



European Charter for Equality

Important news concerning the updated European Charter for Equality

January 2023

The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life is an established tool for local and regional governments seeking to promote gender equality in their territories. Created in 2006, the Charter counts over 2,000 signatories in 36 European countries. It has also inspired “sister” charters in [Africa](#) and the [Euro-Mediterranean region](#).

In 2022, CEMR and its member associations undertook the task of updating the Charter text to ensure its continued utility and relevance for Europe’s towns and regions. The amended and expanded text was adopted by CEMR’s Policy Committee on 6 December 2022.

What changed?

Language and readability

- The readability of the original 30 articles has been improved with simple and direct language.
- The updated text has been newly translated into 27 languages (using inclusive translation where appropriate).
- An ‘easy read’ English version makes the Charter more accessible to people with learning disabilities and people with other conditions affecting how they process information.
- An intersectional approach¹ and inclusive language have been better integrated across the articles, including in Article 10 which is dedicated to multiple discrimination and disadvantage.

New articles

¹ For more information, we invite you to consult CEMR’s publication [‘An Introduction to Intersectionality for Local and Regional Governments’](#) (2022).

In the fifteen years since the Charter was first published, there have been monumental shifts in how we interact, govern, move, work and play. Nine new articles have been introduced to address these changes and the impact they have on local/regional gender equality policies.

1. **Article 31 – Sustainable Development for a Sustainable Future.** It is critical to embrace the mutually supportive pillars of sustainable development: social equity, economic growth, and environmental protection.
2. **Article 32 – Cyber Violence.** Despite offering new possibilities for learning, making connections and participating in activities, the online world brings with it particular challenges for girls and women—especially in terms of harassment and cyber violence.
3. **Article 33 – Violence Against Elected Women and Staff.** The targeting of women elected representatives, public figures and staff with violence and abuse represents a grave threat to democratic governance.
4. **Article 34 – Intersectionality and Diversity.** Intersectionality is a concept and approach that local and regional governments can use to ensure greater inclusivity.
5. **Article 35 – Workplace flexibility.** Modern digital technologies have made it possible for many professional groups to enjoy a more flexible working life which brings both opportunities and risks for gender equality.
6. **Article 36 – Digitalisation and Digital Inclusion.** Digital inclusion of all girls and women is essential for the development of a society that aims to ensure a better future for all. It is crucial to develop and use new tools and processes that *enhance* rather than undermine equality between women and men.
7. **Article 37 – Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.** Girls and women can only live, lead and thrive freely and equally when their sexual and reproductive health rights are upheld.
8. **Article 38 – Climate Change and the Right to a Healthy Environment.** Climate change is a threat multiplier that escalates social, political and economic tensions and has a disproportionate impact on girls and women.
9. **Article 39 – Crisis Management and Civil Preparedness.** Gender equality and the active involvement of girls and women cannot be cast aside in moments of crisis but must be viewed as an effective component for successful civil preparedness and emergency response.

Visual identity

As part of revitalising the Charter, it was natural to update its branding and image to give a fresh feel while still preserving the serious nature of the document. The new visual identity and logo for the European Charter for Equality also help to distinguish the updated 2022 version from the original 2006 one.

Why these changes?

On the Charter's 15th anniversary in 2021, CEMR observed that despite many gains and progress, much work remains to be done in order to achieve real equality in Europe. In a year-long review exercise conducted by CEMR, it became evident that there were some topics that were missing or needed to be addressed further in the Charter to reach its full potential and amplify its impact at local and regional level.

How do the changes affect Signatories?

What will happen to the existing commitments that have been made by local and regional governments **on or before 31 December 2022**?

- Their commitment to the declaration remains valid. Signatories will receive the new text in their local language whereupon they will be invited to adhere to and ratify the new articles and to incorporate their provisions in their Equality Action Plans.

Which text will new Signatories adhere to?

- New Signatories (**from 1 January 2023**) will be able to adhere to the amended and expanded 2022 text.

Who can I contact for more information?

CEMR has a [network of national coordinators](#) who are available to provide information and guidance to existing and potential Signatories in their country.

The CEMR Secretariat can also be contacted directly at charter@ccre-cemr.org