



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Ninetieth session

Summary record of the 2126th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 7 February 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen (Vice-Chair)

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In the absence of Ms. Haidar, Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)

Eighth periodic report of Luxembourg (CEDAW/C/LUX/8; CEDAW/C/LUX/QPR/8)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Luxembourg joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of Luxembourg to the meeting, explained that additional members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that women's rights, gender equality and diversity were essential to the well-being and healthy functioning of society. The fact that there had only been one female Minister of Defence and Minister of Finance in the country's history demonstrated that there was still a long way to go to achieve true equality at all levels, especially in decision-making. Despite significant progress, one crisis was enough to reverse women's rights. Women and girls continued to be disproportionately affected by climate disasters, armed conflicts and pandemics, a situation that could be changed only through gender-responsive policymaking in all areas. Women's and girls' empowerment should be front and centre in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies. Her Government would continue to stand up for the rights, safety, freedom and access to equal opportunities of women and girls.
4. **A representative of Luxembourg**, introducing his country's eighth periodic report (CEDAW/C/LUX/8), said that the Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity had recently expanded its remit to include LGBTIQ+ persons and diversity. Promoting equality between women and men was a cross-cutting priority under the Luxembourg Coalition Agreement for 2018–2023. Measures taken in that regard would be guided by the national action plan for equality between women and men, which would be updated to take into account the country's international commitments concerning women's rights.
5. Women's representation in political and economic life continued to improve. Women held 39 per cent of seats on governing boards of public sector institutions, an increase of 10 percentage points since 2015, and the number of women representing the State on such boards has risen to 44 per cent, surpassing the target of 40 per cent. While women held only 23 per cent of seats on the governing boards of large private sector companies, that figure had shown an upward trend. The Government remained firmly committed to promoting balanced representation and was encouraging stakeholders to work towards that goal.
6. The LGBTI community was also affected by gender imbalances in connection with the traditional roles often attributed to men and women. Equality policies must include men as both political stakeholders and beneficiaries of such policies. To combat gender inequality, it was essential to counter gender stereotypes, negative prejudices, gender roles and the gendering of emotions, values, principles and norms, as well as the concepts of masculinity and femininity and harmful practices and customs. The Government was working with various civil society organizations to that end.
7. Luxembourg was the only country in the European Union to have eliminated the gender pay gap. However, men still tended to earn higher annual salaries. Greater efforts were therefore needed to address economic inequalities, with a particular focus on the large proportion of women in part-time work and the low percentage of women in leadership positions. The appointment of equality officers in private companies with more than 15 employees was crucial to the implementation of gender equality objectives.
8. Combating domestic violence and gender-based violence remained a priority. The total number of victims had increased considerably in recent years, rising from nearly 2,900 in 2015 to almost 4,800 in 2023. Around 71 per cent of victims were women, and the number of female victims had increased by 6 per cent between 2022 and 2023. In November 2021, a government strategy to improve the national domestic violence protection mechanism had been adopted, bringing together all stakeholders in the public and private

sectors to identify challenges and strengthen the protection mechanism. A national centre for victims of all forms of violence was being established to provide holistic care and legal, medical and psychological support services around the clock; it was due to open in April 2025. A national action plan on gender-based violence was being developed in order to offer more comprehensive care to victims by strengthening the relevant national mechanisms. Activities carried out to raise public awareness included the flagship Orange Week campaign, during which a range of events, conferences, training activities, film screenings and a public march were held to demonstrate solidarity with women and girls who were victims of violence. The Government relied on the crucial support of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to combat violence against women and girls.

9. As part of the Government's holistic approach to combating domestic violence, a programme had been established to provide perpetrators with structured support and tailored therapy to break the cycle of violence. The number of perpetrators receiving such support had increased by 45 per cent since 2015, thus demonstrating the programme's success and a growing interest in accountability and rehabilitation.

10. The Government was strongly committed to implementing the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in a cross-cutting manner, in all policies. Since its ratification by Luxembourg, the Convention had shaped the national approach to tackling domestic violence and promoting gender equality and had guided the development of national action plans on issues such as trafficking in persons, emotional and sexual health and prostitution. The Prostitution Committee, composed of experts from the public sector and civil society, had been established pursuant to a regulation issued in 2023 in order to monitor the phenomenon and combat exploitation in prostitution and trafficking in persons.

