



# The European Charter for Equality: Open, Inclusive, Local

- A Declaration of support -

12 May 2021

The CEMR Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life (“Standing Committee for Equality”) was created in 1992 in order to deal with a topic that is highly important for the CEMR: equality of women and men. This working structure provides a frame for the political involvement of CEMR members on gender equality.

In 2020, the Committee was alerted to administrative challenges that some Polish local governments were facing in their efforts to adhere to the [European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life](#). After detailed presentation of the situation faced by the City of Poznań and numerous exchanges, the Committee voted on 8 March 2021 to issue a statement of support for Polish local and regional governments who wish to sign the European Charter for Equality, and to recognise their commitment regardless of subsequent challenges that may be brought by other administrative levels in their country.

## Preamble

*We, local and regional elected representatives of the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality, responsible for the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life,*

**With regard to** the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, a Charter for Europe’s local and regional governments to commit themselves to use their powers and partnerships to achieve greater equality for their people;

**With regard to** the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe and the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities to exercise – within the limits of the law – their public responsibilities as the authorities closest to the citizens;

**Considering** Article 8.3 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe wherein “Administrative supervision of local authorities shall be exercised in such a way as to ensure that the intervention of the controlling authority is kept in proportion to the importance of the interests which it is intended to protect”;

**Recalling** Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFR) prohibiting “any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation”;

**Recalling** the international legal framework of human rights of the United Nations, and in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979;

*have agreed the following declaration to support Polish municipalities in a context of potential restrictions and threats to their efforts adhere to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life and promote gender equality in their territories. We:*

- **Agree** that, as guardians of the Charter, it is the prerogative of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and its Standing Committee for Equality to recognise and welcome local and regional governments to the network of signatories to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life;
- **Acknowledge** the efforts and role of local government across Europe in promoting gender equality so as to create places that are friendly to all people;
- **Underline** the voluntary nature of the Charter instrument while emphasising the serious and rigorous commitment it represents as well as the expectation of signatories to act to advance gender equality within their scope of competence and responsibilities;
- **Emphasise** that it is up to local governments to choose the best approach to becoming a signatory of the Charter; thus ensuring an open, inclusive and local framework that is accessible to any who wish to commit to its principles;
- **Express support** for the original intent of local and regional governments that move to adhere to the Charter;
- **Highlight** and **value** the close cooperation among the representatives of the Standing Committee for Equality, representing a broad spectrum of local and regional government

- associations in Europe, including: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine;
- **Recognise** the involvement and contributions of the Association of the Polish Cities (ZMP) in the drafting and promoting the Charter; **Recognise** and **welcome** the newly formed Human Rights and Equal Treatment Commission of the Association of the Polish Cities (ZMP);
  - **Encourage** Polish local governments - and indeed all European local governments - to implement the Charter's provisions in municipal programmes and policies;
  - **Invite** new Polish local governments to join the group of Signatories;
  - **Commit** to organising a joint event with the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the Association of Polish Cities devoted to the solemn signing of the Charter by Polish mayors of the Association of Polish Cities;
  - **Forward** this declaration to the members of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions Policy Committee.
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*--Adopted by members of the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality on 12 May 2021.*

*--Adopted by members of the CEMR Policy Committee on 18 June 2021.*