

Informal Meeting of Ministers for Equality
Warsaw, 16 April 2025

EWL represented by: Dina Loghin, Vice-President and Mary Collins, Secretary General
EWL invited to speak at **Working session I: Combatting gender inequalities in the digital environment**

Report for EWL members

The informal meeting was very interesting. Here are some of the key discussion points:

Working session I

- Strong support for the European Commission's [Roadmap for Women's Rights](#), a political Declaration adopted on 7 March 2025, in which there are eight principles:
 - 1) Freedom from gender-based violence
 - 2) The highest standards of health – **NB**: includes access to sexual and reproductive health and rights
 - 3) Equal pay and economic empowerment
 - 4) Work-life balance and care
 - 5) Equal employment opportunities and adequate working conditions
 - 6) Quality and inclusive education
 - 7) Political participation and equal representation
 - 8) Institutional mechanisms that deliver on women's rights

These principles are likely to guide the (new) Gender Equality Strategy post 2025, for which we need to prepare very shortly. There is no date yet for the public consultation but we should prepare and submit our key proposals as soon as possible and share with all members.

- Future Gender Equality Strategy post 2025: many Member States called for the need to include measures for **Men and Boys** – this will be the theme of the Danish Presidency (January – June 2026). In this area, we can propose our (past) recommendations as well as the feminist principles in our Sexuality Education publication.

Our key messages (we had 3 minutes, and shared the speaking intervention with WAVE – Women Against Violence Europe. We focused on the transposition of the Directive on Violence against women

and domestic violence, particularly the articles addressing cyber violence¹ (**NB:** EWL Observatory on violence against women had started to work on this). Our key messages in this context included:

We would like to point out some potential pitfalls that should be avoided (in transposing these articles):

- The **imperative** to address **online violence** must outweigh free speech concerns;
- Distinctions between **‘public’ and ‘private’ dimensions** must be avoided, in the criminalisation of non-consensual distribution of images or videos;
- Include under **Article 5** (non-consensual sharing of intimate and manipulated material), **sexual digital forgeries**, commonly known as ‘deep fake porn’ as deep nudes are not included in this article;
- All forms of **violence cause serious psychological harm**, as attested by EIGE data. Therefore, the word *‘likely’* (to cause serious psychological harm”) in **article 7**, is a barrier and should be transposed in a way that serious psychological harm is recognised as a direct consequence of cyber harassment (art.7). This includes cyber flashing and doxing (making accessible to the public material containing the personal data of a person for the purpose of inciting other persons to cause physical or serious psychological harm);
- We call on Member States to **make cyber incitement to hatred or violence a punishable criminal offence** and therefore to refrain from considering this only in the context of it *“likely to disturb public order”* (**article 8**)
- Ensure that the **online reporting mechanisms** for victims of cyber violence (**article 14**) are accessible, including easy-to-read formats.
- Make the link with the **Digital Services Act**, particularly regarding the responsibility of digital services to protect the fundamental rights of users, this includes large online platforms to ensure women’s safety online.

Deadline to transpose (the full Directive): 14 June 2027

Working session II addressed the Roma Strategy and misinformation

A study was presented by a Polish Foundation (House of the Borderland?) as a follow-up to the first report published in Bulgaria in 2022, “Care for truth against fake news and anti-Roma disinformation”. The current EC Roma Strategy runs from 2020-2030.

Working session III: Intersectional approach

¹ Namely : Non-consensual sharing of intimate and manipulated material; Cyber harassment – including cyberflashing; Cyber stalking; Cyber incitement to hatred or violence

- There was a very interesting discussion on the EU [Horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive](#) (on the table since 2008!) and threatened to be withdrawn by the Commission in the summer (June)
- Many Member States called on the Commission to reconsider withdrawal
- Very strong statement from the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of a number of countries, denouncing the [recent Hungarian law on LGBTQ+](#)
- For EWL: we could propose to other Equality NGOs to do a follow-up letter or op-ed to 'save' the horizontal directive from being withdrawn (NB: a message was sent to the networks)

Other information

- The meeting provided an opportunity to network.
- Informal information: it appears that the Czech Republic is considering not to transpose the EU Directive on Pay Transparency, indicating that it is 'too burdensome' particularly for Small and Medium Sized Entreprises (SMEs) and that 'the EU is interfering too much'. (!)
- Interesting meeting with Kateryna Levchenko the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy in Ukraine. She invites the EWL to support the [call to include Russia in the UN 'list of Shame' for committing crimes of sexual violence](#).
- We got confirmation from Poland (Minister Katarzyn), Cyprus (Josie Christodoulou, Commissioner for Gender Equality), EESC President (Olivier Röpke) to speak at our EWL@35 event.

Some photos:



Vice-President Dina Loghin and Secretary General Mary Collins



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



Kateryna Levchenko Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy Ukraine



With our (wonderful) personal assistant Weronika Kaminska (posted with her consent)



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