7th GENERAL REPORT ON GREVIO'S ACTIVITIES



GREVIO
Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

covering the period from

January to December 2025

THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION SAVES LIVES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

7th GENERAL REPORT ON GREVIO'S ACTIVITIES

GREVIO
Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

covering the period from
January to December 2025

Council of Europe

French Edition :
7e rapport général
sur les activités du GREVIO

The reproduction of extracts (up to 500 words) is authorised, except for commercial purposes as long as the integrity of the text is preserved, the excerpt is not used out of context, does not provide incomplete information or does not otherwise mislead the reader as to the nature, scope or content of the text. The source text must always be acknowledged as follows "© Council of Europe, year of the publication". All other requests concerning the reproduction/translation of all or part of the document, should be addressed to the Directorate of Communications, Council of Europe (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int). All other correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to the Violence against Women Division, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity, Council of Europe.

Documents and Publications Production Department (DPDP), Council of Europe,
Cover Photo: Council of Europe
Photos: Council of Europe, Latvian Government, Shutterstock

© Council of Europe, September 2026
Printed at the Council of Europe

Contents

FOREWORD BY MARIA-ANDRIANI KOSTOPOULOU, PRESIDENT OF GREVIO	**5**
ACTIVITIES	**9**
Introduction	9
GREVIO meetings	10
Evaluation visits and procedures	12
Working groups	13
HUDOC-GREVIO database	14
MEMBERSHIP AND BUREAU	**15**
SIGNATURES AND RATIFICATIONS OF THE CONVENTION	**17**
Signatures and developments regarding the application of the Istanbul Convention	17
Reservations	17
Challenges for the Istanbul Convention	19
COMMUNICATION	**21**
Publications	21
Participation in events	23
Visual identity, communication tools and social media	25
The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	26
FOCUS SECTION: PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – THE CRITICAL ROLE OF PRIMARY PREVENTION	**31**
Introduction	31
The Istanbul Convention and primary prevention of violence against women	32
Expanding the knowledge base: theoretical models for understanding the prevention of violence against women	35
Examples of effective primary prevention interventions	38
Primary prevention of the digital dimension of violence against women and girls	45
Progress and challenges in preventing violence against women as identified in GREVIO's monitoring reports	48
Outlook	56
RELATIONS WITH THE COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES	**58**
CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER COUNCIL OF EUROPE BODIES AND INSTITUTIONS	**61**
Committee of Ministers	61
Parliamentary Assembly	62
Commissioner for Human Rights	63
European Court of Human Rights	64
Gender Equality Commission	67
Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child	68
Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)	69
Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)	69
Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)	70
Convention on Cybercrime ("Budapest Convention")	71

CO-OPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS 72
Role of NGOs and civil society, including national human rights institutions 72
Findings of GREVIO on state recognition of and support for NGOs and civil society 74
CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS 76
United Nations 76
Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform) 77
World Health Organization 78
European Union 79
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) 79
CONCLUDING REMARKS 81
APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF GREVIO ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JANUARY AND DECEMBER 2025 83
APPENDIX 2 – TIMETABLE FOR GREVIO'S BASELINE EVALUATION PROCEDURE (2016-2028) 84
APPENDIX 3 – PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE FOR GREVIO'S FIRST THEMATIC EVALUATION ROUND PROCEDURE ON THE THEME "BUILDING TRUST BY DELIVERING SUPPORT, PROTECTION AND JUSTICE" (2023-2031) 86
APPENDIX 4 – SIGNATURES AND RATIFICATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 88
APPENDIX 5 – LIST OF GREVIO MEMBERS 90
APPENDIX 6 – GREVIO'S SECRETARIAT (FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2025) 91
APPENDIX 7 – WORKFLOW OF THE MONITORING MECHANISM 92

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou

Foreword by Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, President of GREVIO

It is an honour for me, as President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), to introduce the 7th general report on GREVIO's activities, covering the period from January to December 2025.

Despite many positive developments to cite, the year 2025 reminded us that progress in the field of women's rights can never be taken for granted and that challenges to the principles and purposes of the Istanbul Convention persist. Yet, these challenges demonstrated something equally important: the Istanbul Convention is strong and resilient, sustained by the voices and experiences of survivors themselves. The convention continues to benefit from strong defenders; from parliamentarians to heads of state, from civil society organisations to national courts, from frontline professionals to survivors. GREVIO, for its part, continued its work fully committed to its mandate.

On the monitoring front, 2025 was highly productive. We published seven first thematic evaluation reports and one baseline evaluation report, on the United Kingdom. We conducted nine evaluation visits and launched our baseline evaluation procedure in respect of the European Union, which is itself a particularly significant development following the EU's accession to the convention in 2023.

In parallel, GREVIO initiated work on its second general recommendation, dedicated to gender-related killings of women and girls. Femicide remains the most extreme and irreversible manifestation of violence against women and one of the clearest reminders of what is at stake when authorities fail to prevent, protect and respond adequately to violence. This recommendation will identify the key obligations and measures required under the convention to promote a comprehensive response to gender-related killings, while providing practical guidance for prevention and protection. A dedicated working group composed of five GREVIO members is mandated to complete this work by the end of 2026.

The thematic evaluation reports adopted this year also tell important stories of progress. An increasing number of parties are aligning their legislation with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention by criminalising psychological violence, adopting consent-based definitions of rape and strengthening responses to intimate partner violence. More specialised support services are being established, interinstitutional co-operation is improving in several countries and the visibility of violence against women as a human rights violation has undoubtedly increased over the past decade. These are not merely legislative or policy developments; they are changes that affect the lives of women and girls. GREVIO's monitoring and the tailored guidance it provides to each party continue to contribute meaningfully to these developments.

Progress, however, remains uneven, particularly in the area addressed in this year's focus section: primary prevention.

Preventing violence before it occurs, especially by addressing the underlying attitudes, stereotypes, behaviours and structural inequalities that sustain violence against women, remains both the most ambitious and the most essential objective of the Istanbul Convention. Yet, GREVIO's monitoring work has consistently shown that primary prevention remains one of the weakest aspects of national responses.

Across the parties we have evaluated, prevention policies too often fail to distinguish clearly between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures. Awareness-raising campaigns, school-based programmes, perpetrator work and victim support measures are frequently grouped together as though they pursue the same objectives. GREVIO has repeatedly underlined the need for greater conceptual clarity: primary prevention requires a distinct approach focused on intervening before violence occurs.

One consequence of this confusion is the persistent underfunding of genuine primary prevention. Well-funded awareness campaigns are important and welcome, but they do not by themselves transform the social norms, behaviours and power dynamics that sustain violence. Effective prevention requires comprehensive, evidence-based and multilevel programmes capable of addressing attitudes, relationship dynamics, community norms and structural inequalities simultaneously. Where such approaches exist (including school-based interventions challenging gender stereotypes or initiatives engaging men and boys) GREVIO has observed more meaningful progress. Some countries provide encouraging examples, although such practices remain too limited.

Women's rights organisations remain indispensable actors in this field. Their expertise, community roots and long-standing experience place them at the centre of effective prevention efforts. Yet GREVIO's findings continue to reveal insecure and short-term funding for these organisations, often accompanied by increasing competition from non-specialist providers. As a result, important prevention work may rely heavily on under-resourced NGOs, including in areas concerning women exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination.

Another issue relates to the evaluation. Do the prevention measures actually reduce violence? Do they change behaviour? Do they alter social norms over time? Across many parties, prevention measures are implemented without a sufficiently rigorous assessment of their long-term impact. Campaigns are launched, programmes are funded and action plans are adopted, yet there is often limited evidence as to whether these measures effectively reduce violence, change behaviours or transform social norms over time.

The urgency of strengthening prevention efforts is further reinforced by developments documented across GREVIO's recent evaluations. Sexual violence is affecting increasingly younger age groups (as both victims and perpetrators). There is growing evidence linking these trends to early exposure to violent pornography, while prevention efforts addressing these dynamics remain fragmented. Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls has also become pervasive, yet prevention strategies continue to lag behind the scale and speed of the phenomenon. Harmful sexual behaviours, including practices such as strangulation, are becoming increasingly normalised in deeply concerning ways.

These are not isolated findings. They are recurring patterns emerging across different legal systems, social contexts and regions of Europe. They point to a broader challenge to invest sufficiently in prevention and in addressing rigid gender stereotypes and unequal power relations that remain at the root of violence against women. The Istanbul Convention provides a comprehensive framework, and GREVIO remains committed to supporting parties in translating their commitments into meaningful action. I hope this year's focus section will serve as a useful resource for policy makers, practitioners, educators and advocates committed to prevention strategies that genuinely work.

Beyond this focus section, the present general report reflects the breadth and depth of GREVIO's work. It highlights our engagement with the European Court of Human Rights, including the first ever structured scientific dialogue between the two bodies held in September 2025. It also documents our co-operation with the Committee of the Parties, our exchanges with United Nations bodies and agencies, our contribution to standard-setting work across the Council of Europe and our active role within the EDVAW Platform (the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women), which GREVIO will chair in 2026.

At the centre of this work stand, as always, women's rights defenders. Their expertise strengthens our monitoring work, their organisations provide essential support services and their advocacy generates the momentum required for effective implementation of the convention. Last year, GREVIO dedicated its 6th general report to the shrinking civic space confronting these defenders. Unfortunately, the concerns

identified there continue to emerge in our evaluation findings and exchanges across Europe. GREVIO will continue to address these developments clearly and consistently.

I would like to thank my colleagues in GREVIO – Laura Albu, Guillaume Barbe, María Rún Bjarnadóttir, Pascale Franck, Päivi Hirvelä, Marie-Claude Hofner, Ivo Holc, Olena Kharytonova, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, Helmut Tichy, Pille Tsopp-Pagan, Aleid van den Brink, Grzegorz Wrona, and Angelina Zaporojan-Pirgari – for their dedication, commitment and collegiality. Working alongside each of them is both a privilege and a source of strength.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the Secretariat. The Executive Secretary, Johanna Nelles, and every member of her team contribute daily, through their expertise and commitment, to making this work possible. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to colleagues across the Council of Europe whose support and engagement continue to make a meaningful difference.

The journey towards ending violence against women is long, and progress is neither linear nor guaranteed. In 2025, we encountered significant challenges. Yet the convention remains strong, and its monitoring mechanism effective. GREVIO remains committed to advancing the convention's vision of a Europe free from violence against women and domestic violence.

I hope you will find this report informative and useful.



35th GREVIO meeting, Strasbourg, France, 24-27 March 2025

Activities

Introduction

1. GREVIO, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, is the independent body established under Article 66 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention; CETS No. 210) that is tasked with monitoring the convention. GREVIO is composed of 15 independent and impartial experts, who have expertise in the field of violence against women and are of high moral character. Their term of office is four years, renewable once. At the European level, GREVIO is currently the only independent panel of experts monitoring the implementation of binding international legal provisions in the area of violence against women.

2. GREVIO launched its first (baseline) evaluation procedure in spring 2016, after adopting a questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the Istanbul Convention in its entirety. Working on a country-by-country basis, GREVIO carries out a first (baseline) evaluation of each country that has ratified the convention. Since 2023, GREVIO has been undertaking its first thematic evaluation procedure, focusing on the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice". For both the baseline evaluation and the first thematic evaluation round, GREVIO initiates the procedure by addressing a questionnaire to the party concerned, inviting the authorities to respond by way of a comprehensive report in which all the relevant issues raised by the questionnaire should be addressed. While the questionnaire for the baseline evaluations covered all articles of the convention, the questionnaire was adapted to the focused scope of the first thematic evaluation round and thus covers 19 articles of the convention, including the development of

policies to prevent and combat violence against women and their financing; data collection; the prevention of gender-based violence; the support for and protection of victims; consideration of situations of violence against women in child custody and access decisions; prohibition of alternative dispute resolution; investigation, prosecution and conviction rates; risk assessment and protective measures; and emergency restraining and protection orders.