11. Recent achievements included the approval of a bill prohibiting virginity testing and hymenorrhaphy and removing the requirement for a period of reflection before abortion procedures. The Criminal Code had been amended in 2023 to update the definition of rape by replacing the criterion of physical violence with that of the absence of consent.

12. The Government demonstrated its commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls in multilateral forums such as the Commission on the Status of Women and was a reliable cooperation partner to several United Nations organizations. Luxembourg was a member of both the LGBTI Core Group and a group of like-minded countries working together on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Gender equality had been made a priority during the country's presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. A national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) for the period 2025–2030 was being finalized with the aim of ensuring respect for women's rights and their full and inclusive participation in peace and security processes.

13. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the Chamber of Deputies played a key role in combating discrimination against women and promoting gender equality in Luxembourg and abroad. As part of the Orange Week campaign, the Chamber's main façade had been illuminated in orange to raise awareness of the need to tackle violence against women and girls. At the international level, deputies participated in interparliamentary networks dedicated to promoting gender equality and had organized meetings on the topic with parliamentarians from other countries. Under the presidency of Luxembourg, the Benelux Interparliamentary Assembly would hold a plenary session on gender equality in late 2025.

14. Inspired by a similar initiative implemented in Belgium, a Gender Audit Committee had been established by the Chamber to develop a strategy for conducting gender sensitivity audits, analysing the current situation within the national parliament and formulating recommendations with the intention of cultivating a more gender-sensitive legislature. Its recommendations would guide the Chamber's institutional activities and enable it to adopt a cross-cutting approach to gender. It had recently come to light that deputies who were pregnant or had recently given birth had no special status and were not entitled to the maternity leave provided for in the Labour Code, a situation that must be addressed when the regulations concerning the status of deputies would be reformed.

15. The Chamber was facing several challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality, including in encouraging the use of inclusive language and gender mainstreaming. In the light of the polarization of discussions on issues of equality, the values enshrined in international and national legal instruments were increasingly being politicized and the Chamber's neutrality was being called into question, with some groups accusing it of adopting a "woke" approach dictated by a societal minority. As a democratic institution, the Chamber must represent the people of Luxembourg while also upholding the rights and freedoms of all. It would therefore be helpful to receive guidance on how best to do so while maintaining existing frameworks.

16. **A representative of the Advisory Commission on Human Rights, Luxembourg**, said that the root cause of discrimination against women in Luxembourg was the continued existence of a social structure that kept women subordinate to men. The Government failed to acknowledge the existence of such systemic subordination, favouring an ostensibly neutral approach that lacked gender sensitivity, despite the fact that supposedly neutral measures were likely to have different effects on people in traditionally disadvantaged situations, including women. The failure to consider specific circumstances risked generating or exacerbating discrimination. A neutral approach to gender equality therefore hindered progress, as it meant that only the symptoms of inequality were being addressed, and not the underlying causes. Political leaders should openly acknowledge the existence of systemic patriarchal domination and prioritize its dismantling. The Government must implement gender mainstreaming across all policies to ensure that gender was taken into account in all aspects of legislation and public administration.

17. The Government's work to promote equality lacked an intersectional approach, and its failure to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination was deplorable. For instance, the concept of disability was conspicuously absent from the national action plan for equality between women and men, and the subject of gender was neglected in the national disability action plan. Without an intersectional approach, measures aimed at combating discrimination against women would generate minimal benefits, advancing equality for only a small subsection of women.

18. Integrating an intersectional approach would ensure that public policies recognized that women were not a homogenous group and that their experiences of discrimination and equality varied considerably. An intersectional approach required the collection of detailed data disaggregated for example by sex, age, ethnic origin, disability and level of education. Such data would provide the information needed to comprehend and address the different forms of discrimination facing women, identify gaps in policies and assess the impact of the measures that had been taken, ensuring that public policies could be better targeted at the specific needs of all women, regardless of their background.

Articles 1–6

19. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that the Committee was concerned about the recent amendment to the Constitution, which had created a distinction between citizens and non-citizens with regard to equality before the law. The amendment had generated a lack of clarity regarding procedural rights, including the right to a fair trial and the right to a defence; it had failed to provide guarantees of the protection of human dignity by prohibiting slavery, forced labour and trafficking in persons; and it had created ambiguity regarding various rights, such as the rights to freedom of thought, religion, asylum, social security and health protection. She would be interested to hear the Government's rationale for the amendment, which in some cases was inconsistent with Constitutional Court rulings, and she wished to know why the State party had not heeded the concerns of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies in that regard. It would be helpful to learn about the anticipated impact of those reforms on non-citizens.

