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REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
AND PUBLIC ORDER

Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality

for Poland, Denmark and Cyprus
(January 2025 – June 2026)

TRIO PRESIDENCY DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY

Poland, Denmark and Cyprus, the Member States holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the 18-month period from January 2025 to June 2026, hereby present this Joint Declaration on Gender Equality

The European Union is founded on a core set of values of non-discrimination, equality, human rights and dignity. These values define our common goals and shared identity. **Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union** enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It is also reinforced by international commitments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Gender equality and non-discrimination constitute the basis of well-functioning and resilient democracies, sustainable growth, and prosperous and inclusive societies. Pursuing **gender equality is not only the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do**, contributing to economic development, stability, peace, and security. For Europe to compete successfully on the global stage, both women and men in all their diversity need to participate fully and equally in society. No one should be left behind.

The Treaties provide the legal basis for combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation¹. The Pay Transparency Directive was the first Directive to formally acknowledge the principle of intersectional discrimination, and this notion has since also been incorporated into the Directive on Minimum Standards for Equality Bodies.

Over the past years, **significant progress has been made** to make equality a reality in the European Union. The dedicated European Commissioner for Equality, the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 as well as the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025, and the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation 2020-

¹ See Article 19 TFEU. Furthermore, the Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 recognises intersectional discrimination based on several characteristics, such as sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, migrant-status, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.

2030 have provided targeted policies and activities to address key challenges, including intersectional discrimination.

Moreover, the **European Pillar of Social Rights** underlines gender equality as a key principle, and the EU's legislative framework has been strengthened with recent directives on work-life balance, pay transparency, gender balance on corporate boards, and standards for equality bodies, to supplement national efforts to promote equality.

With the European Union's accession to the Istanbul Convention and the adoption of the Directive on **violence against women and domestic violence**, important steps have been taken to support, protect and provide reparation to victims of violence and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. We must ensure implementation and enforcement of these important legal frameworks. Furthermore, more work is to be done to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, to ensure early detection and intervention in cases of violence, and to provide treatment for perpetrators in order to break the cycle of violence.

Despite progress, challenges remain, including gender-based violence, harassment and abuse. Other challenges include the unequal participation on the labor market, the persistent gender pay gap, unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, gender-segregated education and labor markets, and the underrepresentation of women in research, entrepreneurship and decision-making. In addition, new challenges are also emerging in our rapidly changing world.

Digitalization is transforming lives and livelihoods. While digital technologies offer opportunities, for instance to foster dialogue and social progress as well as to facilitate new opportunities for women's participation on the labour market, they also pose risks. Artificial intelligence and algorithms can perpetuate existing biases, gender stereotypes and structural inequalities. The severe underrepresentation of women and girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) sectors needs urgent attention. Moreover, new forms of violence have emerged, such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including cyberbullying, cyber-stalking, and cyber-harassment.



Recent years have also been heavily marked by **multiple and intersecting crises**. And no crisis is gender neutral, it exacerbates existing inequalities and amplifies socioeconomic vulnerabilities and increase the occurrence of gender-based violence. Furthermore, **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** brought with it a surge of gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual violence and human trafficking. Rooting out such phenomena at the intersection of armed conflict and gender inequality requires a strong and coordinated international response. While military casualties are mainly young men fighting on the battleground, the war in Ukraine has also seriously affected persons vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion, including refugee women and children. It has demonstrated the importance of ensuring access to employment, social protection, social security, health care, care services, and education without discrimination, and the importance of taking into account diverse needs when implementing security measures.

In addition, **counter-movements** within the European Union and globally threaten gender equality and women's and girls' rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and hinder efforts to combat sexual and gender-based violence. The freedom and equal rights of LGBTI+ persons have also been challenged and there is an increase in anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric and disinformation. Although progress has been made for LGBTI+ persons, including through stronger protection under national legislation, hate-motivated violence and discrimination continue or rise across all member states. We must reaffirm our values and stand together to safeguard progress made and ensure further steps towards equality for all, including by combating hate and abuse of LGBTI+ persons and emphasizing the importance of ensuring that they and their families are fully respected and protected.

As we approach the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), it is crucial to reaffirm the Platform's status as the "gold standard" for gender equality and women's and girls' rights on the global stage. The European Union must maintain a strong focus on its implementation, paying particular attention to emerging trends and challenges.



We, Poland, Denmark and Cyprus, fully commit ourselves to make freedom, equal opportunities and gender equality in Europe a reality for all.

We will work together to promote an **invigorated, innovative and modern approach to gender equality in a digital age.**

We will protect hard-won achievements and further build on progress made. To this end we will support ambitious strategic commitments, including the Roadmap for Women's Rights and the development of follow-up EU Commission strategies on gender equality, LGBTI+ equality and other strategies and frameworks making up Europe's *Union of Equality*.

We underline the continued importance of the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on both new and ongoing challenges.