3. In addition to the information provided by the parties, GREVIO also collects information from various other sources, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other members of civil society, national human rights institutions, Council of Europe bodies (Parliamentary Assembly, Human Rights Commissioner and other pertinent bodies) and other international treaty bodies. After analysing the state report, GREVIO carries out an evaluation visit to the party concerned and subsequently draws up its draft evaluation report. The draft report is discussed in a GREVIO meeting and, following its approval by all GREVIO experts, it is sent to the relevant national authorities for comments. Following the receipt and consideration of these comments, GREVIO adopts the final report. GREVIO's evaluation report is made public on the Istanbul Convention website, together with any final comments received from the state party concerned. The Committee of the Parties, which is the other body involved in the monitoring process and which is composed of the representatives of the parties to the convention, subsequently receives GREVIO's reports and may adopt, on the basis of GREVIO's conclusions, recommendations addressed to each of the parties.

4. After a period of three years, parties are asked to report back to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to implement these recommendations. The committee's review of these reports results in the adoption of conclusions in respect of each party.

GREVIO meetings

5. In 2025, GREVIO held three meetings, starting with its 35th meeting in March, its 36th meeting in June-July and its 37th meeting in October. Much of its meeting time was dedicated to discussions on the first thematic evaluation reports drawn up under the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice". Following the adoption of the first set of eight such thematic reports in 2024, GREVIO adopted its final first thematic evaluation report on Portugal at its 35th meeting, as well as its reports on France, the Netherlands and Serbia in draft version. Further first thematic evaluation reports were discussed at GREVIO's 36th meeting in June-July, focusing on Andorra, Belgium and Italy, again in their first reading. In total, GREVIO approved seven first thematic evaluation reports in their final version and published them between May and November 2025, bringing the number of reports published under GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round to 15. They focus closely on the advances made in implementing the convention's provisions in relation to the four pillars in as far as they contribute to instilling a sense of trust and protection in victims: prevention, protection, prosecution and comprehensive policies. By highlighting progress made in these areas since the baseline evaluation procedure, they show the level of engagement with GREVIO's previous findings and offer insights into important developments.

6. An innovative feature of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports is the section entitled "Emerging trends in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence". For each evaluation report, these sections offer reflections on wider trends in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention that transcend the article-by-article analysis, pointing both to progress and setbacks as well as to worrying developments in terms of an increase in particular forms of violence against women and girls. Among the positive trends are the important developments made in terms of the full alignment of legislation with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention in many parties. For example, psychological violence is criminalised more and more frequently, covering behaviour such as social isolation and degrading behaviour – forms of control and manipulation often applied by domestic abusers. Equally importantly, there is a growing trend of improving the protection offered to victims of intimate partner violence and making prosecution of perpetrators more effective. A further positive trend identified by GREVIO is the increasing attention placed on the prevention of violence against women in sports. This, however, needs to be seen in light of the wider shortcomings in promoting systematic and long-term primary prevention as highlighted in detail in this report's focus section.

7. In parallel, GREVIO's baseline evaluation procedures continued in relation to those parties that had not yet undergone this procedure. The baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom was published in June 2025, and in May 2025 GREVIO carried out its baseline evaluation visit to Ukraine. In November 2025, it also carried out its baseline evaluation visit to Latvia, after a parliamentary proposal to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention was put on hold. Both baseline evaluation reports were placed on the agenda of GREVIO's 39th meeting for final adoption.

8. In addition, GREVIO adopted its 6th general report on its activities at its 35th meeting in March, covering the period from January to December 2024. As in previous such reports, a thematic focus section highlights a theme that emerged from GREVIO's evaluation procedures, this time focusing on the shrinking space for women's rights defenders and organisations advocating women's right to live free from violence. In view of the growing concerns identified in its monitoring work, GREVIO's 6th general activity report explains the applicable international legal standards, principles and guidelines for the protection of human rights defenders, many of which specifically reference the vulnerabilities and gender-related experiences of women human rights defenders, as well as findings from its monitoring work. They offer important insights into the situation on the ground for those who provide assistance, counselling or legal representation to women and girls for their experiences of gender-based violence. These findings, which range from attempts to intimidate or silence women's rights defenders to the lack of inclusion of civil society expertise in policy design, implementation and evaluation of measures and limitations in funding opportunities, are presented in the global context of regression on women's rights and a rise in anti-rights and anti-feminist movements. The challenges, as highlighted in this focus section, that women's rights organisations and women's rights defenders experience in carrying out their work to prevent and combat the different forms of violence against women will continue to feature in GREVIO's country monitoring work. In its evaluation procedures carried out in 2025, GREVIO found that several of the difficulties persisted, notably around funding and meaningful co-operation.

9. During its three meetings, GREVIO engaged in exchanges of views with Neil Datta, representative of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF), Sven Pfeiffer, from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Karin Rowhani-Wimmer, representative of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and Marianne Mikko, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). Each of these exchanges prompted in-depth discussions on themes of common interest and showed the inter-relatedness of GREVIO's work with other treaty bodies and entities, both at the regional and global level.

Evaluation visits and procedures

10. In 2025, GREVIO carried out a total of nine visits. It conducted baseline evaluation visits to Ukraine and Latvia, as well as first thematic evaluation visits to Andorra, Belgium, Estonia, Malta, Romania, San Marino and Slovenia. The duration of these visits varied, depending on the size of the party visited, ranging from five to eight days.

11. Through its meetings with state and civil society representatives held during these visits, GREVIO was able to assess the situation on the ground in relation to the measures taken by the parties under review in relation to preventing and combating violence against women. Many visits included on-site meetings at specialist support services for women victims of violence, such as domestic violence shelters, counselling services and rape crisis and sexual assault referral centres, as well as police stations and social work centres. While baseline evaluation visits seek to ensure fact-finding in relation to all aspects of the Istanbul Convention, thematic evaluation visits focus



Evaluation visit to San Marino - GREVIO delegation with the two Captains Regent of San Marino, Ministers and high-ranking government officials – February 2025

specifically on the theme of "Building trust by providing support, protection and justice". Emphasis is placed on assessing progress made since the baseline evaluation in relation to the 19 articles under review and on identifying specific trends in relation to violence against women.



Evaluation visit to Ukraine – GREVIO delegation – May 2025

12. During the period under review, GREVIO also initiated its baseline evaluation procedure in relation to the European Union and received the EU's report on 24 November 2025. It continued its preparations for its baseline evaluation visit to Latvia and its first thematic evaluation visits to Estonia, Malta, Romania and Slovenia – procedures that had been launched in 2024. State reports were received from all of these parties in 2025. GREVIO's evaluations are organised on the basis of a provisional timetable, which is available separately for the baseline evaluation and GREVIO's first thematic evaluation procedure, the latter covering the period 2023-2031 (see Appendix 3).

Working groups

13. Article 69 of the Istanbul Convention confers upon GREVIO the ability and power to adopt, where appropriate, general recommendations on the implementation of the convention. As indicated in paragraph 359 of the Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, general recommendations have a common meaning for all parties and concern articles or themes that are included in the convention and are not country specific. Although these general recommendations are not legally binding, they serve as an important reference for parties by developing a greater understanding of the different themes in the convention and by offering clear guidance that can contribute to an effective implementation of the provisions contained in the Istanbul Convention.

14. In the period under review, GREVIO decided, at its 35th meeting, to set up a working group mandated to prepare a draft general recommendation on gender-related killings of women (femicides) (GREVIO-GT-FEM), for adoption by the plenary.

15. While gender-related killings of women (femicides) are not explicitly mentioned in the Istanbul Convention, they constitute the most extreme and brutal manifestation of violence against women and girls and they form part of the continuum of violence against women, to which the Istanbul Convention aims to respond in a holistic manner. Therefore, the convention is a key tool for preventing gender-related killings and protecting women victims of violence against such an extreme form of violence. This second general recommendation by GREVIO will identify, throughout the convention, key issues and steps to be taken by the parties to the convention to promote a comprehensive response to these killings.

16. Drawing from, *inter alia*, existing data and research in this field and detailing how the principles and norms laid down in the Istanbul Convention are of relevance to preventing and combating gender-related killings of women, this new general recommendation will provide guidance to the convention's parties for the prevention of gender-related killings of women and girls and the protection of women victims of violence. The working group is composed of five members appointed from among the GREVIO members, mandated for the period of March 2025 to the end of 2026.

17. The working group on GREVIO's evaluation of the EU (the working group on the EU evaluation), set up at GREVIO's 31st meeting and tasked with agreeing on the modalities and timeline for GREVIO's evaluation of the EU's compliance with the provisions of the convention and developing a draft questionnaire to be used for such an evaluation, continued its work in the course of 2025 and completed its mandate in November. The working group was composed of four GREVIO members, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou (GREVIO President), Laura Albu, Olena Kharytonova and Helmut Tichy, appointed by GREVIO and supported by three members of the Secretariat of the Istanbul Convention Monitoring Mechanism. This working group held several online meetings in the course of 2025 to discuss the scope of the EU evaluation and to launch the needed preparatory work, which was then taken up and continued by the GREVIO rapporteurs designated to conduct GREVIO's baseline evaluation procedure in respect of the EU, upon completion of the working group's mandate in November.

HUDOC-GREVIO database

18. The HUDOC-GREVIO database enables public users to access and search documents published by GREVIO. The database is regularly updated and directly accessible from the homepage of the Istanbul Convention website and the HUDOC database of the European Court of Human Rights.

19. The following types of documents are available in the HUDOC-GREVIO database, in English and French:

- GREVIO baseline evaluation reports and related final government comments (in English or French);
- GREVIO general recommendations.

20. The main purpose of this database is to enable users to carry out simple and advanced searches on the evaluation reports adopted by GREVIO using various filters, including articles/provisions, key words (types of violence, women at risk, etc.) and findings made by GREVIO for the attention of the parties, in order to retrieve relevant information.

21. Simple searches can be carried out on GREVIO general recommendations.

22. Year after year, the database continues to be widely used as a public source for all documents published by GREVIO and saw an increase in its use by 119% in 2025.



GREVIO members

Membership and Bureau

23. GREVIO's mandate and composition requirements are set out in Article 66, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Istanbul Convention and further expanded on in Resolution CM/Res(2014)43 of the Committee of Ministers on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). Article 66 provides that GREVIO shall have between 10 and 15 members, depending on the number of parties to the convention, and that it shall take into account a gender and geographical balance, as well as multidisciplinary expertise in the area of human rights, gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence, or in the assistance to and protection of victims. GREVIO members should therefore be nationals of parties to the convention, be nominated by them and elected by the Committee of the Parties for a four-year term, renewable once.

24. The first 10 GREVIO members were elected on 4 May 2015, for a term of four years. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Germany on 12 October 2017 brought the total number of ratifications to 25, triggering the procedure to fill the remaining five seats on GREVIO. The Committee of the Parties subsequently elected, at its fifth meeting on 24 May 2018, five additional members, with a mandate of four years starting on 1 September 2018.

25. Since then, membership has remained at 15, with elections held by the Committee of the Parties each time one or more mandates came to an end. Since the latest changes to the composition of GREVIO in 2023, representing a significant renewal in membership, no changes have occurred.

