

## STANDING COMMITTEE

The Hague, Netherlands

2-3 March 2023

## **TEXTS ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY**

**Provisional versions**

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Recommendations  
2248 to 2250





**Recommendation 2248 (2023)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## European solidarity in the context of asylum and international protection

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Referring to its [Resolution 2487 \(2023\)](#) “European solidarity in the context of asylum and international protection”, the Parliamentary Assembly emphasises the importance of encouraging Council of Europe member States to further build up their humanitarian actions to help refugees, persons under international protection and internally displaced persons.
2. Since 24 February 2022, when the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine, several million persons have either been displaced inside Ukraine or else sought international protection in other member States. Since 2015, following the armed conflict in Syria, more than 3 million Syrians have found temporary protection in Türkiye. Since the trilateral ceasefire agreement of 9 November 2020, several hundred thousand displaced persons in Azerbaijan have been able to return to their mostly destroyed homes. Thousands of Cypriots, Georgians, Moldovans and people from the former Yugoslavia are still displaced. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from outside Europe have sought protection in several member States.
3. The Assembly recalls the declaration by the Heads of State and Government of member States adopted at the Warsaw Summit in 2005. In view of unresolved conflicts, this declaration reflects the threat to the democratic stability of the member States of the Council of Europe and the populations concerned, while proposing solutions. Therefore, member States can now proceed within the context and precedent of the 2005 Warsaw Summit’s prescriptions calling for concrete action by the Council of Europe to provide humanitarian assistance to member States where high numbers of persons have found asylum or international protection or are displaced.
4. Convinced that the next Summit of Heads of State and Government of member States in Reykjavik in 2023 is an opportunity to strengthen European solidarity within and by the Council of Europe, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 4.1. ensures that Council of Europe co-operation activities include support to humanitarian action for vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in member States in co-operation and co-ordination with other international actors mandated in this field;
  - 4.2. calls on those member States that have not yet done so to accede to the Council of Europe Development Bank so that the geographical reach of the Bank is properly extended, as necessary;
  - 4.3. calls on those member States that are not yet members of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe to accede to the Centre, in order to improve the efficacy of its work for vulnerable refugees from the global South living in member States;
  - 4.4. enters into closer co-operation agreements with the European Union and the United Nations regarding practical humanitarian action for displaced persons, refugees and persons under international protection in Europe.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15718](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Lord Alexander Dundee).*







## Recommendation 2249 (2023)<sup>1</sup>

Provisional version

# The Cultural Routes: a platform for intercultural dialogue

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its [Resolution 2488 \(2023\)](#) “The Cultural Routes: a platform for intercultural dialogue”, underlines the importance of heritage as a resource for human development, and a tool to enhance cultural diversity and promote intercultural dialogue.
2. Moreover, the Assembly considers that the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme offers an excellent platform to promote open exchanges based on mutual understanding between individuals and groups of different origins, cultures, religions, and languages; and that it is an effective means to promote conflict prevention and strengthen democratic values and democratic practices in Europe.
3. The significant rise in the number of certified cultural routes (there are now 48) is a clear success of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme. However, the accomplishment lies also in the capacity of each route to sustain its activity, partnerships, and relevance in the long term, as well as to ensure quality and share experience, strategies and tools through regular exchanges and development of joint projects within the route itself and in co-operation with other thematically or geographically related cultural routes.
4. The Assembly considers that the Council of Europe and the European Commission should enhance their co-operation to support this activity and develop targeted EU funding programmes for cultural routes that would be based on clearly established criteria, including the promotion of democratic values and the implementation of the key principles of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, Faro Convention) at both local and European levels.
5. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers together with the member States that are parties to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, and in co-operation with the European Union:
  - 5.1. increase the resources and reinforce the capacity of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes and provide more support to cultural routes in their development and co-ordination of activities;
  - 5.2. undertake a strategic reflection concerning the overall aims and framework of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme to ensure that quality standards accompany the rapid increase in the number of certified cultural routes;
  - 5.3. consider reviewing the certification process and extending the certification cycle to five years in order to guarantee quality and at the same time reduce the administrative burden related to the process of certification;
  - 5.4. develop a common, quality-based label for cultural routes, similar to the UNESCO heritage label, to visually accompany the transformation of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme into a strong, collective and dynamic network, easily recognisable to visitors throughout Europe;
  - 5.5. develop targeted joint programmes with the European Union for certified cultural routes that promote sustainable development, democracy, and human rights and enhance co-operation with the European Commission and its European Heritage Label initiative.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15710](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Andries Gryffroy).*