20. She would welcome information on measures planned by the Government to remove barriers to access to justice for women, especially women from disadvantaged groups. She wished to know why the State party had not granted the Centre for Equal Treatment the power to initiate legal proceedings on behalf of victims of discrimination and had not strengthened the Centre's investigational capacities or bestowed on it the ability to issue binding decisions. She wondered how the State party would eliminate the distinction between citizens and

non-citizens so as to ensure respect for the equality of all persons before the law, including persons with disabilities who were deprived of legal capacity.

21. It would be useful to receive information on human rights-related due diligence requirements imposed by the Government on companies headquartered in Luxembourg, including those in the financial sector. It would also be interesting to hear about any effective remedies available to victims of human rights violations occurring in other countries in connection with companies headquartered in the State party.

22. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the Government's neutral approach to eliminating discrimination against women and girls was based on the principle that women's rights were human rights. Rather than introducing a distinction between government actions taken specifically for women and other action, the neutral approach served to underline the fact that men and women were equal.

23. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity had consulted the Advisory Commission on Human Rights and various NGOs during its preparation of the national action plan for equality between women and men. The Ministry had an annual budget of around €31 million, more than 80 per cent of which was allocated to supporting civil society organizations in their everyday activities, in areas such as combating domestic violence, supporting victims and promoting women's rights. Civil society organizations were also represented in the national committees that had been set up to address specific issues such as LGBTI rights and gender-based violence.

24. In addition to coordinating the national action plan for equality between women and men, the Ministry also coordinated the national action plan for the promotion of the rights of LGBTI persons and the national action plan on gender-based violence. The three action plans had all adopted an intersectional approach based on the analysis of factors of social inequality, such as socioeconomic status, age, disability, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and gender identity. The Equality Observatory had also incorporated an intersectional approach into its work.

25. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that anyone who was a party to criminal proceedings in her country, regardless of residency status or nationality, benefited from a full set of procedural guarantees, including the right to a lawyer, the right to be informed about the charges in a language that the person understood, the presumption of innocence and the right to legal assistance. With respect to the latter, legislation adopted on 7 August 2023 had established a new partial legal aid scheme for victims with modest incomes.

26. Since 2017, the Centre for Equal Treatment had been attached to the Chamber of Deputies and, in a resolution of 1 July 2020, the Chamber had undertaken to grant the Centre greater powers.

27. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that victims of human rights violations occurring in other countries could file a civil action for compensation if they could prove that the violation had been caused as a result of the actions of a company domiciled in Luxembourg. Criminal action could also be brought if the violation fell within the scope of article 454 of the Criminal Code, which prohibited all forms of discrimination. An interministerial working group had been formed to coordinate the transposition into domestic legislation of Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on corporate sustainability due diligence and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and Regulation (EU) 2023/2859. It had held consultations with a variety of stakeholders, including civil society organizations and representatives of private companies. The Government had also appointed a National Contact Point for Responsible Business Conduct within the Ministry of the Economy. The National Contact Point had organized a specific event on the impact of businesses on the rights of women and girls and in 2023, to mark International Women's Day, had made a presentation on gender-related challenges in international business. Members of the public could report human rights abuses via a website set up to raise awareness of the National Contact Point.

28. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that, as part of its ongoing efforts to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Government held daily exchanges with businesses, business leaders and their representative associations and civil

society. The State had the responsibility not only to put in place a legislative framework that ensured compliance with the Guiding Principles but also to impose relevant obligations directly on business leaders. Broadly speaking, the response from professional associations had been extremely positive and the level of awareness of the Guiding Principles among financial institutions was now higher than ever.

29. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she would be interested to know whether a bill addressing juvenile justice would include a provision prohibiting the imposition of custodial measures on girls who were pregnant or breastfeeding.

30. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the Government had placed great emphasis on awareness-raising as a means to address the low number of complaints of discrimination reported by women. It organized major media campaigns and information campaigns at schools to ensure that discrimination and violence against women were no longer taboo subjects and to inform girls from a young age of the risks of discrimination that they faced.

31. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that a broad range of topics was being addressed during the current process of constitutional review, including the national flag, the national territory, languages and the political rights of citizens. Although it was established in the Constitution that citizens were equal before the law, that provision could not be interpreted as implying that foreigners were subject to different legal procedures. Non-nationals did not have the right to vote in parliamentary elections, but they could vote in communal elections.

32. **Ms. Rana** said that the Committee would welcome an update on the status of the second national action plan on women and peace and security. In particular, she would like to know how the lessons learned from the first plan would be incorporated into the new plan. Given the State party's strong ranking in the Global Women, Peace, and Security Index, it would be interesting to hear what specific strategies the Government might be considering to further advance gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and humanitarian responses. Under the previous Government, Luxembourg had pledged to implement a feminist foreign policy, but that term was not used by the authorities who were currently in power. She wished to know whether there had been any changes to the State party's substantive foreign policy commitments and what steps the current Government planned to take to ensure that gender equality remained a core foreign policy priority.

33. It would be helpful to hear what specific measures the Government would take to ensure that the Advisory Commission on Human Rights had sufficient human and financial resources to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate. She would like to know what steps would be taken to ensure that the Advisory Commission's attachment to the Chamber of Deputies would strengthen its independence, in line with the Paris Principles. The Committee also hoped that the neutral approach to equality policies adopted by the Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity would effectively address structural gender inequalities and their impact on women's rights. She wished to know what steps the Government planned to take to enhance the data collection carried out by the Equality Observatory to take better account of intersecting forms of discrimination and what measures were in place to ensure the independence and representativeness of the proposed High Council for Gender Equality.

34. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she would like to know what steps the Government was taking to further develop its use of temporary special measures, including by strengthening enforcement of existing quotas, and to change the public's negative attitude towards such measures.

35. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the attachment of the Advisory Commission on Human Rights to the Chamber of Deputies would strengthen its independence and, subject to the outcome of debates in the Chamber, might also result in the allocation of greater budgetary resources.

36. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that, although a neutral approach to establishing de jure equality between women and men had been adopted, gender-specific measures were still taken to ensure that women enjoyed de facto equality in everyday life. The Government implemented a number of measures in the areas of technology, training and

communication, designed to raise the awareness of young girls of gender equality issues. Steps had also been taken to equip girls and young women to defend themselves against violence and to combat gender stereotypes from an early age, while different groups of vulnerable women were identified as target beneficiaries in all the equality policies set out by the Luxembourg Coalition Agreement for 2023–2028.

37. There were plans to expand the areas addressed by the Equality Observatory to include, among other issues, the fight against poverty. The Government was also aware of the need to collect data on non-binary persons.

38. The second national action plan on women and peace and security was currently being finalized and was scheduled to be announced on International Women's Day, in March 2025. The foreign policy of Luxembourg provided for a series of coherent measures designed to address the intrinsic links between political participation, respect for human rights and the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls. It also acknowledged the important role of women in promoting the women and peace and security agenda. Under the second national action plan, the Government would continue its efforts to establish a robust framework to ensure that women's equal participation was no longer seen as optional. The plan would apply to all foreign policy measures in the fields of diplomacy, defence and development and certain domestic areas of action, including justice, education, the reception of refugees and internal security.

39. A mechanism had been put in place to monitor political parties' fulfilment of the quotas that had been introduced for women's participation in parliamentary and European elections, and financial penalties were imposed in cases of non-compliance. The Government offered mentoring and coaching to potential candidates, including on the importance of the gender balance in decision-making, and there were also plans to carry out a gender audit on each party represented in the Chamber of Deputies.

40. Regarding the private sector, the Government had endorsed the Female Board Pool initiative, which maintained a database containing the names of over a thousand women who were suitable candidates to take roles on boards of directors. The Government would also shortly submit a bill to transpose into domestic legislation Directive (EU) 2022/2381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies and related measures into domestic legislation.

41. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that, even though the term "feminist foreign policy" was no longer being used, the Government continued to make every effort to ensure that women participated in decision-making in relation to foreign policy. The fight against all forms of discrimination against women and girls had also been a priority for Luxembourg during its period as a member of the Human Rights Council, between 2022 and 2024, and the country was part of an informal group of countries that met in Geneva and New York to exchange good practices in relation to the implementation of a feminist foreign policy.

