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IRIS 2017-10/4

Committee of Ministers: Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector

On 27 September 2017, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector. The new Recommendation follows the Declaration on Gender Equality in the European Audiovisual Industry which was adopted at the Conference “Women in today’s European film industry: gender matters. Can we do better?”, which was held in Sarajevo in August 2015 (see IRIS 2015-8/2).

The Recommendation begins by noting that the audiovisual sector - which includes cinema, broadcasting, digital media and video games - has a particular role to play in relation to the achievement of gender equality. In particular, the audiovisual sector is well placed to shape and influence perceptions, ideas, attitudes and behaviour prevalent in society; moreover, audiovisual content can either hinder or hasten structural change towards gender equality. Indeed, gender inequalities in society are reproduced not only in audiovisual content, but also within the audiovisual sector - notably women’s under-representation in the different professions and in decision-making.

In this regard, the Committee of Ministers made six important recommendations to the governments of member States. Firstly, as a fundamental principle of their activities, governments should adopt policies to promote gender equality in the audiovisual sector and in its institutional organisations, duly taking into account the guidelines contained in Appendix I to the Recommendation. Second, governments should encourage European, national and regional film funds, public and commercial broadcasters and other key stakeholders in the audiovisual sector to monitor the situation with regard to gender equality, drawing on monitoring methods and performance indicators such as those proposed in Appendix II. Thirdly, governments should also encourage European supranational film and audiovisual funds, as well as broadcasters and other key audiovisual sector stakeholders, to address gender equality issues in all their policies, measures and support programmes, such as training, production, distribution, festivals and media literacy initiatives.

Fourth, relevant audiovisual sector organisations should prepare, or revise, regulatory and self-regulatory strategies, collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct or other frameworks for implementation, taking into account a gender equality perspective. Fifth, governments should disseminate the Recommendation and raise awareness among the relevant stakeholders and those active in the audiovisual sector, in particular in respect of the central role of gender equality as an enabling factor for fully-functioning democracy and the full enjoyment of human rights. Lastly, governments should monitor and evaluate progress in achieving gender equality in the audiovisual sector, and report on a five-year basis to the Committee on the measures taken and progress made in implementing the Recommendation.

The Recommendation also includes three important appendices, with the first containing guidelines for improving gender equality in the audiovisual sector and measures for implementation. In particular, member States are invited to: examine a number of measures, including legislation, regulations and policies; collect, monitor and publish data on gender equality in the audiovisual sector at national level; support research on gender equality in the audiovisual sector; encourage the ongoing development of media literacy; promote gender-sensitive media literacy; enhance the gender equality perspective in media literacy programmes; and enhance accountability processes. The second appendix contains detailed recommended monitoring methods and performance indicators of gender equality in the audiovisual sector, including off-screen performance indicators, on-screen performance indicators. Finally, the third appendix includes a helpful list of reference instruments to guide member States in their implementation of measures to achieve greater gender equality in the audiovisual sector.

• Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)9 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality in the audiovisual sector, 27 September 2017

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