26. Elected in June 2023 as President of GREVIO, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou continued to serve in this role together with first Vice-President Aleid van den Brink and second Vice-President EllenO'Malley-Dunlop up until the expiry of their Bureau mandate in June 2025. At its 36th meeting (from 30 June to 3 July 2025), GREVIO re-elected Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou as President, while also electing Angelina Zaporojan-Pirgari as First Vice-President for a mandate of two years. Furthermore, GREVIO elected Aleid van den Brink as Second Vice-President (replacing Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop) for the duration of her remaining GREVIO mandate (one year). The members expressed their deep appreciation for Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop who had served as second Vice-President for a term of two years and warmly thanked her for her continued involvement in the work of GREVIO.



36th GREVIO meeting – Bureau members



Signatures and ratifications of the convention

Signatures and developments regarding the application of the Istanbul Convention

27. As of 31 December 2025, there were a total of 39 ratifications of the Istanbul Convention, comprising ratifications from 38 member states of the Council of Europe and the ratification of the European Union. An additional six member states of the Organisation signed the convention. Despite some incremental steps taken in some Council of Europe member states towards ratification and interest regularly expressed by non-member states invited to accede, no new developments in terms of the convention's ratification have taken place.

Reservations

28. The possibility for parties to enter reservations to the convention is strictly regulated under its Article 78. To promote uniformity in the convention's implementation, it encourages them to consider withdrawing and/or reviewing their reservations. Besides foreseeing the possibility for parties to withdraw their reservations at any time by a declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Article 78, paragraph 4), Article 79 subjects reservations to a limited period of validity (five years from the entry into force of the convention in respect of the party concerned) and to a system of compulsory renewal (Article 79, paragraphs 1

and 2). Moreover, the convention provides that any party that makes a reservation is under the duty to provide GREVIO with an explanation on the grounds justifying its continuance, before its renewal or upon request (Article 79, paragraph 3).

29. At its 19th meeting held in November 2019, GREVIO decided to review the information provided by the party on the reasons for upholding the reservation and assess the situation in the area covered by the reserved article/provision in the context of the country assessment. If after such a review, GREVIO identifies an inadequate response to violence against women in terms of a significant lack of protection, prevention or prosecution as a result of the reservation, GREVIO may invite the party under evaluation to consider revoking the reservation.

30. At its 33rd meeting, GREVIO decided to request explanations for the renewal of their reservations from all parties that did not do so initially, reminding them of their obligation stemming from Article 79, paragraph 3, of the Istanbul Convention. Following this decision, in February 2025, Croatia provided GREVIO with reasons for renewing, in October 2023, its reservation on Article 30, paragraph 2, and Greece communicated reasons for renewing its reservation on Article 44, paragraphs 1*e*, 3 and 4. In March 2025, Sweden provided GREVIO with reasons for renewing, in October 2023, its reservation on Article 44, paragraph 3, and Article 58. In April 2025, Finland provided GREVIO with reasons for renewing, in October 2023, its reservation on Article 44, paragraph 3, and Article 58.

31. In the course of 2025, several parties either upheld, in full or in part, or withdrew their reservations to the convention. For example, Finland notified the Secretary General on 17 April 2025 of its decision to uphold its earlier reservation with regard to Article 55, paragraph 1, in respect of Article 35 regarding minor offences, providing an explanation to GREVIO. Denmark, on 7 July 2025 communicated its decision to uphold its earlier reservation with regard to Article 44, paragraph 3, in respect of Articles 36, 37 and 39, also including an explanation to GREVIO. Malta, on 1 May 2025, communicated its intention to renew its earlier reservation on Article 30, paragraph 2, and Article 44, paragraph 1*e*, without, however, providing an explanation to GREVIO, as per the requirement in Article 79, paragraph 3, of the Istanbul Convention. Slovenia wholly renewed, with effect from 1 June 2025, its set of reservations covering Article 30, paragraph 2, Article 44, paragraphs 1*e*, 3 and 4, Article 55, paragraph 1, in respect of Article 35 regarding minor offences, Article 58 in respect of Articles 37, 38 and 39, and Article 59, similarly without providing an explanation to GREVIO for the renewal. On 29 October 2024, Monaco notified the Secretary General of its decision to uphold its earlier reservation with regard to Article 44, paragraphs 1*e*, 3 and 4, Article 59 and Article 30, paragraph 2, with reasons for renewing, which took effect on 1 February 2025. At the same time, it issued its notification to withdraw its reservation with regard to Article 30, paragraph 2.

32. In January 2025, Denmark issued its notification to withdraw its reservation in relation to Article 34 with effect from January 2025, and Switzerland communicated the withdrawal of its reservation on Article 59 of the convention, which took effect on 1 January 2025. Andorra communicated on 12 December 2025 its decision to withdraw its previously renewed reservation in respect of Article 30, paragraph 2.

Challenges for the Istanbul Convention

33. During the period under review, GREVIO remained an exceptionally authoritative voice in the area of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This was reinforced by the fact that its findings have been mirrored by a number of other international bodies, including in an increasing number of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The growing use of GREVIO's reports and findings made by the Court in its judgments prompted GREVIO to initiate a scientific dialogue between the two bodies, held in public in September 2025 (see Chapter VIII for more details). GREVIO's baseline and first thematic evaluation reports continue to receive wide national and international press coverage and have been the object of ever-increasing interest by academics and women's rights organisations. Despite GREVIO maintaining its strong reputation as an independent body providing expertise in a specialised field of human rights, challenges to its work and the principles that it stands for have continued in the period under examination. These are linked to the rise in anti-rights sentiments expressed by a growing range of actors as discussed in GREVIO's thematic focus section on the shrinking space for women's rights defenders highlighted above.

34. The bill of withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, adopted by the Latvian parliament (Saeima) on 30 October 2025 in a fast-tracked procedure but subsequently not signed into law by President Edgars Rinkēvičs and instead referred back to the Saeima for reconsideration, is the most recent and significant example of a challenge levelled against the principles of the convention.[1]

35. Since issuing its first report on its general activities in 2020, GREVIO has consistently addressed the persistent and at times very vocal opposition against premises and concepts of the Istanbul Convention, pointing to the false narratives and disinformation campaigns employed by anti-rights actors to stir national political debates that detract attention from the phenomenon of violence against women, its root causes and the ways to tackle it.[2] Its first president, Feride Acar, in her foreword to GREVIO's first activity report, stated that while distortions of the convention's aims tended to impede or slow down the convention's ratification and implementation, "history has shown time and again that values and principles of equality, inclusiveness, diversity, tolerance, and promotion and protection of human rights have always outlived very strong reactionary currents that have tried to repress these values, including women's human rights".[3]

36. In this spirit, during the reporting period, GREVIO continued its work to reinforce, with facts and results, messaging about the aims and purposes of the Istanbul Convention. The progress identified across GREVIO's 15 first thematic evaluation reports published to date testifies to the impact of the convention and the advances made in the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence through the convention's thorough implementation. Moreover, the new series of

1. More details about the President's veto can be found here: www.president.lv/en/article/president-requests-saeima-reconsider-law-withdrawal-council-europe-convention-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence.
2. See GREVIO's 1st Report on its general activities, paragraphs 71-76.
3. Ibid., Foreword by Feride Acar, President of GREVIO (2015-2019).

country impact factsheets published in 2025 identify the progress made by individual parties to the convention over the course of the baseline evaluation procedure.[4] Together, these sources show the level of engagement with the convention's purposes and specific requirements among the parties to the convention, and highlight the significant guidance provided by GREVIO to achieve the convention's aims. The added value of such independent monitoring of a human rights treaty in the field of women's rights is frequently expressed by parties to the Istanbul Convention, who draw detailed conclusions and advice from GREVIO's assessment. With this in mind, GREVIO conducted its first baseline evaluation visit to Latvia in November 2025, collecting vital information on the level of implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Latvia, which at present continues to be bound by the convention. The visit, as part of the ongoing evaluation procedure, was conducted with a view to issuing a comprehensive assessment of Latvia's implementation of the convention in a baseline evaluation report to be published in 2026. The importance of collective international supervision provided by the independent monitoring of a binding convention generally, and GREVIO's expertise in the field of violence against women more specifically, were highlighted in the Opinion on Latvia adopted by the European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (Venice Commission) on the draft law on the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention adopted on 15 December 2025.[5]



4. Country impact factsheets on Albania, Austria, Denmark, Monaco, Montenegro, Portugal and Sweden, available at: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/impact-and-results.
5. Latvia – Opinion on the draft law "On the withdrawal from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence" (Istanbul Convention), Venice Commission, CDL-AD(2025)053-e, paragraphs 59-60, available at: www.coe.int/en/web/venice-commission/-/cdl-ad-2025-053-e.



Communication

Publications

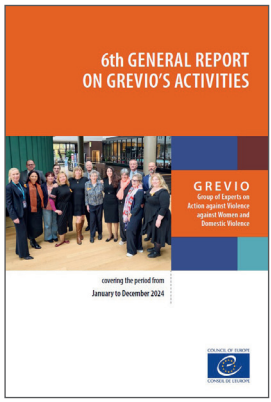
GREVIO evaluation reports

37. In accordance with Article 68, paragraph 11, of the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO reports and conclusions are made public as from their adoption, together with any comments by the party concerned. During the reporting period, GREVIO published its baseline evaluation report in respect of the United Kingdom and seven first thematic evaluation reports. These latter reports were issued in respect of Portugal, France, Serbia, the Netherlands, Andorra, Belgium and Italy (in order of publication) and are available on the Istanbul Convention's website, together with the comments of the respective national authorities. A press release is issued whenever a report is published.

38. Upon publication, GREVIO evaluation reports have attracted considerable media interest, raising awareness and visibility on their findings. The first thematic evaluation report on Portugal, in particular, received extensive coverage by national news, including in *DN*, *Público*, *JN*, *LUSA*, *Expresso*, *RTP*, *AO Minuto*, *TVI Player* and *JTM*. Similarly, the first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands received extensive coverage by national news, including in *NOS*, *NRC*, *Trouw*, *NU.nl*, *Hart van Nederland*, *BNNVARA*, *Reformatorisch Dagblad* and *NPO Radio 1*, as well as from international news outlets such as *Reuters*. National media drew attention to the publication of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Serbia (*N1 Info*, *Serbian News Media*, *Nova*, *Beta*, *Nin* and *Autonomija*), on Andorra (*SWISSINFO EFE*, *Diari d'Andorra*, *RTVA*, *El Periòdic d'Andorra*, *ARA Andorra*, *altaveu*, *Bondia*, *SER*, *La Veu Lliure*, *Europa press* and *ANA*) and on Italy (*ANSA*, *AgenSIR*, *Corriere della sera* and *Domani*). Finally, national media in France (*Elle*, *Libération*, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *France Inter* and *France 24*) extensively covered GREVIO's first thematic report on France. On the occasion of the publication of the report, an event was held in Paris on 25 September 2025, organised by women's rights NGOs in co-operation with the French Senate's Delegation for Women's Rights.

6th general report on GREVIO's activities

39. GREVIO published its 6th general report on 13 May 2025, covering its monitoring work from January to December 2024, including the adoption and publication of eight first thematic evaluation reports (Austria, Albania, Denmark, Monaco, Montenegro, Spain, Sweden and Finland). As for all previous general reports on GREVIO's activities, it covers the Group of Experts' activities, composition and co-operation with other external stakeholders, including Council of Europe bodies and institutions as well as other international organisations and NGOs.



