Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 16419
03 June 2026

Eliminating gender stereotypes in the media

Committee Opinion[1]
Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
Rapporteur: Mr Benjamin DALLE, Belgium, Group of the European People's Party

A. Conclusions of the committee

The Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media welcomes the analysis and proposals made by the rapporteur, Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk (Ukraine, ALDE), for the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, and suggests that a few amendments are added with a view to reinforcing the message conveyed in the draft resolution.

B. Proposed amendments

Amendment A (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 6, insert the following paragraph:

> *"The Assembly welcomes Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence, and it acknowledges the risks posed to equality and non-discrimination by artificial intelligence (AI) systems. In particular, such systems can reproduce, perpetuate and exacerbate existing gender stereotypes. The Assembly also recognises that the under-representation of women as well as individuals and groups at risk of discrimination in the AI sector — particularly in decision-making roles, and in the design and development of AI systems — further exacerbates these risks. The Assembly is also aware of the distinct challenges that AI systems may present due to their complexity, large-scale impact, and limited transparency."*

Amendment B (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 7, insert the following paragraph:

> *"In this regard, it is important to address not only the representation of women on screen, but also the role of women behind the scenes in the production of television series and films. Female directors, producers and screenwriters often play a decisive role in ensuring more balanced representation, more diverse perspectives and richer storylines. Scenarios written by women also tend to create more substantial and leading roles for female actors. Gender equality in media is therefore not only a question of visibility, but also of access to creative power and editorial decision making. Supporting female talent at all levels of the audiovisual sector is essential to achieving more inclusive and realistic representations of women in society."*

1. Reference to committee: Doc. 15975, Reference 4812 of 24 May 2024. Reporting committee: Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination. See Doc. 16418. Opinion approved by the committee on 2 June 2026.

Amendment C (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 8, insert the following paragraph:

"The intersection between age and gender is of paramount importance in this regard. Too often, women have reduced opportunities as they grow older, for example as presenters, journalists or leading on-screen figures, whereas this tends to be far less the case for men. This imbalance contributes to the invisibility of older women in public life and reinforces harmful stereotypes linking women's value primarily to youth and appearance."

Amendment D (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 9, insert the following paragraph:

"The Assembly emphasises that the media can play an important emancipatory role by promoting mutual respect, equal opportunities, social cohesion and diverse role models for younger generations."

Amendment E (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 10.3.6, insert the following paragraph:

"require that the unauthorised distribution of realistic digitally generated imitations of personal characteristics is considered illegal in their national legislation, as proposed by the Assembly in its Resolution 2654 (2026) "Copyright enforcement in the artificial intelligence environment;""

Amendment F (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 10.3.6, insert the following paragraph:

"support an inclusive and transformative use of AI systems to advance equality, including gender equality, by ensuring that relevant legislation, policies and regulatory, administrative or other frameworks create the conditions for initiatives in this regard and consider promoting adequate funding, as proposed by Recommendation Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence."

Amendment G (to the draft resolution)

In paragraph 10.4.1, replace the words "explicitly prohibiting gender stereotyping and sexist representations" with the following words:

"that promote non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men, as well as their equal presence on and off screen".

Amendment H (to the draft resolution)

At the end of paragraph 10.4.5, insert the following words:

", while keeping into consideration the creative requirements of the funded project and the freedom of expression of the artists involved".

Amendment I (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 10.4.7, insert the following paragraph:

"pay special attention to ensure fair representation of women of all ages, both on screen and in editorial roles."

Amendment J (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 10.4.7, insert the following paragraph:

"promote a non-stereotypical and respectful representation of men and boys".

C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Benjamin Dalle, rapporteur for opinion[2]

1. Introduction

1. I welcome the report prepared by Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk (Ukraine, ALDE) and her strong and timely suggestions.

2. I would nevertheless like to suggest highlighting certain matters which, in my view, deserve more explicit political attention in the text.

3. As recalled by Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media, inequalities in society are reproduced in the media through women's under-representation in media ownership, in information production and journalism, in newsrooms and management posts, but also in women's low visibility, both in terms of quality and quantity, in media content, the rare use of women as experts and the relative absence of women's viewpoints and opinions in the media.

4. CM/Rec(2013)1 explains that media freedom (including editorial freedom) and gender equality are intrinsically inter-related. Gender equality is an integral part of human rights, and freedom of expression, as a fundamental right, goes hand-in-hand with gender equality. Furthermore, the exercise of freedom of expression can advance gender equality.

5. Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) recognises the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. Paragraph 2 of this article regulates the formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties that this fundamental right can be subjected to.