42. **Ms. Rana** said that, in light of the weak level of civil society engagement with the Committee during the reporting period, she would be interested to know what steps the Government planned to take to promote the participation of civil society organizations and women human rights defenders in gender equality policymaking and to encourage them to submit reports to the Committee in the future.

43. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the importance that the Government attached to its partnership with civil society could not be overstated. One of the main lessons drawn from the internal evaluation of the first national action plan on women and peace and security was that civil society should be more involved in the development of activities under the second plan and in the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Furthermore, one of the two permanent seats on the High Council for Gender Equality had been reserved for a representative of the Luxembourg National Council of Women, which represented all women's organizations in the country.

44. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that each meeting of the Interministerial Human Rights Committee included a session open to representatives of civil society. On average, a dozen or so NGOs working in different areas relating to development, cooperation and humanitarian aid attended each of those sessions. There were roughly a hundred such

organizations currently operating in Luxembourg, and they also had the chance to express their views at meetings held by other interministerial committees.

45. **The Chair** said that she wished to know whether the Government intended to amend the Criminal Code to bring the definition of trafficking in persons in line with international standards, including by establishing force, fraud and coercion as core elements of trafficking offences, and not just as aggravating circumstances. It would also be useful to know what steps the Government planned to take to ensure that penalties for trafficking were commensurate with the gravity of the crime, to strengthen asset confiscation mechanisms and to ensure that victims received adequate compensation. The Committee would welcome updated information on the status of the new national action plan against trafficking in human beings, including an explanation as to how the plan would take into account the fact that victims of trafficking in persons were often subjected to intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. She would like to know whether there were any plans to expand formal victim identification procedures to include the participation of civil society organizations, labour inspectors, social workers and healthcare professionals and what steps the Government would take to prioritize the identification of child victims of trafficking. It would be useful to know what measures the Government would take to prevent trafficking victims from being inappropriately penalized, for example through deportation, for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

46. She would like to know whether the Government was considering ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It would be helpful to hear what measures the Government intended to take to address the lack of data on migrant workers and whether any plans had been made to establish a more comprehensive data collection system. She also wished to know what steps would be taken to improve access to justice and remedies for exploited female migrant workers and to ensure that all such victims were accurately identified and protected. The Committee would like to know whether there were any plans to decriminalize women in prostitution, in all settings.

47. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that she would like to know what measures the Government was taking to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes, including those affecting women from marginalized groups. It would be useful to know whether an intersectional approach to eliminating stereotypes had been adopted and how the concepts of masculinity and femininity were addressed. She also wished to know what percentage of civil servants had received training in gender equality, whether an intersectional approach had been incorporated into that training and whether the impact of the training on institutional policies and practices had been evaluated.

48. The delegation might also like to confirm whether the Government had introduced a gender impact assessment of current and new legislation and policy measures.

49. She would like to learn what measures had been taken to incorporate a disability perspective into efforts to combat gender-based violence and to stop the application of non-consensual contraception and sterilization or medical treatment on women and girls with disabilities, especially psychosocial disabilities. She would welcome further information on how the criminal justice system responded to cases of forced sterilization that were not considered to be war crimes or a crime against humanity. It would be interesting to hear what measures had been taken to prohibit non-consensual sex reassignment surgery on intersex children and what provisions had been adopted to ensure redress for those who had undergone such procedures. The Committee would like to find out what steps were taken to assess the impact of the Act of 28 March 2023, under which gender had been listed among the motives for hatred as a general aggravating circumstance for crimes and misdemeanours motivated by discrimination, and whether the Government would consider increasing the statute of limitations applicable for the offence of rape. The delegation might like to describe the approach taken to address sexual violence in the digital environment. The Committee would like to know what measures had been taken to introduce a comprehensive definition of psychological violence into domestic legislation and to ensure effective sanctions for all forms of violence against women.

50. Although the Committee welcomed the Government's plan to establish a comprehensive strategy to prevent and combat all forms of violence, certain aspects of the

plan's implementation were unclear. How would an intersectional approach be incorporated in order to respond adequately to the needs of women from marginalized groups, including migrants and asylum-seekers? Would the strategy provide for improved training and capacity-building for staff in relevant sectors? What measures did the Government plan to take to strengthen the data-collection system to produce statistics on cases of gender-based violence and the corresponding responses of the justice system, including conviction rates?