40. The 6th general report covered a new theme in its focus section: the shrinking space for women's rights defenders. The aim of highlighting this theme was to shine a light on the situation on the ground of the many women's rights defenders and their organisations who provide assistance, counselling or legal representation to women and girls for experiences of gender-based violence. In many instances these are women human rights defenders, working for human rights organisations, legal aid offices, advocacy organisations or counselling services. In many more instances, they specifically advocate advances on women's right to live free from gender-based violence, notably on the basis of the Istanbul Convention. GREVIO's findings demonstrate that their work is increasingly coming under scrutiny because of the rise of anti-rights and anti-feminist movements, which is leading to increasing opposition to fundamental principles of human rights and to vocal opposition to the core aims and principles of the Istanbul Convention. GREVIO found that this, and the overall global context of regression on women's rights, was leading to a reduction in opportunities for women's rights organisations to participate in policy making on violence against women, to the side-lining of their expertise and to the shrinking of space in which to operate and advocate a strong implementation of the Istanbul Convention. It was also leading to instances in which women's rights advocates were being silenced and intimidated or their organisations' funding reduced.

41. In highlighting these issues in its 6th general report, GREVIO wished to connect to the points it elaborated on in its very first general report, published in April 2020. Describing the contestations and objections levelled at the convention in its very first focus section, its president at the time, Feride Acar, in her foreword, exposed these as "reactionary currents" that targeted women's equality with men and impeded or slowed down the convention's ratification and implementation.

Thematic perspectives on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention: compilation of focus sections as presented in GREVIO's activity reports from 2015 to 2023



42. On 7 March 2025, on the occasion of International Women's Rights Day, a new publication was launched, providing a compilation of the "focus sections"[6] extracted from GREVIO's first five general activity reports, covering the period 2015-2023. Drawing from GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports, each focus section presents a contextualised analysis of the progress made in relation to a chosen theme of the Istanbul Convention while also highlighting the areas where improvement is needed. The topics covered range from preventing and combating sexual violence against women to the complex issue of child custody and visitation rights in the context of domestic violence, and to the importance of risk assessment and management for women and girls exposed to violence. This compilation offers an essential reflection on the implementation of the convention as evidenced by GREVIO's monitoring activities. It seeks to ensure greater readability of the digest of GREVIO's findings on a particular aspect of the Istanbul Convention.

Participation in events

43. In the period under review, GREVIO members and the Secretariat participated in over 100 events that took place in various countries around Europe, with some events also taking place in Tunisia, French Guiana and Polynesia. These included conferences, meetings and summits organised by a variety of stakeholders, including Council of Europe bodies, the United Nations, the European Union, national ministries, national human rights institutions, civil society and academic institutions. The events addressed a wide array of topics, ranging from consent to sexual relations and the role of education to violence against women in its digital dimension and gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide). While some events aimed at general presentations of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's role in its monitoring, others catered to specific audiences on specific topics or constituted specialist training activities for judges, for example. The number and variety of requests for representation by GREVIO has continuously grown over the years. While not attempting to provide an exhaustive list, a few examples are provided in the following paragraphs.

44. GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou attended the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Chairpersonship Conference on Gender Equality on 6 and 7 May 2025. It focused on the theme "Building resilience through inclusion and empowerment", organised under Finland's 2025 OSCE Chairpersonship and attended by over 400 participants from across the OSCE region. The GREVIO President

6. *Thematic perspectives on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, Compilation of focus sections no. 1 to 5 as presented in GREVIO activity reports (June 2015 - December 2023)* available at: https://rm.coe.int/thematic-perspectives-on-the-implementation-of-the-istanbul-convention/1680b4a2e3

contributed with her insights to a panel discussion on violence against women and girls. The heightened exposure of women and girls to technology-facilitated violence against women, in particular violence against women and girls who actively contribute to public debates as journalists or politicians, was among her points of focus.

45. Guillaume Barbe presented the added value of the Istanbul Convention to an audience of practitioners and academics attending a conference on violence against women organised by the University of Papeete, in Polynesia, on 16 June 2025. He explained the importance of the Istanbul Convention, its set of standards and its monitoring mechanism consisting of GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties.

46. Addressing the issue of gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide), Aleid van den Brink, second Vice-President of GREVIO, participated in a debate entitled "What do we need in the fight against femicide?" on 6 October 2025, in Rotterdam in the Netherlands, organised by Soroptimist Netherlands. This event explored the causes of femicide and assessed current efforts, including the Istanbul Convention, after 10 years of its ratification in the Netherlands. In her presentation, she presented the added value of the Istanbul Convention and its relevance to stemming gender-related killings, particularly through its four pillars, to an audience of practitioners, legal experts, politicians and academics attending the event.

47. The topic of gender-related killings was also at the heart of a high-level international conference on femicide, organised by the OSCE on 21 November 2025, in Rome, Italy. Representing GREVIO as first Vice-President, Angelina Zaparojan-Pirgari explained that the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's monitoring work adopted a holistic approach to tackling violence against women, with gender-related killings of women and girls representing its most extreme form. She informed the audience of GREVIO's ongoing work to develop guidance on the issue through the preparation of a second general recommendation, intended to offer practical insights into using the convention's provisions to prevent and combat gender-related killings.

48. A third conference on the issue, this time organised at national level, was attended by Pascale Franck, member of GREVIO and co-organised by Angelina Zaparojan-Pirgari, First Vice-President of GREVIO. The National Conference on Preventing and Combating Femicide, organised by the Women's Law Centre and the Department of Criminal Law of the State University of Moldova, with the support of the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Embassy of Sweden in Chisinau and UN Women Moldova, took place on 28 November 2025. It offered an important occasion to discuss strategies for the protection of women victims of violence and GREVIO's findings on the matter.



Angelina Zaparojan-Pirgari, first Vice-President, Rome, Italy, 21 November 2025

49. Touching upon the growing digital dimension of violence against women, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop participated in an international conference entitled "Technology – Friend or Foe? A Global Conversation on Combating Pornography, Sexual Violence



Third meeting of national co-ordinating bodies, 6 November 2025 in Kalkara, Malta

and Sexual Exploitation", held on 9 October 2025 in Dublin, Ireland, organised by Ruhama, a Dublin-based NGO. She presented insights from GREVIO's monitoring work on this issue during a panel discussion.

50. As per the practice established for previous such meetings, GREVIO's President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou participated in the third meeting of national co-ordinating bodies established under Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention. This meeting was held on 6 November 2025 in Kalkara, Malta, hosted by the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence of Malta, under the leadership of Commissioner Samantha Pace Gasan. It examined the practical implementation of the Istanbul Convention with a focus on the role of the judiciary and law-enforcement authorities, discussing ways in which national co-ordinating bodies may contribute to further their role. With a view to initiating the discussion, the GREVIO President presented the collective findings made in this regard across the first thematic evaluation reports so far.

51. Last, Marie-Claude Hofner spoke at an event held on 11 December 2025 in Tunisia, a country invited to accede to the Istanbul Convention by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. She explained the standards of the convention as regards the medical response to women victims of sexual violence and rape, both in terms of their medical and psychological support and how to ensure high-quality forensic documentation and evidence in a trauma-informed and victim-centred manner.

Visual identity, communication tools and social media

52. In 2025, a new visual identity was developed to strengthen the visibility and coherence of communication related to the Istanbul Convention, including on the results of GREVIO's monitoring activities. This includes a coherent visual language that reinforces the convention's authority, consisting of images and graphic elements.

53. For example, images drawn from the travelling photo exhibition held in 2024 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention were incorporated to reflect its storytelling approach around the four pillars of the convention: prevention, protection, prosecution and comprehensive policies. These

visual references were progressively applied across communication channels, GREVIO reports, explanatory materials and the Istanbul Convention website, creating an immediately recognisable and engaging identity. The new visual identity contributed to clearer messaging and enhanced the overall impact of communication activities, notably during awareness campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism (see below).

54. In addition, on 9 September 2025, a new LinkedIn page dedicated to the Council of Europe's work on gender equality, preventing and combating violence against women and related initiatives was launched, entitled Gender Equality and the Istanbul Convention – Council of Europe action – @CoE_Women. The page provides updates on the Istanbul Convention and its monitoring, among other information, and it showcases and announces forthcoming events and projects as well as reports and studies. Posts regularly feature formats such as institutional announcements, quotes, short videos and visual summaries of monitoring findings. With more than 77 000 impressions and 1 700 new followers since the account was created in September 2025, this communication effort provides an important platform to show the impact of GREVIO's tailor-made and country-specific assessments and to engage the public on this basis.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

55. The United Nations designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, aiming to promote global awareness of all forms of violence against women. This date also initiates the "16 days of activism against gender-based violence", which run until Human Rights Day on 10 December and represent a period of heightened attention on the efforts made to address and eradicate violence against women and girls. In 2025, as in previous years, GREVIO engaged in various initiatives to shed light on emerging trends, shared shortcomings in the implementation of the convention and the progress made.



56. Launching the 16 days of activism, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, President of GREVIO, issued a statement highlighting the transformative power of the Istanbul Convention, "shaping the way states understand their duty to protect women and girls: not as an isolated issue, but as a structural human rights obligation". She sketched the progress made in its implementation and pointed to the continued support provided by GREVIO to the authorities in their journey towards full implementation. Addressing also the attempts witnessed by GREVIO and other stakeholders to question the need for policies dedicated to ending violence against women, and efforts to undermine the human rights framework that protects them, she pointed to emerging forms of abuse, including online and technology-facilitated violence as demanding urgent attention and collective solutions. Also, the fact that young

women and girls were increasingly being exposed to sexual violence required all to act with clarity and determination.



57. On the same occasion, Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset issued a statement highlighting the ongoing progress in addressing violence against women since the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention, while emphasising the need for further efforts. Importantly, he pointed to the new challenges faced by democracies and the increasing threat to women's rights as a result. Sending a strong message of support for the aims and purposes of the Istanbul Convention, the representatives of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, joined by the Secretary General following an initiative of the Republic of Moldova's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, opened umbrellas bearing the visual identity of the Istanbul Convention as a symbol of women's protection from violence. The message was actively disseminated across social media platforms (X, LinkedIn and Instagram) by Council of Europe Women thematic accounts and several Permanent Representations and was further relayed by individual users and networks. The co-ordinated use of campaign hashtags (#OrangeTheWorld, #16DaysOfActivism, #EndViolence, #IstanbulConvention) and the resharing of posts across diplomatic accounts ensured coherent messaging and broadened the initiative's reach. This cross-platform amplification reinforced political support for the Istanbul Convention and contributed to the wider visibility of the Council of Europe's engagement in the global campaign.

58. The EDVAW Platform also released a statement to mark 25 November coinciding with the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The statement highlighted the significant progress achieved – including the establishment of strong legal frameworks and increased recognition of women as active agents in peace processes – and the persistent gaps in terms of implementation at national and international levels. Despite the adoption of national action plans in over 110 countries, the position paper adopted alongside the statement (see below) notes ongoing challenges such as limited funding, the exclusion of women from decision making, weak accountability and the impact of emerging threats like conflict and technology-fuelled violence. As a result, the platform called for stronger political will, increased and sustainable financing for women-led organisations, the full and meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes and expanded efforts to address new and intersecting challenges affecting women and girls. The statement concluded by emphasising the need for radical accountability to transform rhetorical commitments into concrete action and long-term change for gender equality in peace and security contexts.

59. In addition, GREVIO members and the Secretariat participated in a range of activities at national level, raising the profile of the Istanbul Convention and the monitoring work by GREVIO. For example, Päivi Hirvelä, GREVIO member and former judge at the European Court of Human Rights, participated in a high-level

seminar marking the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention in Finland – an event held in Helsinki on 25 November 2025 by the Finnish national co-ordinating body (NAPE) set up under Article 10 of the convention. She presented the monitoring work carried out by GREVIO since its inception, both in relation to Finland and other parties to the convention. Marja Ruotanen, Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity of the Council of Europe, also participated in the event, delivering a statement on international developments in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and providing a broader context for the national discussions.



