Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2661 (2026)[1]

Eliminating gender stereotypes in the media

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Gender stereotypes, or stereotypes about the characteristics and roles traditionally attributed to women and men in private and family life, as well as in professional and public life, remain pervasive throughout public communication spaces, including in traditional media, such as the press, radio and television, and in modern media, including online platforms and social networks.

2. Such stereotypes do not merely reflect long-standing social traditions; they also perpetuate them by normalising them and, at times, presenting them as appealing, particularly to younger generations. The popularity on social media of so-called trad wives, who portray an idealised traditional image of domestic femininity, is a clear example of such dynamics.

3. Gender stereotypes hinder progress towards gender equality and undermine women's empowerment by conveying the message that women's position in private and public life is limited and predetermined. They also damage boys and men by presenting them with stereotypes of male behaviours and roles to which they may feel intense pressure to conform, as well as negatively impact societies in general by robbing them of the full range and potential of their populations. These stereotypes should therefore be challenged and countered wherever they occur, and particularly in communication spaces which reach large portions of the population.

4. The Parliamentary Assembly reaffirms that women, in all their diversity, can and do aspire to, and successfully fulfil, any role or position in society. Empowering women means enabling them to fulfil such potential.

5. As gender stereotypes are an eminently cultural issue, the response should, above all, be cultural in nature, with measures applied to education, mass media and the cultural industry in general.

6. Referring to its Resolution 1751 (2010) and Recommendation 1931 (2010) "Combating sexist stereotypes in the media", the Assembly reiterates that gender stereotypes are a barrier to gender equality and are too frequently trivialised and tolerated under the banner of freedom of expression. Since the adoption of these texts, the media landscape has significantly evolved, with an increase in social media influence, and the negative impact of gender stereotyping has become even stronger.

7. The Assembly welcomes Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence, and 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.

8. In the current global context of democratic backsliding and increasing attacks on gender equality, preventing and countering gender stereotyping are more relevant and urgent than ever.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 24 June 2026 (23rd sitting) (see Doc. 16418, report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk; and Doc. 16419, opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Benjamin Dalle). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 24 June 2026 (23rd sitting).

9. 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.

10. Gender stereotyping is often exacerbated by intersectionality: young women, women from racialised groups and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are particularly vulnerable and disproportionally targeted. Transgender women are the victims of severe forms of stereotyping, portraying them as ill, unstable or as a threat to the safety and integrity of others. In view of this, policies to prevent and counter gender stereotyping should be based on a widely intersectional approach.

11. The intersection between age and gender is of paramount importance in this regard. Too often, women have more limited 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.

12. As regards men and boys, the harm caused by societal pressure to conform to traditional roles is compounded by the expectation that they should not seek help or even express vulnerability ("boys don't cry").

13. 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.

14. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the member and observer States of the Council of Europe and States whose parliament enjoys observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

14.1. with regard to education, information and awareness raising, to:

14.1.1. ensure that age-appropriate, mandatory school curricula on comprehensive sexuality education address gender equality, consent and critical analysis of gender stereotypes across traditional and digital media;

14.1.2. incorporate media literacy programmes at all educational levels to equip children, young people and adults with skills to recognise and challenge gender stereotypes, disinformation, sexist hate speech and manipulative content in audiovisual, print and online formats;

14.1.3. develop and support teacher training and educational resources enabling educators to address gender stereotypes in the media and to promote critical thinking about representations of people in all their diversity regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression;

14.1.4. launch nationwide public awareness campaigns, with a focus on youth, to highlight the harmful societal effects of gender stereotyping, sexist hate speech and normalisation of gender inequality in media and online environments;

14.1.5. foster co-operation between public education and public service broadcasters and other media outlets to produce and disseminate information campaigns promoting non-stereotypical role models and gender equality;

14.1.6. extend media literacy and gender equality education to non-formal education settings and lifelong learning, in order to reach vulnerable groups and enhance resilience against harmful digital content;

14.2. with regard to co-operation with civil society, to:

14.2.1. provide sustainable funding, institutional support and protection to non-governmental organisations working on gender equality, women's rights, media literacy, youth empowerment and the prevention of violence against women and girls;

14.2.2. consider civil society organisations as key partners in designing, implementing and evaluating national policies to combat gender stereotypes in media and digital spaces;

14.2.3. fund civil society research, training and campaigns challenging harmful gender norms and promoting inclusive media representations;

14.3. with regard to online platforms and technology companies, to:

14.3.1. require social media platforms and online services to design and enforce transparent, updated community standards prohibiting gender-based harassment, sexist hate speech, image-based abuse and violence, deepfakes and stereotyping causing demonstrable harm;

14.3.2. strengthen co-operation with online platforms, civil society and fact-checkers to detect, demote and remove harmful content while safeguarding freedom of expression;

14.3.3. mandate regular transparency reports from platforms detailing moderation practices, enforcement timelines, appeals processes and algorithmic impacts on gender-based content amplification;

14.3.4. strengthen user reporting tools on platforms with rapid, effective responses and remedies for victims of gender-based abuse and image-based violence;

14.3.5. compel platforms to audit and mitigate gender biases perpetuating stereotypes or misogynistic content in algorithms, recommended systems and targeted advertising;

14.3.6. promote co-operation with online platforms in the area of preventing and countering deepfakes and manipulated image content targeting women and men in politics and public life;

14.3.7. 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”;

14.3.8. support the 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 CM/Rec(2026)1;

14.4. with regard to media, public service broadcasting, the advertising sector and other cultural industries, to:

14.4.1. urge media organisations, journalists’ associations, the advertising sector and other cultural industries to adopt robust codes of ethics and self-regulatory mechanisms explicitly discouraging gender stereotyping and sexist representations and promoting non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men, as well as their equal presence on and off screen;

14.4.2. implement gender equality action plans in public service media, including equitable recruitment and career progression, leadership quotas and anti-harassment measures;

14.4.3. enhance women’s voices, and the diversity of voices, in news, entertainment, sports and political coverage, as well as in advertising, avoiding stereotypical role assignments;

14.4.4. fund and promote content showcasing women and men in diverse, leadership and non-traditional roles across genres;

14.4.5. condition public funding for film, audiovisual and cultural projects upon gender equality targets, balanced teams and inclusive storytelling, while taking into account the creative requirements of the funded project and the freedom of expression of the artists involved;

14.4.6. support training, internships and mentoring to encourage women to take on leadership roles in journalism, production and creation;

14.4.7. require media organisations to ensure gender balance among experts, leaders and athletes in public broadcasting schedules and editorial choices;

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

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

14.4.10. encourage media regulators to integrate a gender perspective into their standard-setting and monitoring activities, with a view to preventing and countering gender stereotyping in the media and advertising sectors;

14.4.11. encourage cultural institutions and cultural industries to promote gender equality and challenge discriminatory stereotypes in cultural production and dissemination;

14.5. with regard to monitoring, research and data, to:

14.5.1. systematically collect and publish sex- and age-disaggregated data on media representation, online gender-based abuse and violence and stereotyping impacts, in order to track progress;

14.5.2. commission regular research on the prevalence, manifestations and effects of gender stereotypes in traditional, digital and algorithmic media.

15. The Assembly highlights that an intersectional approach is paramount in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of legislation and policies to prevent and counter gender stereotyping. Effective data collection must take into account the intersection of all grounds of discrimination including age, ethnic origin, migration status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.