives, Albania; Mr Francesco Florit, President of the EULEX Assembly of Judges, Kosovo⁴ (Tirana, September 2012);
- The rights of national minorities, with the participation Mr Mark Lattimer, Executive Director of the Minority Rights Group International (Paris, December 2012);
- Activities of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), with the participation of Ms Carlien Scheele, Chairperson of the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe (Paris, December 2012);
- Co-operation with the Commissioner for Human Rights, with the participation of Mr Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights (January 2013);
- Equality and non-discrimination in Poland, with the participation of Ms Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Secretary of State, Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, Mr Ryszard Kalisz, Chairperson of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights of the Sejm and Mr Józef Pinior, member of the Committee on Human Rights, Rule of Law and Petitions of the Senate (Warsaw, March 2013);
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), with the participation of Mr Alexei Avtonomov, Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (Warsaw, March 2013);
- ODIHR's activities in the area of equality and non-discrimination, with the participation of Ambassador

⁴ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Janez Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) (Warsaw, March 2013);

- The situation of women in Algeria, with the participation of Ms Louisa Chachoua, Chair of the Committee on Health, Social Affairs, Labour and National Solidarity of the Council of the Nation, Ms Saadia Nouara Djaafar, member of the Council of the Nation and former Minister responsible for Family and Women, Ms Hafida Hamedi, member of the National People's Assembly and Ms Yasmina Benabid, member of the National People's Assembly (April 2013);
- Co-operation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), with the participation of Mr Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Head of Department, Equality and Citizens' Rights, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (April 2013);
- The situation of transgender persons in Europe, with the participation of Ms Vanessa Lacey, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), and Mr Nicolas Beger, Director of Amnesty International European Institutions Office (Paris, May 2013);
- Violence against women and domestic violence, with the participation of Ms Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights, France (June 2013);
- Gender equality in Spain: current situation and perspectives, with the participation of Ms Carmen Plaza, Director General for Equal Opportunities, Ministry for Health, Social Services and Equality, Director of the Spanish Institute for Women's Affairs (Madrid, September 2013);
- Legislation on same-sex marriage in Spain, with the participation of Mr Ronny de la Cruz Carbonel, Vice-president, COGAM Colectivo LGBT of Madrid (Madrid, September 2013).