Päivi Hirvalä, Helsinki, Finland, 25 November 2025

60. Many other events took place with the involvement of GREVIO and Secretariat members, addressing a range of issues and target groups, including international conferences beyond the European region. Guillaume Barbe, GREVIO member, addressed the audience of an international conference held in French Guyana on 24 November, focusing on family violence in cross-border settings. He covered the Istanbul Convention's standards to ensure safety in child contact regulations and visiting rights after domestic violence. Presenting to two separate university audiences, Aleid van den Brink, second Vice-President of GREVIO, participated as a keynote speaker in an online webinar on how students and civil society can leverage the Istanbul Convention to combat gender-based violence, organised by students of the master's in human rights and democratisation at the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice. In a second event, an international conference held on 10 December 2025 in Tübingen, Germany, entitled "Courage Against Power – Defending Women's Rights Worldwide" and organised by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, the Institute of the Weltethos Foundation and the Institute of Political Science at the University of Tübingen, Aleid van den Brink presented GREVIO as a leading example of an effective international mechanism for the protection of women's rights.



Aleid van den Brink, second Vice-President of GREVIO, 10 December 2025 Tübingen, Germany.

61. On 25 November, the Executive Secretary delivered a message about the Istanbul Convention being a comprehensive set of legally binding standards involving all relevant actors to an international audience at an online event organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This event aimed to explore integrated, cross-policy solutions to prevent and address violence against women, which the Istanbul Convention offers.



62. Beyond speaking engagements, the visibility of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's findings from its monitoring process were ensured through intensified social media activity run from the new LinkedIn account entitled Gender Equality and the Istanbul Convention – Council of Europe action – @CoE_Women and the from thematic X account (@CoE_Women). This was achieved through a co-ordinated social media campaign across various platforms, including the Council of Europe main accounts, which reached almost 70 000 impressions during the campaign period.

63. The messages were disseminated using powerful hashtags such as #IstanbulConvention, #EndVAW, #IDEVAW, #OrangeTheWorld and #16DaysofActivism, or #ConventiondIstanbul and #PasDExcuse for the French-speaking audience, amplifying their reach and increasing visibility, encouraging a global conversation on the importance of combating gender-based violence against women on the basis of the Istanbul Convention. Particular emphasis was placed on explaining GREVIO's role and showcasing the concrete impact of its tailor-made, country-specific monitoring, notably through the launch of country impact sheets. Communication during this period made systematic use of the new visual identity developed in 2025, which contributed to greater coherence and visibility of GREVIO-related content.



Instagram @Malta_CoE: Maltese presidency
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, November 2025

64. Last, for visitors to the Council of Europe building, the Istanbul Convention's aim to increase the prevention of violence against women and to combat it in all its forms was rendered visible through the photography exhibition "Through the lens – a decade of the Istanbul Convention", prepared by the Violence against Women Division in 2024. It offered a visual rendition of core articles of the convention and examples of their implementation and was displayed in the Agora building of the Council of Europe for the duration of the 16 days of activism. As a travelling exhibition, it exists in poster format and can be requested by any institution or entity wishing to promote the Istanbul Convention. In 2025, the exhibition attracted significant interest from external institutions and organisations, resulting in requests for its display in France in 2026.





Focus section: preventing violence against women – The critical role of primary prevention

Introduction

65. The prevention of violence against women and domestic violence is a core element of the comprehensive response envisioned by the Istanbul Convention. It forms one of the convention's four pillars and is central to its strategic vision of ending violence against women in the long term. Alongside adequate service provision, victim protection and prosecution, the Istanbul Convention covers specific provisions dedicated to the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of violence against women.

66. The importance of engaging in preventive measures has received formal recognition and been further strengthened by the adoption of the Dublin Declaration in 2022.[7] Inspired by the standards of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's findings, this declaration was adopted by 38 out of 46 member states of the Council of Europe as an affirmation of their commitment to the promotion of gender equality for the wider aim of effectively preventing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence

7. Dublin Declaration on preventing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, adopted on 30 September 2022 at the Conference of Justice Ministers organised by the Irish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

against women. Crucially, it emphasises the need to address the discrimination of women, sexism, gender stereotypes and gendered power dynamics, including through commitments to ensuring that school curricula and professional training address these issues.

Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

67. Ending violence against women and domestic violence requires a combination of approaches applied over various points in time and designed for multiple but distinct target groups. A useful way of representing the wide range of measures that are necessary to effectively prevent violence against women and domestic violence is the public health perspective that sees prevention as a three-pronged approach, covering primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures.[8]

- Primary prevention intervenes before a problem occurs and strives to reduce vulnerability by strengthening the capacity to resist and to prevent a problem.
- Secondary prevention identifies a problem as early as possible and intervenes immediately to prevent further harm.
- Tertiary prevention aims at undoing the harm caused by the problem as much as possible, often through long-term intervention.

68. In terms of combating violence against women and domestic violence, primary prevention refers to policies and interventions upstream of violence, in other words before it occurs to prevent it from occurring. Secondary prevention comprises measures that help to recognise and put a stop to violence early on to mitigate the harm. And tertiary prevention encompasses any long-term efforts to prevent repeat offending and reduce the negative impact of violence, such as victim support, perpetrator work or criminal justice responses. Of these three types of preventive measures, primary prevention is uniquely transformative in reducing prevalence, that is, the number of women and girls affected by the different forms of gender-based violence. Secondary and tertiary prevention measures take effect only after a violent incident has occurred. While they undoubtedly have a beneficial impact by providing critical support to victims and helping prevent further harm, they do not reduce the number of women exposed to violence in the first place.

The Istanbul Convention and primary prevention of violence against women

69. From the convention's title to its preamble and several specific provisions, the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence features prominently across the treaty. While the convention and its explanatory report do not explicitly specify a particular conceptional framework for the understanding of prevention, several of the convention's provisions require effective primary prevention measures to be developed and implemented by all parties. Article 1, for example, defines the elimination of violence against women and domestic violence as one of the purposes

8. World Health Organization (2004), *Preventing violence. A guide to implementing the recommendations of the world report on violence and health*, WHO, Geneva.

of the Istanbul Convention, in general as well as through international co-operation and an integrated approach. This purpose is echoed in Article 4, which calls on parties to the convention to protect women's right to live free from violence, a right that is best exercised when violence is effectively eliminated.

70. In addition to these framework articles, Article 12 sets out general obligations to address prejudice, gender stereotypes, attitudes, or customs and traditions that may perpetuate or condone violence against women. This is a key provision for preventing violence from occurring and it calls for specific primary prevention measures by referencing the need to change harmful attitudes and behaviour patterns; to prevent all forms of violence covered by the convention; and to reduce vulnerability, including through empowering women and girls and ensuring the active contribution of men and boys. Article 12 calls for a profound transformation of norms, structures and behaviours at the individual, community and societal levels. It is flanked by the specific requirement set out in Article 13 to ensure regular awareness raising around the many different manifestations of violence against women and available measures to prevent acts of violence covered by the scope of the convention. Article 14 promotes the vision of involving the education sector in the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence by teaching learners the necessary skills and knowledge, while Article 17 underlines the important role of the private sector, including ICT companies and the media, in preventing violence against women. Parties to the convention commit to encouraging the media and the private sector to contribute to the primary prevention of violence against women by countering harmful beliefs and gender stereotypes, promoting positive role models and recounting narratives on violence against women that expose its root causes. Together, these provisions provide a strong rationale and a sound legal basis for parties to the convention to tackle the root causes of male perpetration of violence against women and domestic violence and to involve society at large in this transformation. They are supported by a range of secondary and tertiary prevention measures, such as the obligation to carry out risk assessment and risk management, to offer protection and support by trained professionals and the obligation to ensure adequate intervention programmes for perpetrators. Together, they testify to the ambitious goal of eliminating violence against women and domestic violence that the parties to the Istanbul Convention have subscribed to.

Challenges to effective policy making on primary prevention



Women attending an information session at CIDFF, Strasbourg, France September 2024

71. In many countries, responses to violence against women and domestic violence have historically focused on service provision for victims. With the help of the women's movement, the need for protection and support, including through domestic violence shelters and counselling services, has been identified, which in turn has prompted the need to invest in the training of professionals and to

ensure legal reform to hold perpetrators accountable. In a context marked by limited resources and capacity for advocacy, responding to the immediate needs of women and girls who experience a form of violence against women covered by the convention frequently takes priority. While important progress is being made in the level of protection and support for women and girl victims of gender-based violence, far less policy and programming attention is placed on long-term and sustainable primary prevention measures. GREVIO's monitoring work, since its beginning in 2017, has revealed only limited examples of comprehensive primary prevention measures and has found that most policy attention is focused predominantly on domestic violence.

72. This might be explained by the fact that primary prevention of the different forms of violence against women requires long-term programmatic action and the allocation of significant resources with little immediate or short-term impact to justify the investment. At the same time, the difficulties in measuring its effects and thus its cost-effectiveness may contribute to the prioritisation of secondary or tertiary prevention measures that carry the promise of more immediate and visible results.

73. Moreover, understanding the underlying reasons for perpetration for their effective deconstruction requires sound research and specific expertise that, in turn, requires structural investments and political prioritisation. While some forms of violence, in particular domestic violence, receive some level of research attention, other forms of violence, notably sexual violence, sexual harassment, forced marriage and female genital mutilation do not. The dearth of tried-and-tested approaches for primary prevention measures in relation to the many forms of violence women and girls experience at the hands of men and boys exacerbates the difficulties in getting started. This may be compounded by the fact that there is no blueprint for a society that has effectively eliminated violence against women. The Istanbul Convention's requirement to support research in fields dealing with all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as set out in Article 11, paragraph 1*b*, was incorporated as an enabler for evidence-based policy making. This includes the evidence-based design of primary prevention measures, adequately targeted to different population groups and demographics throughout their life cycle.

74. The extent to which the perpetration of some forms of gender-based violence against women and girls proliferates requires urgent attention through means of primary prevention. This is particularly the case for the digital dimension of violence against women, which has penetrated many if not most aspects of the lives of women and girls and is enabled by the many opportunities created online and through technology and goes widely unchecked. It is also the case for sexual violence and harmful sexual practices such as strangulation, which is increasingly affecting younger women and teenage girls, with some evidence of linkages to the increasing consumption of (violent) pornography by young people.[9]

75. Effectively preventing violence against women and girls requires attention to all these developments, which are driven by the same root causes: women's inequality

9. Children's Commissioner for England, "Evidence on pornography's influence on harmful sexual behaviour among children" (2023), available at: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/pornography-and-harmful-sexual-behaviour/.

with men, gender norms and harmful stereotypes, and unequal power relations between women and men in society and at the individual level. Overcoming these enablers of gender-based violence against women requires long-term efforts to not only challenge individual attitudes but also to transform social norms and structures across institutions, communities and society. In view of the growing opposition to gains in women's rights and gender equality, such efforts may be met with reluctance, thus adding to the real or perceived difficulties in promoting primary prevention measures.