**Recommendation 2250 (2023)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## Promoting online education and research across national borders

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Referring to its [Resolution 2489 \(2023\)](#) “Promoting online education and research across national borders”, the Parliamentary Assembly draws attention to the right to education under Article 2 of the Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 9), and to its crucial role in creating and upholding democratic societies and ensuring social and individual progress.
2. This fundamental right has recently been challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic and the military attack of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which have shown the fragility of current education systems in Europe.
3. At the same time, technological progress enables educational institutions, teachers and students to make a strategic transition to more inclusive and interactive education through online resources, thereby preparing coming generations for further changes in inter-personal communication, the media, democratic processes as well as work environments.
4. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 4.1. define the right to education, including online education, as a priority for Council of Europe action towards more inclusive and coherent democratic societies;
  - 4.2. convene on this subject a session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe;
  - 4.3. update the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165, Lisbon Recognition Convention), possibly through a protocol, in order to set common standards on the recognition of online education periods and accomplishments;
  - 4.4. support the work of the Council of Europe on library legislation and policy in Europe, including encouragement to online learning and research through libraries;
  - 4.5. support the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and Budapest, so that they can provide more online education programmes for young participants across Europe;
  - 4.6. analyse the legal exception for educational purposes under the current copyright legislation in Europe in view of online education requirements;
  - 4.7. widen the scope of the European Support Fund for the Co-production and Distribution of Creative Cinematographic and Audiovisual Works (Eurimages), in order to include targeted help for the co-production and distribution of creative and socially responsible European video and computer games, designed to help an interactive learning process;
  - 4.8. establish practical projects in member States for promoting online education, possibly financed through voluntary contributions by member States as well as joint programmes with the European Union and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15714](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Lord Alexander Dundee).*





Resolutions  
2487 to 2490





**Resolution 2487 (2023)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## European solidarity in the context of asylum and international protection

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Aware that Europe faces the highest numbers of refugees and displaced persons since Second World War, mainly due to the military attack by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the high level of European solidarity shown among member States and with Ukraine in the context of asylum and international protection of persons fleeing war, conflict, persecution and situations of human rights violations.
2. In view of its [Resolution 2448 \(2022\)](#) “Humanitarian consequences arising from the Russian aggression against Ukraine”, the Assembly calls on member States, the European Union and the United Nations to maintain, and if possible increase, the level of their humanitarian solidarity with displaced Ukrainians as the Russian military persists in targeting and attacking the civilian infrastructure within Ukraine.
3. Recalling its [Resolution 2404 \(2021\)](#) “Instrumentalised migration pressure on the borders of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with Belarus”, the Assembly is appalled by the abuse of migrants and refugees for political purposes and invites all member States to review their visa and immigration arrangements as well as their readmission agreements and practices, in order to prevent vulnerable persons from falling victim to migrant smuggling and organised crime.
4. Taking into account its [Resolution 2409 \(2021\)](#) “Voluntary relocation of migrants in need of humanitarian protection and voluntary resettlement of refugees”, the Assembly approves the response of a few member States which have already relocated or resettled vulnerable refugees from overwhelmed locations in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as well as from Libya and other countries. Equally to be welcomed is the decision by European Union member States to apply the Temporary Protection Directive and offer public transport free of charge to displaced Ukrainians. All member States of the Council of Europe should strengthen solidarity through more voluntary relocations and resettlements.
5. Considering its [Resolution 2380 \(2021\)](#) “Humanitarian action for refugees and migrants in countries in North Africa and the Middle East”, the Assembly reminds member States that European solidarity should also be extended beyond the European continent, especially to those countries along the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea; these being transit countries for irregular migrants seeking to reach Europe. Conflicts, climate change and poverty are ever forcing from many different places the numbers of persons who wish to reach a few member States.
6. Following its [Resolution 2356 \(2020\)](#) “Rights and obligations of NGOs assisting refugees and migrants in Europe”, the Assembly applauds the immense humanitarian contributions made by so many NGOs. Without NGO actions and co-operation, member States on their own would not be able to cope sufficiently with the humanitarian demands of millions of refugees and persons at present under international protection in

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15718](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Lord Alexander Dundee).*  
See also [Recommendation 2248 \(2023\)](#).



