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The Declaration of Principles on Equality and activities of the Council of Europe

Reply¹ to Recommendation 1986 (2011)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1986 (2011) on “The Declaration of Principles on Equality and activities of the Council of Europe” and has brought it to the attention of the governments of member States.
2. The Committee of Ministers highlights the fact that it reasserted the main principles to which the Assembly refers in its Declaration “Making gender equality a reality”, adopted in Madrid, at its 119th Session on 12 May 2009.
3. It points out that these principles gave rise to the adoption of several Committee of Ministers’ recommendations, such as Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education and Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms. All the recommendations it has adopted have been collected together in a compilation entitled “Make equality in law a reality in fact”,² a source of inspiration for all those wishing to promote gender equality as an essential precondition for protecting human rights and genuine democracy.
4. Promoting these principles in member States, the support to be given to them for their implementation, and co-operation with the Council of Europe’s various international partners in this field, in particular the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations, were recommended by the action plan adopted by the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Equality between Women and Men (Baku, 24-25 May 2010). These recommendations have been given practical expression in the 2012-2013 Programme and Budget in the form of a cross-sectoral programme for gender equality.
5. Lastly, the Committee of Ministers acknowledges the importance of ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights by those member States which have not yet taken this step. It also encourages those member States which have not already done so to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, implementation of which is a key element for making gender equality a reality in fact.
6. All the instruments quoted above offer an effective legal framework to promote the principles of equality and combat all forms of discrimination. The Committee of Ministers calls the authorities of member States to take the necessary steps in order to achieve complete *de jure* and *de facto* equality, placing particular emphasis on equal participation in political life and the decision-making process, in accordance with the above-mentioned legal instruments.

1. Adopted at the 1146th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (20 June 2012).

2. <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/gender-equality/Prem%202076311%20GBR%200000%20Compilation%20recommandations%20CM%20A4%20pour%20web.pdf>