6. Accordingly, measures to promote gender equality should not unnecessarily impinge upon freedom of expression. Their objective should not be to prescribe content, but to encourage a media environment that reflects the diversity and equality of our democratic societies.

7. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that, according to the European Court of Human Rights, freedom of expression constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, and it is applicable not only to "information" or "ideas" that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population. The court also explains that every "formality", "condition", "restriction" or "penalty" imposed in this sphere must be proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued.[3]

8. New technologies, and in particular artificial intelligence, can be a boon or a bane for gender equality. The preamble to Recommendation Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence highlights the risks posed to equality and non-discrimination by Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems, which can be built upon and sustained by data and models that reproduce, perpetuate and exacerbate existing bias, stereotypes, stigma, prejudice and false assumptions about individuals or groups on the basis of actual or perceived personal characteristics or proxies and their intersections, and the distinct challenges that AI systems may present due to their complexity, large-scale effect or limited transparency. It further notes that the under-representation of women and individuals and groups at risk of discrimination in the AI sector, notably in decision-making positions and in the design and development of AI systems, is an important dimension of such risks.

9. Given that the gender digital divide and the use of AI systems can intensify discrimination and under-representation, it is absolutely necessary to mitigate the resulting economic and social inequalities.

10. The intersection between age and gender is fundamental when assessing the participation and visibility of women in the media. The reduced opportunities offered to women as they grow older contributes to the invisibility of older women in public life and reinforces harmful stereotypes linking women's value primarily to youth and appearance.

11. Moreover, harmful masculinity stereotypes and online misogyny have a harmful impact on boys and young men. Addressing gender stereotypes should not only focus on the portrayal of women, but also promote a non-stereotypical and respectful representations of men and boys.

---

2. The explanatory memorandum is drawn up under the responsibility of the rapporteur.
3. See European Court of Human Rights (Court), Case of Handyside v. the United Kingdom, (Application no. 5493/72), Judgment of 7 December 1976.

12. Finally, it should not be forgotten that media do not only have the power to reinforce stereotypes, but they can also play an important emancipatory role by promoting mutual respect, equal opportunities, social cohesion and diverse role models for younger generations.

2. Explanatory note

2.1. Amendment A (to the draft resolution)

This amendment serves to explain Amendment F.

2.2. Amendment B (to the draft resolution)

This amendment highlights the importance of addressing not only the representation of women on screen, but also the role of women behind the scenes in the production of television series and films. This is important because media representation does not merely reflect society; it actively shapes cultural norms and public perceptions. If creative leadership remains overwhelmingly male, stereotypical portrayals are more likely to persist.

2.3. Amendment C (to the draft resolution)

This amendment serves to explain Amendment I.

2.4. Amendment D (to the draft resolution)

The amendment seeks to stress the positive role that media can play in the fight against gender stereotypes and gender equality at large.

2.5. Amendment E (to the draft resolution)

The amendment reflects the view of the Assembly that deepfakes are a matter of widespread concern that require the implementation of concrete measures to counteract their potential for affecting fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and the right to non-discrimination.

2.6. Amendment F (to the draft resolution)

This amendment highlights the risks posed to equality and non-discrimination by AI systems, and in particular the role that the under-representation of women, as well as individuals and groups at risk of discrimination, in the AI sector – particularly in decision-making roles, and in the design and development of AI systems – may play in this regard.

2.7. Amendment G (to the draft resolution)

This amendment seeks to underline that combating harmful gender stereotypes should go hand in hand with safeguarding media freedom, editorial independence and pluralism. The objective should not be to prescribe content, but to encourage a media environment that reflects the diversity and equality of our democratic societies.

2.8. Amendment H (to the draft resolution)

The amendment seeks to balance measures promoting gender equality with the freedom of expression and the creativity of the artists involved in the production of the funded work.

2.9. Amendment I (to the draft resolution)

This amendment highlights the importance of the intersection between age and gender. Too often, women face reduced opportunities as they grow older, for example as presenters, journalists or leading on-screen figures, whereas this tends to be far less the case for men. This imbalance contributes to the invisibility of older women in public life and reinforces harmful stereotypes linking women’s value primarily to youth and appearance. I believe the resolution should therefore more clearly recognise age-based discrimination against women in media and encourage broadcasters and media organisations to ensure fair representation of women of all ages, both on screen and in editorial roles.

2.10. Amendment J (to the draft resolution)

This amendment seeks to acknowledge the role of harmful masculinity stereotypes and online misogyny, particularly their impact on boys and young men. Addressing gender stereotypes should not only focus on the portrayal of women, but also promote a non-stereotypical and respectful representations of men and boys.