Europe. Since NGOs and charities are the mainstay of all humanitarian efforts on the ground, this work thus deserves the full support of member States, the European Union and the Council of Europe, in particular through its International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) Conference.

7. Welcoming the Cities4Cities initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe for twinning with Ukrainian cities, the Assembly recognises the central role played by local authorities when people first arrive in search of asylum or international protection. Member States and the European Union should, therefore, support local authorities financially, technically and in administrative ways in order to improve their ability to take on emergency situations caused by the arrival of large numbers of persons.

8. Appreciating the very strong financial solidarity shown by the European Union with Türkiye for hosting some 3.7 million displaced Syrians since 2015 under the EU-Turkey Statement, as well as with displaced Ukrainians both inside Ukraine and abroad, the Assembly calls on member States to match these achievements by providing bilateral financial assistance and support through the United Nations.

9. Approving the appeal for more European solidarity made by members of the Assembly's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons together with members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Migration of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the occasion of the joint web conference hosted by the United Kingdom Parliament on the eve of World Refugee Day 2021, the Assembly invites national parliaments and the European Parliament to regularly hold thematic debates to identify needs and strategies for greater European solidarity action in the context of asylum and international protection.

10. As a result of the action decided upon by member States after the Russian military attack against Ukraine and also in view of the increasing numbers of arrivals of refugees from other countries, the Assembly invites:

10.1. the Council of Europe Development Bank to continue its effective support for displaced Ukrainians as well as other refugees and persons under international protection in member States;

10.2. the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to help local authorities, which host large numbers of internally displaced persons, refugees and persons under international protection, to pursue local needs assessments and communicate them to national parliaments and governments;

10.3. the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe to foster co-operation among humanitarian NGOs running local action on the ground for meeting the humanitarian needs of refugees and persons under international protection;

10.4. the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and Budapest to do more for displaced young Ukrainians and other young refugees;

10.5. the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe in Lisbon to do more for vulnerable refugees and migrants from the global South who live in Europe.



**Resolution 2488 (2023)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## The Cultural Routes: a platform for intercultural dialogue

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines the importance of cultural heritage for achieving a greater unity among Europeans. At a time when European societies face new and profound challenges, cultural heritage has yet again become a crucial element for the reconstruction of a peaceful and democratic society, and a key element in the processes of sustainable development and promotion of cultural diversity.
2. Through the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18, 1954) adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the four subsequent heritage-related conventions including the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, "Faro Convention", 2005), the Council of Europe has developed and broadened the understanding of cultural heritage and established close links between heritage, human rights, and democracy.
3. The Assembly considers that the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes offers a very practical means of implementing Council of Europe policies on the value of cultural heritage for promoting cohesive societies, intercultural dialogue, and the right to access to culture, extensively among people and across regions in Europe. The 48 certified Cultural Routes connect local heritage with a broader historic exchange of ideas and skills across Europe and encourage collaborative grassroots initiatives which give people a sense of ownership and pride in their local heritage as an element of a broader European common heritage.
4. The Assembly therefore recommends that the member States of the Council of Europe:
  - 4.1. join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe;
  - 4.2. sign and ratify the Faro Convention;
  - 4.3. present cultural heritage as a positive element in forming cohesive yet diverse societies;
  - 4.4. encourage a diversity of views on history with a wide range of heritage sites illustrating ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity;
  - 4.5. put in place national strategies involving all levels of governance, with a view to sharing the knowledge of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme and more specifically to support and promote the certified Cultural Routes;
  - 4.6. support associations of cultural routes to co-operate and expand their work with regional and European networks that are rooted in common causes in order to attract support and encourage diversity by building cross-cutting thematic networks or broader geographical networks that cover macro-regions such as the Mediterranean Basin.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15710](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Andries Gryffroy).*  
See also [Recommendation 2249 \(2023\)](#).