51. She wished to know why the Government had not taken any action to implement a recommendation of the Cooperation Committee of Professionals Working against Violence that it retrospectively review all cases of murder or attempted murder linked to gender-based violence.

52. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the Government was keenly aware of the importance of working with the media to eliminate stereotypes and change discriminatory attitudes. To that end, the Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity had initiated a dialogue on the subject of gender representation in the media with representatives of that sector. However, the Global Media Monitoring Project had found that women were still underrepresented in terms of both the number and seniority of female employees. An advertising ethics commission had been set up to receive complaints, but greater efforts were needed to eliminate sexism from media advertising. Ultimately, making people aware of sexism, discrimination and violence was the most effective instrument of prevention, and a campaign devoted to recognizing, discussing and stopping sexism, conducted in cooperation with the Council of Europe, had played a key role in raising awareness. The Ministry had also set up a task force to combat hate speech via new forms of communication and digital media platforms. Its members included representatives of the police, the public prosecutor's office, institutions responsible for surveillance and digital security and associations working with the perpetrators of hate speech.

53. The Ministry had established training as a cross-cutting priority in all its activities and action plans. It developed and implemented programmes and courses on subjects such as equality, diversity, gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ issues for people of all ages and at all levels, from young children to teachers and officials in the social and legal sectors who worked with potential victims. Unfortunately, very few of those courses were currently compulsory.

54. The Minister of Justice had recently informed the parliament that no court rulings had been handed down relating to the Act of 28 March 2023, so it was still too early to assess the impact of that legislation. However, the parliament had passed a motion calling on the Government to provide statistics on feminicide from 2003 onward.

55. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that the Government was in the process of formulating a national action plan on gender-based violence, which would be based on the four pillars of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), namely prevention, protection, prosecution and coordinated policies. As part of that process, over 120 questionnaires had been sent to a range of stakeholders in the Government and civil society to establish the priorities for strengthening the care and protection of victims. The Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity had organized meetings to review the recommendations and proposals that had been received from those partners. The new national action plan would have a number of objectives, including strengthening the existing system for preventing and combating gender-based violence, improving training, identifying necessary legislative changes and creating new services for victims of all the forms of violence addressed by the Istanbul Convention.

56. In response to a request received from civil society partners and the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, four government departments had joined forces to establish a new national centre for victims of violence. The centre would be open to all victims around the clock and would provide them with psychosocial, medical and legal support. The centre would ensure that victims were aware of their rights, provide guidance on legal procedures and put them in touch with the police if they wished to submit a formal complaint. It would also offer medical assistance, either on site or in partnership with hospitals and medical centres. Plans had been made to

launch a pilot project on 1 April 2025, with a view to bringing the centre fully into operation in 2026.

57. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) of the European Union, which had entered into force on 17 February 2024, required online platforms to remove illegal or harmful content as soon as they became aware of its existence.

58. In accordance with its commitments under the Luxembourg Coalition Agreement, the Government would take measures to ensure that appropriate gender reassignment procedures were available for persons with non-binary gender identities. It was therefore currently analysing the legal frameworks that had been established in that area by other members of the European Union. The Ministry of Health was also working on implementing the recommendations of the Council of Europe concerning intersex persons, including in relation to the performance of surgery on intersex children.

59. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that in Luxembourg there was no automatic removal of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities. The Government was in the process of preparing a new national action plan for persons with disabilities, and work was under way to bring the national legislation into line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, under which Luxembourg was required to recognize that persons with disabilities enjoyed legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life.

60. The parliament was currently considering a bill submitted by the Government in 2023 that would establish a future protection mandate. The proposed legislation would enable adults to make legally binding arrangements concerning their person and assets; the arrangements would come into effect only at a time in the future when, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, they might not be in a position to protect their interests. The Government had also started work on a comprehensive reform of the national legislation on the protection of adults in order to strengthen the autonomy of persons who were subject to a measure of protection. Luxembourg would soon ratify the Convention on the International Protection of Adults.

61. The Government was of the opinion that a law that established force, fraud and coercion as core elements of the crime of trafficking in persons would make prosecution more difficult. Under the existing provisions of the Criminal Code, prosecutors had to prove only the intention of the accused to exploit another person; the material elements of the offence were considered as aggravating circumstances.

