



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
PRIME MINISTER

Zagreb, 12 April 2017

Dear Commissioner,

Thank you for your letter of 24 March 2017 regarding the process of ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention') by the Republic of Croatia.

The Constitution of Croatia stipulates gender equality as one of the highest values, which also implies the necessity of preventing all forms of violence and discrimination. Recognizing the need to protect victims of domestic violence as a particularly vulnerable group, the Government has devoted particular attention to combating domestic violence. This is also evident from the Government's Programme for the Mandate Period 2016 – 2020, where one of the priority objectives refers to the protection of socially vulnerable populations, health care, solidarity and partnership.

As you are already aware, pursuant to this basic guidelines, the central coordinating body for the area of protection from domestic violence – the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy, has initiated the process of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The working group for drafting the proposal of the Law on Ratification of the Convention was established and, according to the Plan of Normative Activities of the Ministry, the draft Law is expected to be sent into formal procedure for the adoption in the last quarter of 2017.

The Working Group consists of the competent state authorities and pluralistically represented civil society organizations. Individual meetings with the representatives of the state bodies with the purpose of determining competences for individual articles of the Convention and for assessing the necessary funds from the State Budget are also ongoing. In accordance with the national legislation, the legislative procedure will include public consultations, as well as the regulatory impact assessment.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that in the process of drafting the new National Strategy for Protection Against Domestic Violence for the period from 2017 to 2022, the provisions of Istanbul Convention were taken into account. This strategic national document defines measures in the area of prevention, legislative framework and support to victims of violence, and it meets standards set in the Convention.

**Mr Nils Muižnieks**  
Commissioner for Human Rights  
Council of Europe

All the aforementioned elements demonstrate the clear commitment of the Republic of Croatia to suppress all forms of discrimination against women, promote full equality of women and men, as well as create conditions for the empowerment of female victims of violence.

I am looking forward to continue discussing this issue with you during your upcoming visit to Croatia next month. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Andrej Plenković

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'AP', written in a cursive style.