5. Considering that local and regional authorities have a significant role to play in this field to enshrine the principles of the Faro Convention in their policies and actively promote their implementation, the Assembly recommends that local and regional authorities:

5.1. adopt a strategic approach to local sustainable development, economy, and tourism, and in particular:

5.1.1. recognise, and actively seek to raise awareness of, the close link between cultural routes and the values of sustainability, democracy and human rights;

5.1.2. integrate cultural routes in a wider strategy for local tourism and sustainable economic policies, covering also rural areas outside the main tourist attractions as an alternative to mass tourism;

5.1.3. create a platform for discussion to engage local partners from the education, research, tourism and local economy sectors in the promotion of cultural routes and of their associated values;

5.1.4. involve local partners including associations of cultural routes to develop a common strategy and determine local tourism offers;

5.1.5. foster local community involvement in the work of cultural routes and in that respect provide training to local people, volunteers, travel operators, and those in the private sector concerned with tourism to explain the principles of the Faro Convention and build capacity to actively engage in projects based on these principles;

5.1.6. develop partnerships with associations of cultural routes, providing them with administrative and financial support, and uphold grassroot initiatives, to ensure viability and continuity of existing cultural routes and their established partnerships;

5.1.7. develop international partnerships with local and regional authorities abroad that share the same routes and themes;

5.1.8. financially support and take part in annual exchanges organised by cultural routes;

5.2. pay more attention to the positive interconnections between cultural routes, intercultural dialogue and education, that mutually reinforce each other, and in this respect:

5.2.1. emphasise that heritage is not just monumental, but also uncomfortable, dissonant, humble;

5.2.2. ensure continuity of their political engagement to support heritage and cultural routes projects namely when dealing with controversial heritage and dissonance, also to cultivate a nuanced and constructive public debate and understanding of this heritage locally, and to alleviate taboos, prejudice and division;

5.2.3. in co-operation with State authorities, encourage universities and schools in exploration and analysis of the historical context of dissonant heritage; and support educational exchanges in this field;

5.2.4. promote artistic projects to create links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture, as a creative means to address sensitivities and emotions that are associated with dissonant heritage;

5.3. tap into the potential of innovation and digitalisation, to promote local heritage and increase the outreach, visibility and sustainability of cultural routes, and in this respect:

5.3.1. encourage partnerships to document and explain local heritage through multi-media, repositories and museums; share and ensure visibility of information on local platforms including those of local authorities, tourism boards, museums and other partners in the private sector;

5.3.2. provide targeted support to associations of cultural routes to develop interactive visits of dissonant heritage in a digital format, which could help to remove prejudices, and be an incentive to physically visit, spurring visitors' understanding and curiosity;

5.3.3. introduce Smart Ways (pathways bringing together heritage, communities, and services to provide a territorial sustainable tourist offer) and Interpretation Centres, in which service providers meet visitors in hubs along the route where the tourist offer can be explained and understood.



6. The Assembly invites the European Union to co-operate with the Council of Europe to support the Cultural Routes Programme in particular within the framework of the European Heritage Label initiative and develop targeted EU funding programmes for cultural routes that would be based on clearly established criteria, including the promotion of the key principles of the Faro Convention.
7. The Assembly invites countries, having observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly, to join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.





**Resolution 2489 (2023)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## Promoting online education and research across national borders

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is conscious that education and learning are at a technological and systemic watershed, whereby the internet and mobile communication enable new forms of distance learning and interactive education which are yet to be utilised to their full potential.
2. Public-private partnerships have been established in member States in order to advance online education and research across national borders, ranging from the provision of mobile online access tools and satellite internet to the creation of multilingual online learning and teaching material.
3. Recalling the decisions taken by the G7 under the Presidency of the United Kingdom in 2021 regarding digital technology as well as online education as a means to overcome inequalities globally, the Assembly is aware of the negative impact on school education and higher education in Ukraine caused by the military attack of the Russian Federation; it also notes the good examples of online education established by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine and other member States benefiting hundreds of thousands of displaced Ukrainian students and teachers, such as the All-Ukrainian Online School.
4. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees of the Council of Europe enables recognition of the educational and professional qualifications of refugees, even when their documentation is incomplete, in accordance with the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165, Lisbon Recognition Convention).
5. The Assembly refers to its [Recommendation 1836 \(2008\)](#) “Realising the full potential of e-learning for education and training”, [Resolution 2250 \(2018\)](#) “Encouraging the movement of international students across Europe”, as well as [Resolution 2411 \(2021\)](#) and [Recommendation 2217 \(2021\)](#) “The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education and culture”.
6. It is aware of the great potential of online learning for the inclusion of disadvantaged students and students with special needs, in particular students with reduced mobility or visual or hearing impairments.
7. The Assembly also refers to the Council of Europe’s Digital Agenda 2022-2025, its Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and its Digital Citizenship Education Programme, as well as the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 of the European Union; it recalls Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education, and CM/Rec(2022)18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering education fraud.
8. The Assembly emphasises the importance for member States to strengthen online education and calls on them to commit to the following interventions:
  - 8.1. analyse inequalities and access barriers regarding online education in order to counteract them through targeted strategies and actions at local, national and European levels;

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15714](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Lord Alexander Dundee).*  
See also [Recommendation 2250 \(2023\)](#).