Expanding the knowledge base: theoretical models for understanding the prevention of violence against women

76. Violence against women and girls is the result of multiple interconnecting factors and influences. As highlighted in the publication "Preventing violence against women: Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention – A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence", several models exist to understand the connections between risk factors and influences and how they lead to perpetration.[10]

77. Among these, the "ecological model" explores the risk factors on multiple levels of behavioural influence at which they occur: individual, relational, community and societal.[11] This model has been further developed and refined by researchers and has informed approaches to the prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual violence promoted at the international level, notably by the World Health Organization.[12]

78. According to the ecological model, it is insufficient to tackle a single risk factor to effectively prevent violence from occurring, because violence must be understood as the result of complex articulations of such factors over several levels of influence. It highlights the interdependencies between societal structures and societal norms, social interactions and individual life history and provides an understanding that intervening at only one point in time on one isolated factor will have very limited to no impact. Due to its holistic perspective, the ecological model also allows for an understanding of intersecting forms of discrimination of women, the impact of such discrimination on women's exposure to violence and its prevention. As such, it offers a framework for diversified action across all levels. These include:

- interventions at the individual level, such as awareness-raising campaigns and activities, social skills training and reduction of individual risk factors such as alcohol abuse;

10. "Preventing violence against women: Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention – A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence", p. 9; available at: www.edoc.coe.int/en/violence-against-women/7140-preventing-violence-against-women-article-12-of-the-istanbul-convention.html.
11. Heise L. (1998), "Violence against women: an integrated, ecological framework", *Violence against women*, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 262.
12. World Health Organization (2004), *Preventing violence. A guide to implementing the recommendations of the world report on violence and health*, Geneva.

- interventions at the relational level, for example healthy relationship skills training, activities to foster equality in individual relationships and bystander intervention training;
- interventions at community level, such as community organising that allows towns, villages, neighbourhoods or identity-based communities to act together to shift social norms, hold each other accountable and prevent violence;
- interventions at the societal level that strive to reduce structural vulnerability to violence by addressing structural inequalities, including those stemming from discriminatory laws and/or institutional practices. Examples of structural inequalities are women's economic inequality and their resulting financial dependency; migration and asylum laws that link residence status to relationship status; insufficient protection for LBTI women; or structural inequalities experienced by ethnic minority women and Roma women.

79. Applying the lens of the ecological model ensures that policy makers develop action evenly across the four levels and create synergies between them. As GREVIO's monitoring has shown across its baseline evaluation cycle, this is not always the case, with most interventions focused on the individual level through awareness raising, with only some attention on interventions focusing on the relational level, mainly through initiatives taken in the education sector through comprehensive sexuality education and other means. Many parties conduct awareness-raising activities through social marketing campaigns and engage in some form of educational approaches, even if voluntary, to instil in learners a sense of mutual respect, equality between women and men, and notions of healthy relationships.

80. The focus on only one level of intervention, the individual level, is mirrored in the available impact evaluations of programmes. Research found that the overwhelming majority of programmes that had been evaluated focus on the individual and relationship level, while only very few focussed on the community level, none on system and institutional (community) level and only one on the societal level.[13]

81. Impact evaluations of stand-alone awareness-raising campaigns have shown a rather weak track record in preventing violence from occurring.[14] The reason for this is the dominant underlying theory of social change that a change in attitude, such as a more positive attitude to gender equality, will translate into a change in behaviour, that is, less violence. This theory neglects what the ecological model points out: social norms and attitudes do not only exist in individual people's minds but are reproduced in interaction with societal structures that reflect and support those norms and attitudes and through collective and individual behaviour. Individual changes achieved by awareness-raising activities and campaigns may not be sustainable over time unless sufficiently supported at the societal, community and relational level.

13. Hooker L., Ison J., O'Sullivan G., Fisher C., Henry N., Forsdike K., Young F. and Taft A. (2020), *Primary prevention of sexual violence and harassment against women and girls: combining evidence and practice knowledge – Evidence review and data synthesis*, La Trobe University, Victoria, AU. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/3t6mh465.
14. WHO (2025), *RESPECT women: preventing violence against women, second edition*. Available at: www.respect-prevent-vaw.org.

82. Moreover, changes in attitudes cannot translate into behavioural change if the individual and collective skills and agency to do so remain lacking. Awareness-raising efforts must therefore embed specific prevention messages and skills for pro-social behaviour such as how to build healthy relationships, challenge gender stereotypes, intervene as a bystander or defuse potentially dangerous situations.

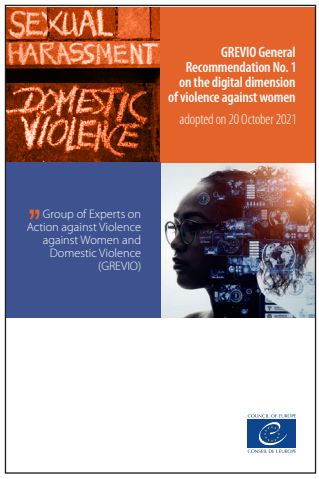
83. A useful starting point to ensure a comprehensive approach to prevention measures across all four levels of intervention is the joint UN Women and World Health Organization (WHO) policy tool called "RESPECT Women: preventing violence against women".[15] Launched in 2019, it was developed by UN Women and WHO together with 12 other United Nations (UN), bilateral and multilateral agencies specifically to support policy makers to develop integrated, evidence-based policies for preventing violence against women, including in contexts of armed conflict and humanitarian settings. The acronym RESPECT stands for the seven major strategies that have proven efficient at preventing violence against women:

- **R**elationship skills strengthened
- **E**mpowerment of women and girls
- **S**ervices (to victims) ensured
- **P**overty reduced
- **E**nvironments made safe
- **C**hild and adolescent abuse prevented
- **T**ransformed attitudes, beliefs and norms

84. The RESPECT framework aims to support policy makers to develop tailored prevention policies and provide examples of effective interventions for each of the seven approaches. It can also serve as guidance for policy makers willing to address the growing digital dimension of violence against women, which, due to its rapidly evolving character, has not yet allowed for a broad evidence base on effective primary prevention programmes to emerge.

85. Such a policy could be utilised to address online and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls by, for example, integrating digital and online communication skills into existing training programmes on healthy relationships, feminist self-defence and bystander intervention (R); strengthening women and girls' participation in the ICT sector and software, hardware and platform development (E); develop specialist support services for victims of digital manifestations of violence against women (S); bridge the digital gender gap in terms of know-how and economic barriers (P); commit private-sector companies to safety by design in all software, hardware and platform development (E); prevent digital manifestations of violence against children and adolescents, with specific attention on the gendered dimension of such experiences (C); and tackle gender norms embedded in and promoted by the ICT sector and its role in preventing the further dissemination and reinforcing of harmful attitudes, beliefs and norms (T).

15. Ibid.



86. Such an approach is fully reflected in GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, which provides guidance on the prevention of such violence to the parties to the Istanbul Convention. It emphasises digital literacy and online safety education, recognising the increased risk of violence for young women as they are more active on the internet, including on social media; highlights the involvement of the private sector in both increasing women's participation in the ICT sector and designing safer digital products; and stresses the need to achieve wider societal change in attitudes and stereotypes regarding the digital dimension of violence.[16] As for the latter, structural measures, including legislative action and effective sanctions, are particularly important for the regulation of behaviour as tertiary prevention.

87. These principles are further reinforced in Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 of the Committee of Ministers on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, which, recognising the importance of prevention efforts for fostering an environment of accountability, provides that member states should conduct and promote comprehensive, accessible, evidence-based and inclusive prevention initiatives. These initiatives include education, capacity building and awareness raising by involving all relevant stakeholders, as well as the integration of primary prevention strategies targeting the general population.[17]

Examples of effective primary prevention interventions

88. Since the adoption of the Istanbul Convention, the evidence base for effective primary prevention has increased. The number of systematic reviews of research evaluating programmes and measures has multiplied, facilitating orientation in a complex field. For example, a review conducted for the World Bank identified effective programmes in the field of community organising, group training for women and men, and women's empowerment as effective at preventing gender-based violence.[18] Successful programmes typically are participatory, include multiple stakeholders, challenge social norms around gender and violence and strive to develop the necessary skills for behavioural change. An Australian report on primary prevention programmes addressing sexual violence has found certain school-based programmes, mostly in the fields of bystander intervention and feminist self-defence,

16. GREVIO (2021), General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women.
17. Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, 2026.
18. Ellsberg M., Arango D. J., Morton M., Gennari F., Kiplesund S., Contreras M. and Watts C. (2015), "Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say?", *The Lancet*, 385, 1555-66.

to be effective.[19] Other reviews cover programmes to prevent adolescent dating violence, offering important insights into the prevention of this form of violence.[20] Significant research also exists on preventive measures to engage men and boys.[21] Of equal importance is the body of evidence in relation to what works in preventing gender-based violence against women and girls in humanitarian contexts.[22]

19. Hooker L., Ison J., O'Sullivan G., Fisher C., Henry N., Forsdike K., Young F. and Taft A. (2020), *Primary prevention of sexual violence and harassment against women and girls: combining evidence and practice knowledge – evidence review and data synthesis*, La Trobe University, Victoria, AU. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/3t6mh465.
20. Crooks C. V., Jaffe P., Dunlop C., Kerry A. and Exner-Cortens D. (2019), "Preventing gender-based violence among adolescents and young adults: lessons from 25 years of program development and evaluation", *Violence Against Women* 25(1), 29-55; Farmer C., Shaw N., Rizzo A. J., Orr N., Chollet A., Hagell A., Rigby E., Young H., Berry V., Bonell C. and Melendez-Torres G. J. (2023), "School-based interventions to prevent dating and relationship violence and gender-based violence: systematic review and network meta-analysis", *American Journal of Public Health*, 113(3); Finnie R. K. C., Okasako-Schmucker D. L., Buchanan L., Carty D., Wethington H., Mercer S. L., Basile K. C., DeGue S., Niolon P. H., Bishop J., Titus T., Noursi S., Dickerson S. A., Whitaker D., Swider S., Remington P. and The Community Preventive Services Task Force (2022), "Intimate partner and sexual violence among youth: a community guide systematic review", *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 62(1), 45-55: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2021.06.021; Lowe H., Dobbin J., Kiss L., Mak J., Mannell J., Watson D. and Devakumar D. (2022), "Mechanisms for the prevention of adolescent intimate partner violence: a realist review of interventions in low- and middle-income countries", *PLoS Global Public Health*, 2(11): DOI 10.1371/journal. pgph.0001230; Nyoni T., Steiner J. J., Okumu M., Orwenyo E., Tonui B. C., Lipsey K. and Mengo C. (2023), "The use and effectiveness of the whole school approach in school-based interventions addressing gender-based violence in Sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review", *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 24(5), 3615-28; Reyes H. L. M., Graham L. M., Chen M. S., Baron D., Gibbs A., Groves A. K., Kajula L., Bowler S. and Maman S. (2021), "Adolescent dating violence prevention programmes: a global systematic review of evaluation studies", *Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 5(3), 223-32; Roldan S. M., Iñiguez-Berrozpe T., Renta-Davids A. I. and Cerviño-Lopez E. (2023), "A research synthesis of effective programs to address gender-based violence in the school context: actors involved and impacts achieved", *Frontiers in Education*: DOI 10.3389/feduc.2025.1593176; Ullman C., Dutra F. and Mathews S. (2025), "What works to prevent violence against adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review", *Journal of Adolescent Health*: DOI 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2025.09.020; Yount K. M., Krause K. H. and Miedema S. S. (2017), "Preventing gender-based violence victimization in adolescent girls in lower-income countries: systematic review of reviews", *Social Science and Medicine*, 192: DOI 10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.08.038.
21. DaSilva-Ibru A. K., Stöckl H., Pearson I. and Zimmerman C. (2025), "Interventions for adolescent school boys and young men to reduce gender-based violence in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review", *BMC Public Health*, 25: DOI 10.1186/s12889-025-25184-9; DeHond A., Brady F. and Kalokhe A. S. (2023), "Prevention of perpetration of intimate partner violence by men and boys in low- and middle-income countries: a scoping review of primary prevention interventions", *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 24(4), 2412-28; Perez-Martinez V., Marcos-Marcos J., Cerdan-Torregrosa A., Briones-Vozmediano E., Sanz-Barbero B., Davo-Blanes M. C., Daoud N., Edwards, C., Salazar M., La Parra-Casado D. and Vives-Clases C. (2023), "Positive masculinities and gender-based violence educational interventions among young people: a systematic review", *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 24(2) 468-86.
22. Noble E., Ward L., French S. and Falb K. (2019), "State of the evidence: a systematic review of approaches to reduce gender-based violence and support the empowerment of adolescent girls in humanitarian settings", *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 20(3), 428-484; Tappis H., Freeman J., Glass N. and Doocy S. (2016), "Effectiveness of interventions, programs and strategies for gender-based violence prevention in refugee populations: an integrative review", *PLoS Currents*: DOI 10.1371/currents.dis.3a465b66f9327676d61eb8120eaa5499.