We will promote the dual approach to gender equality, namely, integrating a gender perspective into all relevant policy areas (gender mainstreaming) combined with specific targeted measures.

We will build on the efforts of previous Presidencies whilst working in close collaboration with all Member States, the European Commission and other EU institutions and agencies, as well as civil society, seeking to promote a Europe for all following these guiding themes:

1. Combating sexual and gender-based violence

The European Union has taken determined steps to combat gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, human trafficking, stalking, and harmful practices against women and girls, through measures focused on prevention, protection and prosecution. However, new and emerging types of violence need attention, especially online violence, abuse and discrimination. Moreover, a stronger focus on prevention, early detection and intervention as well as on the perpetrators of violence is needed to ensure that the cycle of violence is broken.

We will discuss ways to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, including measures for early detection and intervention. We will also focus on technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and raise awareness of new and emerging forms of online violence.

2. Gender equality in a digital age

The ongoing digital transformation promises new opportunities for growth, prosperity, jobs, opportunities and innovation. More women need to be part of the expanding ICT sector, for their own benefit and also in the interest of businesses and societies at large. We will raise awareness and seek to combat gender biases and stereotypes, particularly those amplified by AI and algorithms, as well as address the growing threat of technology-facilitated gender-based violence. We will seek new and effective solutions to create a future of equality both online and offline.

We will build on the Digital Services Act which aims at protecting consumers and their fundamental rights online in order to make the digital world safe for all.

3. Focus on the root causes of inequalities and engage both women and men in the creation and implementation of a modern policy on gender equality

Changing legislation is a necessary step towards ensuring equality. However, the culture and practices of a society can also be a barrier to equal opportunities and to people's freedom of choice throughout their lives. Bias and negative social norms affect all areas of life including education and jobs, career choices, health and life expectancy, care giving, family life and exposure to violence. Both women and men can be confined in stereotypical roles that limit their potential.

We will discuss, raise awareness, share best practices and collaborate on how to accelerate actions combating gender stereotypes in order to create sustainable change and a modern gender-equal society.

We recognize that men and boys face specific gender-based challenges and inequalities that can limit their lives and opportunities. We will thus explore how to include men and boys in modern gender equality policies both as strategic allies and actors and as beneficiaries of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Activities to be carried out during the Presidency of Poland, January-June 2025

Witnessing increasing geopolitical tensions, the Polish Presidency will support activities strengthening European security in all its dimensions: external, internal, information, economic, energy, food, and health, with the main motto, “**Security, Europe!**”. In terms of the link between security and equality, a key focus will be on strengthening efforts to promote equal treatment and protect minorities, which represent the diversity of the European Union, against discrimination. This will also involve reinforcing measures for gender equality and combating violence, including **gender-based violence**.

Firstly, Poland aims to focus during its Presidency on **mainstreaming gender equality into the digital realm**. This involves tackling online gender-based violence, equal access to digital spaces, or addressing biases in AI and technology.

Secondly, to commemorate the **30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action**, Poland will actively support and organize events and initiatives, including during the 69th session of the **Commission on the Status of Women**, that celebrate and reflect upon this landmark international framework for advancing women's rights globally.

Thirdly, Poland plans to continue the efforts to adopt the draft **directive on the implementation of the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive**, which would enhance the EU's ability to address and eliminate discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion or belief across various sectors.

Fourthly, Poland will support the Commission in its efforts to create a real **Union of Equality**, notably through new **EU strategies** focusing on both **gender equality** and **LGBTIQ equality**, including the recently published Roadmap for Women's Rights.

Under these four focus areas, the Polish Presidency will:

Gender Equality in a Modern Digital Society

- Host a meeting of the **High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming** (Warsaw 11-12 February 2025)
- Organise an event: **Shaping Gender Equality in Europe's AI Era** (Brussels, 6 March 2025)
- Organise an informal **meeting for equality ministers** (Warsaw 16 April 2025)
- Present draft **Council Conclusions on Gender and AI** for approval at the EPSCO Council meeting in June

The 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action

- Represent the EU at the CSW69 **marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action** (New York City, 10-21 March 2025)
- Host the **informal breakfast meeting of** the EU Ministers in NY and co-host an EU reception
- Co-organise with the EU Delegation a **side event Who run the world? Girls' Activism Shaping The Future** (New York 12 March 2025)

Supporting Union of Equality

- Support the EU Commission in **preparing an ambitious new Gender Equality Strategy**
- Organise a **High Level Conference Equality in society** (Poznań, 23 June 2025)

Activities to be carried out during the presidency of Denmark, July-December 2025

Denmark regards gender equality and non-discrimination as fundamental for individual freedom as well as for prosperous, just and sustainable societies. Therefore, the Danish Presidency will promote European cooperation to make **equality a reality for all**. In uncertain times – with multiple and intersecting crises and gender equality and fundamental rights under pressure within the EU and abroad – it is important that we stand united and defend the European Union's founding values and principles and ensure that gender equality and LGBTI+ equality is prioritized within the EU. The Danish Presidency will therefore support the development of new, ambitious EU Commission strategies on both gender equality and LGBTI+ and dedicate a meeting of the EPSCO Council to equality matters.