- 8.2. effectively support schools, institutions of higher education, research institutions and libraries in order to achieve a proper transition from blackboards and books to interactive and, where relevant, individualised online education;
- 8.3. encourage the development of quality standards and norms for online education, including the use of online verification systems and databases, in order to better inform users of online education and permit them to make informed choices;
- 8.4. advance the recognition of online study periods and results in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- 8.5. support schools, institutions of technical and vocational education and training, institutions of higher education, research institutions and libraries to establish inter-institutional co-operation in online education across national borders, for example under the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (ETS No. 106);
- 8.6. make use of the financing possibilities of the Council of Europe Development Bank, in order to develop online education in the framework of national and local social development policies;
- 8.7. join and support the action of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, in order to raise awareness and strengthen online education across national borders with the global South.



**Resolution 2490 (2023)<sup>1</sup>**  
Provisional version

## Innovative approaches to sexual and reproductive health and rights

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are the rights related to planning one's own family, the ability to have a satisfying and safe sex life, and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to have children. These rights are particularly relevant to women's empowerment and gender equality. Lacking or insufficient access to sexual and reproductive healthcare affects women first and foremost: the consequences of inadequate care, which include unwanted pregnancies and health risks when abortion is denied, are largely borne by them.
2. Nevertheless, sexual and reproductive health and rights concern every individual, irrespective of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, or their age. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that access to sexual and reproductive healthcare should be granted to all without discrimination based on any ground. They are relevant to multiple human rights, including: the right to life; freedom from torture and ill-treatment; health; privacy; education; equality and non-discrimination.
3. Legislators, policy makers and all those who are committed to upholding human rights and equality should place a high priority on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Progress in this area is needed and is made possible by a variety of advances and innovations in technology and design, social sciences, information technology, communication and media, medicine, with substantial progress in healthcare provided remotely and through digital means, and in new insights and approaches towards male contraception.
4. Furthermore, legislators and policy makers should strongly support and promote research and further innovation in these areas.
5. The Assembly underlines that sexuality is a central aspect of human life that is related to physical and mental health, well-being, and interpersonal connection. Gender roles and boundaries imposed by patriarchal cultures, particularly on women, ultimately have a negative effect on the entire population. Legislation and policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights should be inspired by a positive vision of sexuality and should aim to preserve and promote self-determination and bodily autonomy for everyone without discrimination based on any ground, notably sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. An intersectional approach to preventing, detecting and countering discrimination is particularly needed in this context.
6. The Assembly highlights that sexual and reproductive health and rights are not only relevant to young people or people of fertile age. Adequate sexual healthcare should be provided to everyone, acknowledging the importance of sexual health throughout life.
7. Advances in technology have made access to sexual healthcare easier and safer in recent years, with an increased use of telemedicine practices, such as consultations and prescriptions via internet and mobile devices, online and at-home testing for sexually transmitted diseases, telemedicine for early medical abortion, artificial intelligence applied to screening and counselling. The Covid-19 pandemic and the measures adopted

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 March 2023 (see [Doc. 15715](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Petra Stienen).*



to contain its spread have contributed to this process. This should be supported and embedded into policies and guidelines with a view to ensuring adequate and equal access to this type of healthcare to all those who need it.

8. The Assembly believes that to achieve progress towards gender equality, a shift in culture and attitudes on contraception is needed. Women largely bear this burden, and planned contraception has historically been seen solely as women's responsibility. The expected emergence in the foreseeable future of new male contraceptive methods, with topical, oral and injectable contraceptives currently undergoing clinical trials, will allow for increased sharing of responsibility between women and men. Research in this area should be strongly encouraged and supported, including financially. Meanwhile, all modern contraceptive methods, including long-acting reversible contraceptives should be provided by public health services and made easily available to all those who may need them.