89. Most of this evidence base has emerged in North America and the global South, while the research conducted among Council of Europe member states is comparatively smaller. Primary prevention measures, where they exist, are not always evaluated, and their long-term impact on prevalence rate is not assessed. Most impact evidence in Europe today concerns children and young people as main audiences of primary prevention programmes, while far fewer insights exist into the impact of primary prevention activities targeted at other age groups.

90. There are many factors that may impact programme effectiveness, such as country context, target groups, programme settings and duration, training and expertise of programme implementers, and integration into wider primary prevention efforts. A programme might successfully reduce violence against women and domestic violence in one context and fail to do so in another. Therefore, policy makers and programme operators need to carefully adapt existing programmes to local contexts and specific audiences and evaluate the impact on violence perpetration and victimisation to steer prevention efforts and resources towards the best outcomes. Particular attention should be paid to the sustainability of impact over time, for example with the programming of "booster" interventions at opportune moments.

91. The limitations in funding made available for primary prevention programmes and their evaluation, however, has a bearing on the quality and effectiveness, because it impacts negatively on the training of staff and their retention. Moreover, it does not allow for an evidence base to emerge, upon which policies and programmes might be founded. As a general observation, parties to the Istanbul Convention report few details on their primary prevention measures in their reporting to GREVIO, with fewer details on the outcome of their evaluation, where this is even done, making it difficult to identify promising practices in this area. It is important that primary prevention programmes are thoroughly evaluated, both in terms of process and impact. It is also essential to ensure that the programmes do not have unintended and harmful consequences.

92. The following types of primary prevention approaches that have been evaluated as positive may serve as inspiration for some, although they address mainly the individual, relational and community level of the ecological model, to the exclusion of the societal level. Not all programmes pertaining to one of the following categories have successfully shown to significantly reduce violence or to maintain their beneficial impact over time.

Community-based primary prevention programmes

93. These programmes, also called community organising, are typically implemented over the long term and in a designated local community (a village or a neighbourhood) and mobilise a critical mass of citizens as social actors, thereby facilitating sustainable norm and behaviour change. They include a wide range of activities tailored to different target groups (by age and sex, for instance) and are organised in different settings (schools, workplaces, community organisations, etc.), using awareness-raising workshops to question gender stereotypes and social skills development (such as healthy relationship skills, conflict resolution, feminist self-defence and bystander intervention). While these programmes are more developed

and evaluated in the global South, at least two systematic community organising approaches to prevent intimate partner violence have been developed elsewhere, for example StoP in Germany and Close2Home in the United States of America.[23]

School-based programmes

94. Programmes based in schools have the advantage of reaching a captive audience in a context already geared towards learning, making them relatively easy to implement. They typically aim at reducing either dating and relationship violence and/or sexual violence through a combination of increased awareness, focus on gender norm change and the development of healthy relationship skills. Some programmes also strive to create protective school environments. School-based programmes may cover the entire student body or target specific, more vulnerable groups such as boys or youth who have been exposed to domestic violence. However, while many programmes have been evaluated in relation to participants' change in attitudes and intentions to act, only a few have demonstrated a beneficial impact on perpetration and/or victimisation rates.[24]

Positive parenting programmes

95. The main objective of positive parenting programmes is to reduce corporal punishment, child sexual abuse and other forms of violence against children perpetrated by parents and carers. Through teaching about shared parenting, non-violent discipline and conflict resolution and respect between caregivers as a model for children, some programmes have demonstrated an indirect beneficial impact on intimate partner violence and attitudes to gender equality. At the same time, they help to disrupt the intergenerational cycle of violence. However, some authors have observed a lack of attention on harmful gender norms.[25] Programmes can include home visits for at-risk families, parenting skills workshops, peer education and advocacy, and awareness raising about the negative impact of violence against children.

96. Effective primary prevention programmes can combine different forms of pedagogic interventions, including applied theatre and other interactive, embodied and collaborative forms. Examples from the literature include:

- women's and girls' empowerment activities, such as feminist self-defence (see textbox below) and girls empowerment clubs or camps;

23. See: https://stop-toolbox.eu/; www.c2-home.org.
24. Systematic reviews of school-based prevention programmes implicitly or explicitly address this imbalance in evidence between evaluation of impact on mediators (knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavioural intentions) and behavioural outcomes (violence victimisation or perpetration, bystander intervention). For example, a review of school-based programmes to prevent dating violence in the United States of America and Canada found among 118 impact evaluations only 18 that included a quality evaluation showing beneficial impact on behaviour, behavioural impact being defined as impact on victimisation and/or perpetration (Chawla S. A., Solomon J. and Sarnquist C. (2022), "A review of evidence-based dating violence prevention programs with behavioral change outcomes for adolescents and young adults", *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 25(4), 3315-31).
25. Bacchus L. J., Colombini M., Pearson I., Gevers A., Stöckl H. and Guedes A. C. (2024), "Interventions that prevent or respond to intimate partner violence against women and violence against children: a systematic review", *Lancet Public Health*, 9, 326-38.

- engaging men and boys as allies, as recommended in the Council of Europe guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women, Article 32(b);[26]
- gender-transformative bystander intervention training as recommended in the Council of Europe guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women, Article 32(d);
- healthy relationship skills training.

Evidence-based primary prevention: feminist self-defence for women and girls

Feminist, or empowerment, self-defence (FSD) is an umbrella term for different methods that have developed around the world to provide women and girls with the means to actively prevent violence and protect themselves against harm. It has been recognised as contributing to the implementation of Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention, as it is grounded in a gendered understanding of violence and covers the entire continuum of violence against women and domestic violence, from everyday sexism to rape and gender-based killings of women and girls.

Major elements of FSD include the deconstruction of myths around violence, gender and victim blaming; preventive strategies to diffuse potentially dangerous situations; recognising and setting personal boundaries; developing voice, stance and physical capability as embodied forms of power; accessible and effective physical defence skills; and psychological preparedness for the eventuality of being attacked. FSD can be tailored to girls, older women, women of colour, women with disabilities, women working in specific sectors, LBTI women, homeless women, etc. A set of proposed minimum quality standards for effectively empowering feminist self-defence was developed in the context of a study upon the request of the European Parliament in 2016.[27]

Feminist self-defence training is a form of primary prevention that has a broad evidence base for its effectiveness, stretching across numerous countries and settings and different target groups.[28]

26. Council of Europe (2023) CM(2023)51-add2final – [1468/4.1]: Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women. Available at: https://search.coe.int/cm?i=0900001680ab680e.
27. Kelly L. and Sharp-Jeffs N. (2016), "Knowledge and know-how: the role of self-defence in the prevention of violence against women", European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Brussels. Available at: www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/research/advanced-search?textualSearch=self-defense.
28. Ball K. and Martin J. (2012), "Self-defense training and traditional martial arts: influences on self-efficacy and fear related to sexual victimization", *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology*, 1(2), 135-44; Baiocchi M. et al. (2017), "A behavior-based intervention that prevents sexual assault: the results of a matched-pairs, cluster-randomized study in Nairobi, Kenya", *Prevention Science*, 18, 818-27; Barata P. C. et al. (2025), "A successful sexual assault resistance program also reduced intimate partner violence", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 40(9-10), 2234-56; Beres M. A. et al. (2019), "A mixed-methods pilot study of the EAAA rape resistance programme for female undergraduate students in Aotearoa/New Zealand", *Women's Studies Journal*, 33(1/2), 8-24; Brecklin L. R. (2005), "The benefits of self-defense training for sexual assault survivors", in Bryant-Davis T. (ed.), *Surviving sexual violence: a guide to recovery and empowerment*, 276-95; Brecklin L. R. and Ullman S. E. (2004), "Correlates of postassault self-defense/assertiveness training participation for sexual assault survivors", *Psychology of Women*

Quarterly, 28, 147-58; Crann S. E. et al. (2022), "'I felt powerful and confident': women's use of what they learned in feminist sexual assault resistance education", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 46(2), 147-61; David W. S. et al. (2006), "Taking charge: a pilot curriculum of self-defense and personal safety training for female veterans with PTSD because of military sexual trauma", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(4), 555-65; Decker M. R. et al. (2018), "Sexual violence among adolescent girls and young women in Malawi: a cluster-randomized controlled implementation trial of empowerment self-defense training", *BMC Public Health*, 18, 1341-53; Edwards K. M. et al. (2020), "Efficacy of a sexual abuse prevention program with children on an Indian reservation", *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 29(8), 900-10; Edwards K. M. et al. (2022), "Effectiveness of a sexual assault self-defense program for American Indian girls", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(15-16), NP13245-67; Edwards K. M. et al. (2024), "In their own words: sexual assault resistance strategies among Kenyan adolescent girls following participation in an empowerment self-defense program", *Violence Against Women*, 30(5), 1092-1106; Hollander J. A. (2004), "'I can take care of myself': the impact of self-defense training on women's lives", *Violence Against Women*, 10(3), 205-35; Hollander, J. A. (2010), "Why do women take self-defense classes?", *Violence Against Women*, 16(4), 459-78; Hollander J. A. (2013), "'I demand more of people': accountability, interaction, and gender change", *Gender & Society*, 27(1), 5-29; Hollander J. A. (2014), "Does self-defense training prevent sexual violence against women?", *Violence Against Women*, 20(3), 252-69; Hollander, J. A. (2016), "Outlaw emotions: gender, emotion and transformation in women's self-defence training", in Channon A. and Matthews C. R. (eds.), *Global perspectives on women in combat sports: women warriors around the globe*, Palgrave McMillan, Basingstoke; Hollander J. A. and Beaujolais B. (2014), "'I have the right to defend myself': the underlying curriculum of empowerment self-defense training", *Sex Roles*, 90, 166-85; Hollander J. A. and Cunningham J. (2020), "Empowerment self-defense training in a community population", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 44(2), 187-202; Hotchkiss M. E. et al. (2024), "Implementation of empowerment self-defense programming in a university counseling center: an effective sexual violence prevention delivery model", *Journal of American College Health*, 72(8), 2432-40; Jordan J. and Mossman E. (2018), "'Back off buddy, this is my body, not yours': empowering girls through self-defense", *Violence Against Women* 24(13), 1591-1613; Jordan J. and Mossman E. (2019), "'Get out of my home and don't come back!' Empowering women through self-defense", *Violence Against Women*, 25(3), 313-36; Jordan J. and Mossman E. (2021), "'Don't ever give up!" Resisting victimhood through self-defense", *Journal of Interpersonal* Violence, 36(3-4), NP1233-58; Machisa M. T. et al. (2023), "Ntombi Vimbela! Sexual violence risk reduction intervention: pre and one-year post assessments from a single arm pilot feasibility study among female students in South Africa", *BMC Public Health*, 23, 1242-56; Mahlungu P. et al (2022), "Preliminary evidence of promise of a sexual violence risk reduction intervention for female students in South African tertiary education institutions", *Global Public Health*, 17(11), 2720-36; McDaniel P. (1993), "Self-defense training and women's fear of crime", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16(1), 37-45; Mouilso E. R. et al. (2011), "Effects of participation in a sexual assault risk reduction program on psychological distress following revictimization", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(4), 769-88; Orchowski et al. (2008), "Evaluation of a sexual assault risk reduction and self-defense program: a prospective analysis of a revised protocol", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 32, 204-18; Ozer E. M. and Bandura A. (1990), "Mechanisms governing empowerment effects: a self-efficacy analysis", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(3), 472-86; Sarnquist C. et al. (2014), "Rape prevention through empowerment of adolescent girls", *Pediatrics*, 133(5), 1226-32; Sarnquist C. et al. (2023), "Sexual assault among young adolescents in informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya: findings from the IMPower and SOS cluster-randomized controlled trial", *Prevention Science*, 25, 578-89; Senn C. Y. et al. (2015), "Efficacy of a sexual assault resistance program for university women", *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372(24), 2326-35; Senn C. Y. et al. (2017), "Secondary and 2-year outcomes of a sexual assault resistance program for university women", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 41(2), 147-62; Senn C. Y. et al. (2022), "Sexual assault resistance education's benefits for survivors of attempted and completed rape", *Women & Therapy*, 45(1), 47-73; Senn C. Y. et al. (2023), "Testing the effectiveness of a sexual assault resistance programme in 'real world' implementation", *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 14(2); Siller L. et al. (2021), "'I learned that I am worth defending': a process evaluation of a sexual assault prevention program implemented on an Indian reservation", *Community Psychology*, 49(7), 2221-2237; Sinclair J. et al. (2013), "A self-defense program reduces the incidence of sexual assault in Kenyan adolescent girls", *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53, 374-80; Thompson M. E. (2023), "Empowerment through feminist self-defense: the IMPACT lasts", *Violence Against Women*, 29(14), 2925-40; van Baarsen B. and van