62. A bill had recently been put forward with the aim of addressing the tendency of judges to hand down suspended sentences for trafficking offences. To advise the judiciary on the confiscation or seizure of assets in trafficking cases and, where appropriate, the compensation of victims, an Asset Management Office had been set up.

63. The Government had taken the decision to undertake, concurrently, the tasks of preparing a new national action plan against trafficking and transposing Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA. Anyone, including NGOs, could assist in detecting victims of trafficking. Furthermore, a special police unit had been set up to formally identify victims and to ensure that they received protection and were aware of their rights.

64. The Ministry of Justice delivered training on trafficking in persons to State bodies such as the police and immigration authorities and to NGOs working with migrants. Over the previous four years, it had organized 55 training courses, with a total of 420 participants. Although judges and prosecutors also received specific training on trafficking, the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking had never been applied in court. The principle had simply not applied to any of the cases brought before a judge in Luxembourg.

65. Work on developing a witness protection mechanism had begun, and the Government hoped to bring a bill before the parliament by the end of the year.

66. The Government had entered into informal talks with representatives of the European Union about the accuracy of its trafficking statistics. Luxembourg had an unusually high number of reported victims for a country of its size.

67. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that an intersectional approach had been incorporated into the training provided to all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on the subjects of trafficking in human beings, domestic violence and gender-based violence. The personnel at reception centres accommodating trafficking victims were trained to take specific measures to ensure that all victims received the most appropriate support, in accordance with factors such as their sex, gender identity and health status. The staff of the Red Cross who provided support at the DropIn centre for sex workers were also trained to detect victims of human trafficking.

68. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that she would like to know what the criminal response was to forced sterilization, other than in cases where it constituted a war crime or a crime against humanity; what reparation measures were envisaged for persons subjected to forced sterilization, or for intersex persons who had undergone irreversible medical interventions; and whether consideration had been given to extending the statute of limitations for the offence of rape, which was currently 10 years, and to criminalizing psychological violence. She wondered why retrospective analyses had not been implemented of femicides, homicides or attempted homicides in the context of gender violence.

69. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that, as psychological violence was covered by Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, the criminalization of psychological violence would be discussed during the transposition process.

70. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that psychological violence would be addressed in the national action plan against all forms of gender-based violence. While sex workers were not criminalized, clients who engaged with minors or victims of trafficking were subject to criminal penalties.

Articles 7–9

71. **Ms. Al-Shukairi** said that she would like to know what specific measures were being taken to bridge the gender gap in local and regional political bodies, especially in smaller municipalities, and to ensure equal representation at all levels of government. She wondered whether an effective monitoring mechanism was in place to ensure that political parties adhered to the 40 per cent gender quota, and whether financial penalties were imposed for non-compliance.

72. The Committee would be curious to know whether the Government believed that extending the 40 per cent gender quota to private companies in which the State held shares could help enhance female representation in the private sector and public life. She wondered how the impact of the gender quota on women's participation in leadership roles was evaluated and whether any monitoring mechanisms were in place to verify compliance.

73. She wished to learn whether steps were being taken to engage foreign nationals, including women from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, in the 2028 elections and in political and public life more broadly. She would welcome further details on the State party's plans to address the gender gap in its diplomatic corps, especially in senior positions, and on any targeted initiatives to encourage young women to pursue careers in international relations and diplomacy.

74. It would be of interest to hear whether the Government had set specific targets for increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions and achieving gender parity in the near future, and whether strategies were in place to increase women's representation in the military and in the security sector.

75. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would like to hear the Government's position on the administrative requirements placed on the family reunification process, particularly in relation to women with children; how the State party addressed the issue of financial support for stateless persons who did not have valid identity documents, particularly if they were apparently from outside the European Union; how the identification process for women and

children had changed following the recent amendments of the Constitution and national legislation; and what measures were in place to guarantee the citizenship of children who were adopted or born abroad before the new amendments on nationality had come into effect. He would be grateful if the delegation could indicate how many foreign wives had applied for permanent residency or citizenship over the previous five years, how many of those applications had been granted or denied and what justifications had been provided.

76. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that political parties that failed to meet the gender quota were penalized through a proportional reduction in State funding. Information campaigns had been organized to build trust in female candidates and empower women to participate in politics, both as candidates and as voters.