The Danish Presidency will focus on **combating gender-based violence** with a particular focus on prevention, early detection and intervention, including by combating gender stereotypes aggravating or justifying violence, by enabling both bystanders and public authorities to detect and react to cases of violence and also by focusing on the perpetrator in order to break the cycle of violence. The Presidency will table draft Council Conclusions on the prevention, detection and early intervention against gender-based violence for approval by the EPSCO Council meeting.

The Danish Presidency will focus on the **human rights of women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and strengthen the involvement of men and boys as allies and beneficiaries of gender equality**. Bodily autonomy and women and girls' right to make independent and informed decisions about their bodies and lives forms the very foundation of a gender-equal society. We must respect, protect and promote the rights of women and girls in all their diversity, including by dismantling gender stereotypes, which constricts both women and men, and promote the concept of consent as a condition of any sexual act. The Presidency will organize a high-level conference on men, boys and gender equality and facilitate political discussions at the EPSCO Council meeting on women's rights to decide over their own bodies and lives.

The Danish Presidency will focus on the promotion of **equal rights and opportunities for LGBTI+ persons**. To make equality a reality for all, we must ensure that no one experiences discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. We must protect the rights and strengthen the well-being of LGBTI+ persons, and combat hate, violence and harassment. The Presidency will facilitate political discussions on LGBTI+ equality at the EPSCO Council Meeting and focus on the rights and opportunities for LGBTI+ families at the meeting of the LGBTIQ Equality Subgroup of the High-Level Group on non-discrimination, equality and diversity.

Under these priorities, The Danish Presidency plans the following activities:

- Meeting of the **High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming** (Copenhagen, 8-9 September 2025)
- **High-Level Conference on Men, Boys and Gender Equality** (Copenhagen, 9 September 2025)
- Attending the **High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly** on the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (New York City, 22 September 2025)
- **EPSCO Council meeting on equality** (Luxembourg, 17 October 2025)
- Meeting of the **EU LGBTIQ Equality Subgroup of the High-Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity** (Brussels, date to be confirmed)
- Meeting of the **EU Network of National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms on Trafficking in Human Beings** (Brussels, date to be confirmed)

Activities to be carried out during the Presidency of Cyprus, January-June 2026

In an increasingly **digital world**, the online experiences of young people, particularly girls, play a major role in shaping their lives. The digital environment, whilst offering an avenue for learning, connection, and empowerment, also presents substantial risks, such as the growing threat of **cyber violence and abuse**. Cyber violence against girls is a widespread phenomenon that harms their security, mental health, and overall well-being. The European Union being fully committed to gender equality and the protection of children's rights, it is necessary to deal with this new problem in a timely manner and through effective action. Recognizing the severity of cyber violence and the need to protect girls from its harmful effects, Cyprus will tackle this problem and ensure that girls can navigate the digital landscape with confidence, safety and security.

- In the context of the review of the **implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action** and as a response to the urgent need for effective measures to protect girls in the digital era, Cyprus will focus on the critical area of concern "**The Girl-Child**," and "**Violence against Women**" with a focus on cyber violence against girls aged 13 to 18. Particular attention will be given to the **protection of young girls from evolving online threats**, including cyberbullying, sexual harassment, image-based abuse, and other forms of digital exploitation.
- A **report** on the situation in the EU Member States related to **cyber violence against girls**, prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality, will be presented as background to a set of Conclusions to be approved by the EPSCO Council. This report will provide an overview of the prevalence, impact, and responses to cyber violence across the EU; identify the gaps in current protections; and propose new strategies to enhance the safety and rights of girls in the online environment.
- In order to further facilitate planning and effective cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, a meeting of the **High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming** will be held in Nicosia, Cyprus, on 10-11 February 2026 (dates to be confirmed). The High-Level Group will discuss coordinated actions, share best practices, and further develop gender-sensitive policies at the European level.

- **A Conference on Preventing and Combating All Forms of Cyber-Violence Against Girls**, aiming at reviewing the progress at the EU level and exchanging good practices between Member States will be organized in Nicosia on 19-20 May 2026 (dates to be confirmed), with the participation of all national, European, and international stakeholders. Policymakers, educators, civil society, technology companies, and youth representatives will come together to develop a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach to combating cyber violence against girls.

On the occasion of the 70th Session of the United Nations **Commission on the Status of Women**, to be held in March 2026 in New York, Cyprus will undertake the following activities:

- **Statement on behalf of the European Union**
- **EU Ministerial Breakfast**
- **Cyprus Presidency Reception**
- **Flagship Side Event**

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