9. The Assembly reiterates that comprehensive sexuality education is crucial to young people's preparation to life. Age-appropriate, medically accurate and evidence-based sexuality education should be a mandatory part of school curriculums at all levels, and accessible to all young people including outside of schools, also thanks to digital technologies. Comprehensive sexuality education should cover issues including contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections; gender equality, gender norms and stereotypes; prevention of and protection from sexual, gender-based and domestic violence; sexual orientation and gender identity and expression; self-determination and consent in relationships; and personal interaction. As a necessary tool to learn how to practice one's self-determination and bodily autonomy, and to make informed choices on one's sexuality, comprehensive sexuality education is a right that should be recognised to all.

10. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as on States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly to:

10.1. promote scientific research in areas related to sexuality and reproduction, including contraception, with a view to making available innovative contraceptive methods, including for men;

10.2. encourage and support gender-sensitive medical research and practices;

10.3. promote data collection with a view to expanding and improving sexual and reproductive healthcare services and better understanding of the needs of women and girls and the rest of the population in this area; to this end, promote the adoption of internationally recognised standard definitions and data collection methods to ensure that data are accurate and comparable;

10.4. prevent and combat period poverty, or difficult access to menstrual products due to lack of economic resources, and give access to safe and hygienic menstrual products by ensuring that the menstrual protection of choice is available and affordable to all those who need it;

10.5. prevent and combat reproductive coercion, intended as interference with a person's autonomous decision making with regards to reproductive health; sanction and consider criminalising relevant behaviour, such as contraception sabotage, physical coercion or psychological pressure to become pregnant, as well as controlling the outcome of a pregnancy (pressure to continue, or to terminate, a pregnancy);

10.6. ensure that gynaecological and reproductive healthcare guidelines and recommendations take into account the needs of all patients, irrespective of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, and that they are inclusive of transgender and non-binary persons;

10.7. provide healthcare professionals with up-to-date training on sexual and reproductive healthcare, including on relevant scientific and technological innovation and inclusive healthcare, taking into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities, LGBTI people and older people; promote and support research to improve medical knowledge in these areas;

10.8. strengthen co-operation with civil society organisations and other stakeholders active in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and support their research, data collection, information and awareness raising activities;

10.9. provide access to sexual and reproductive healthcare to the population of rural areas and ensure fair geographic distribution of relevant infrastructure;

10.10. promote awareness of the notion of co-responsibility of women and men in matters of fertility and integrate it in relevant legislation and policies;

10.11. ensure access to comprehensive sexuality education by making evidence-based, age-appropriate sexuality education mandatory and part of school curricula at all levels and using digital technologies to provide comprehensive sexuality education;

10.12. conduct awareness-raising, information and education activities, including online, targeting the general public in the same areas covered by comprehensive sexuality education in schools;

10.13. raise public, political and corporate awareness of the impact of gender bias and other forms of inequality on our health and well-being, individually and collectively;

10.14. promote applied research and development in public organisations, non-profit organisations and businesses to ensure that the design, production and promotion of objects, spaces and systems used in health care, education, work spaces and other areas of daily life address the inequalities caused by gender bias, by accommodating the diverse needs of women and all individuals irrespective of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics;

10.15. encourage the revision of design, architecture and engineering curricula to ensure that students and teachers are fully aware of the negative impact of gender bias, and are equipped to develop design projects that are as diverse and inclusive as possible, in particular in a gender perspective;

10.16. make available detailed, accurate, evidence-based information on sexual and reproductive health and rights to the general public through online platforms managed by public health authorities, which should include information on where and how to obtain sexual and reproductive healthcare, including in rural areas;

10.17. encourage media, both traditional and online, including social media, to convey accurate, evidence-based information on sexuality and gender issues, including contraception, abortion, consent, and sexual and gender-based violence;

10.18. encourage and support the implementation of innovative technologies to improve access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, such as telemedicine and self-testing kits for sexually transmitted infections, as well as self-managed medical abortion;

10.19. support research and evaluation of new and existing approaches to sexual and reproductive health and rights, in order to identify best practices and inform future policy and program development;

10.20. act to eliminate stigma and discrimination related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promote a culture of respect and inclusivity, by inspiring legislation and policies to such culture, and through public education campaigns.

11. The Assembly considers that the forthcoming Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy should include bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights among its priorities.