77. The underrepresentation of women in elections in smaller municipalities stemmed from the fact that the candidates were not nominated by political parties but must nominate themselves as individuals. The role and responsibilities of mayors were defined in a way that considered the diverse needs of the population, including the different needs of women. The Government aimed to surpass the 40 per cent electoral gender quota and to achieve parity.

78. By transposing Directive (EU) 2022/2381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies and related measures, the Government sought to foster a corporate culture that promoted equality, including equal pay, equitable promotion practices, access to training and measures to ensure a balance between work and family life.

79. The combined mandates of the government ministries responsible for defence and for gender equality placed a strong emphasis on improving the gender balance among military personnel. A recent recruitment campaign had specifically targeted female applicants as part of a broader initiative to promote gender equality and diversity within the military.

80. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that women currently made up 42.2 per cent of the diplomatic corps and that a gender monitoring programme was being set up. The number of female diplomats had risen rapidly in recent years and, as older male staff members retired, those figures were likely to improve further.

Articles 10–14

81. **Ms. Akia** said that she would be grateful if the State party could provide disaggregated data on the number of women and girls enrolled in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and construction subjects at the tertiary level. She wondered what steps were taken at all levels of education to eliminate stereotypes and structural barriers that might discourage girls from pursuing an education in fields that had traditionally been dominated by men.

82. She wished to know how the State party was supporting the international community in effectively implementing the Safe Schools Declaration. It would be useful to obtain disaggregated data on the number of women and girls with special needs in education, as well as data on the number of teachers trained to support them. She wondered how the State party ensured that the educational needs of women and girls with special needs were met, including refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking women and girls, and girls affected by poverty.

83. The Committee would welcome information on the steps taken to ensure the safety of women and girls at school and in online spaces, particularly in relation to school-related sexual violence, exposure to and distribution of pornography, bullying and online violence. She also wished to hear more about the measures implemented to promote the responsible use of technology, including artificial intelligence tools, and to help close the digital divide affecting women and girls in school.

84. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that there was a pressing need to strengthen the country's data-collection and follow-up mechanisms. The Ministry of Equality between Women and Men intended to expand the scope of its Equality Observatory so that it would collect data on areas such as the presence of women in scientific fields.

85. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that, at the country's universities, in the 2022/23 academic year, there had been no female students and 15 male students enrolled in maths, 61 female students and 99 male students enrolled in science, 179 female students and 170 male students enrolled in information technology and 5 female students and 39 male students enrolled in entrepreneurship, finance and marketing.

86. The Government's BEE SECURE service provided training on online safety, addressing issues such as cyberbullying and sexting, and also offered a pedagogical kit to ensure that teachers had the knowledge and tools to provide students with advice in that area. The BEE SECURE Stopline provided a structure through which the general public could report illegal or harmful content. The Ministry of Education, Children and Youth was working to promote the importance of achieving a "screen-life balance", particularly among children. Training modules on the safe and responsible use of digital tools were available for teachers.

87. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that Luxembourg was a member of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict and that it financially supported the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Furthermore, representatives of Luxembourg regularly raised the issue of school safety in multilateral forums.

88. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that intensive, one-to-one language classes with a specialized foreign languages teacher were organized for young children who had arrived in Luxembourg unable to speak French or German. Children with special needs or disabilities were supported by specialist teachers. Where possible, all children were kept within the classroom and in mainstream schools. Measures were in place to support socioeconomically disadvantaged families, including free school meals, free schoolbooks and childcare service vouchers.

89. **Ms. Pia-Comella** said that she would like to know whether any measures had been implemented to address the gender pension gap, the exclusion of persons with disabilities from "disabled worker" status if they did not meet the requirement of a 30 per cent loss of working capacity and the requirement for asylum-seekers to wait six months after submitting their application to gain access to the job market. She wondered whether steps had been taken to expressly criminalize sexual harassment and provide for adequate penalties, and to ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

90. **A representative of Luxembourg** said that victims of gender-based violence or discrimination could obtain access to support through a specialized State service dedicated to addressing equality issues. The Government was putting measures in place to provide additional support to single parents, for instance by granting them priority in gaining access to affordable housing. Steps to address the pension gap would be discussed as part of a major pension reform. The Ministry of Health and Social Security had launched a national survey to understand citizens' priorities.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.