Women's rights activists have played a key role in developing feminist self-defence techniques and providing training. While such techniques were featured in international policy documents, including at the Council of Europe, as early as the 1980s and up until the 2000s, and have been part of (education) policies in several European countries in the past, feminist self-defence has rarely featured in government policies on the prevention of gender-based violence against women in recent years.[29]

GREVIO has highlighted the importance of feminist self-defence as an evidence-based primary prevention measure in some of its baseline evaluation reports. In its baseline evaluation report on Germany, for example, GREVIO found an overall lack of primary prevention measures that empowered women, noting however that feminist empowerment and self-defence classes existed, operating on quality standards but rarely recognised or supported by the authorities and thus not included or funded.[30] In its baseline evaluation report on Belgium, it pointed to the considerable experience in the field of feminist self-defence for adult women as a result of the work of women's rights organisations.[31] Inviting the authorities in Belgium to become a pioneer in this field by integrating FSD into a comprehensive violence against women prevention strategy, GREVIO made the proposal to embed funding for the training of trainers to conduct FSD in any future national action plan.[32]

---

der Pligt J. (1995), "Een cursus zelfverdediging als preventie van seksueel geweld tegen vrouwen", *Gedrag & Gezondheid*, 23(6), 286-95; Weitlauf J. C. et al. (2000), "Generalization effects of coping-skills training: influence of self-defense training on women's efficacy beliefs, assertiveness, and aggression", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(4), 625-33; Weitlauf J. C. et al. (2001), "Assessing generalization in perceived self-efficacy: multidomain and global assessments of the effects of self-defence training for women", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(12), 1683-91; Wheeler L. A. et al. (2023), "Empowerment transformation training reduces rape among girls and young women in South Sudan and the Kakuma refugee camp", *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 74(4), 820-27.

29. In the **European context**, see European Parliament (1986) Resolution on Violence against Women, Article 24 (c) and 66; Council of Europe (1997) "Final report of the activities of the EG-S-VL including a plan of action for combating violence against women", section 13 (13.23): https://rm.coe.int/090000168092ac92; Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2002), Recommendation 1582, Article xi:; Council of Europe (2008), "Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services": https://rm.coe.int/1680096e49; European Parliament (2017), Interim report on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2017-0266_EN.html. **In the UN context**, see United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (2005), "Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women", p. 36; UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (2008), "Second thematic report: Indicators on violence against women and State response", paragraphs 99 and 104: https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/7/6; WHO (2016), "INSPIRE Handbook: action for implementing the seven strategies for ending violence against children", pp. 260-261.
30. Baseline evaluation report on Germany, paragraph 77.
31. Baseline evaluation report on Belgium, paragraph 63.
32. Ibid., paragraph 64.

Primary prevention of the digital dimension of violence against women and girls

97. A phenomenon that merits a targeted prevention approach is online and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. Throughout its mandate, GREVIO has examined the digital manifestations of violence against women through the lens of various articles of the Istanbul Convention. Its evaluations reveal that the prevalence and complexity of this issue have been rising rapidly in recent years – a trend that is likely to continue and evolve, particularly among young people, although women of all ages remain at risk.

98. In Denmark[33] and the Netherlands,[34] for example, GREVIO's evaluations have revealed widespread online harassment, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and stalking through phones and tracking devices, with new forms continuously emerging. Similarly, in Albania[35] and Portugal,[36] an increase in online stalking and sextortion has been observed, while in Serbia, image-based abuse remains particularly prevalent.[37]

99. GREVIO's findings further highlight that the digital dimension of violence against women disproportionately affects women in public roles. In Finland, women journalists and politicians face high levels of online harassment, including sexist hate speech, with documented attacks against the female-led government and smear campaigns against female journalists.[38] Similarly, in Serbia, women's rights organisations, including those supporting women exposed to intersectional discrimination, have faced online harassment and threats.[39]

100. A trend that goes hand in hand with the growing prevalence of digital manifestations of violence against women is the earlier onset of sexual violence, as well as engagement in harmful sexual behaviours, both online and offline, which has been linked to the early consumption of violent pornography. In Spain[40] and Italy,[41] both perpetrators and victims of gang rapes have often been found to be minors. Similarly, in France,[42] GREVIO observed very high levels of sexual violence against minors, especially girls, alongside a significant proportion of perpetrators under the age of 20.

101. The primary prevention of this phenomenon requires a multilayered approach due to its complex nature, which combines deeply rooted gender norms with ever-evolving digital technologies, necessitating also the involvement of the ICT sector and tech companies. Online platforms, where violence often takes place, are primarily designed for engagement, with algorithms amplifying misogynistic content that

33. First thematic evaluation report on Denmark, paragraph 5.
34. First thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 3.
35. First thematic evaluation report on Albania, paragraph 7.
36. First thematic evaluation report on Portugal, paragraph 7.
37. First thematic evaluation report on Serbia, paragraph 9.
38. First thematic evaluation report on Finland, paragraph 5.
39. First thematic evaluation report on Serbia, paragraph 7.
40. First thematic evaluation report on Spain, paragraph 9.
41. First thematic evaluation report on Italy, paragraph 7.
42. First thematic evaluation report on France, paragraph 7.

may not explicitly violate laws but still contributes to a hostile environment. The very nature of online interaction reduces the barriers to express sexist hate or misogynistic attitudes, as users often do not see the immediate impact of their actions on victims, and harmful behaviour can be reinforced through a group dynamic of likes, shares or co-ordinated attacks, further diminishing empathy.

102. Thus, the responsibility for wider prevention must be shared by several different parties, including schools, families, governments and technology companies, which is reflected in the obligations set out in several articles of the Istanbul Convention with the aim of achieving not only broader societal change but also significant shifts in how digital products and platforms are designed and governed. This is particularly relevant in relation to the wide accessibility of online platforms for the sharing of online (violent) pornography with increasing links to harmful sexual behaviours, the proliferation of sexist hate speech, harmful attitudes towards women and girls through the manosphere and online violence against women in the public eye (politicians, journalists, activists or artists). Research with young people who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviours has revealed several factors that, if addressed earlier, might have prevented these actions. Two key opportunities for primary prevention in this regard are improving age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education and addressing access to pornography.[43] This highlights the relevance of the Istanbul Convention's requirement set out in Article 14 to tap into the potential of the education sector by integrating in teaching materials notions of women's equality with men, non-violent interpersonal conflict resolution, mutual respect and information on the different forms of violence against women, among other issues.

103. GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, adopted on 20 October 2021, provides a useful road map for guiding primary prevention efforts addressing online and technology-facilitated violence against women as well as tackling access to violent online pornography. For instance, it explains that parties should undertake primary prevention initiatives to eradicate gender stereotypes, sexist attitudes and discrimination against women; foster gender equality and promote the empowerment and representation of women and girls online, including through enhanced digital literacy and participation; and encourage all members of society, in particular men and boys, to abandon harmful stereotypes and adopt respectful and non-violent behaviours in the digital sphere.

104. As a second step, and as measures of secondary and tertiary prevention, parties to the convention should further implement awareness-raising campaigns targeting all groups in society on the different forms of digital violence against women and on available support services, while supporting and drawing on the expertise of women's rights organisations; ensure mandatory and continuous training for all relevant professionals to equip them to address digital forms of violence without causing secondary victimisation; promote the integration of digital literacy and online safety into formal education curricula in line with Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention; incorporate digital manifestations of violence into perpetrator programmes; and

43. McKibbin G., Humphreys C. and Hamilton B. (2017), "'Talking about child sexual abuse would have helped me': young people who sexually abused reflect on preventing harmful sexual behavior", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 70, pp. 210-221: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.06.017.

encourage the ICT sector and internet intermediaries to prevent gender bias in the design of technologies, strengthen victim-centred approaches and co-operate with relevant civil society organisations. Parties should also encourage media organisations and journalists' unions to take steps to eradicate gender-based discrimination, victim-blaming attitudes and violations of the privacy of victims of gender-based violence against women and their children in all their journalistic activities.

105. GREVIO's findings reveal that despite remaining gaps, parties to the Istanbul Convention are gradually incorporating the digital dimension of violence against women into their prevention strategies, often in line with GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1. For instance, in its first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, GREVIO noted that awareness-raising measures in respect of violence committed in the digital sphere are insufficiently represented, especially in view of rising prevalence of this form of violence.[44] In this regard, GREVIO particularly welcomed the increased efforts by the media, through codes of conduct for hypersexualised advertising based on gender stereotypes and promoting more equal representation of women and men, to raise awareness.[45] Another interesting example described by GREVIO in its first thematic evaluation report on Belgium is the campaign "We See You", aiming to increase awareness of sexual violence among youth, which paid special attention to issues such as the non-consensual distribution of images of a sexual character and violence occurring in the digital sphere.[46] In its first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, GREVIO noted that according to research carried out at national level, the digital dimension of violence against women was often addressed in prevention efforts, in particular image-based abuse.[47] The Dutch National Action Programme on Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and Sexual Violence further includes measures on the digital dimension of violence, based on GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1, therefore formally embedding and endorsing such prevention efforts within the policy framework.[48] Moreover, GREVIO welcomed the information provided by the Serbian authorities concerning forthcoming awareness-raising measures, particularly addressing the digital dimension of violence and sextortion, which predominantly impacts young people.[49] In its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, GREVIO noted that more comprehensive awareness-raising efforts were needed in order to address the impact of young men's and boys' growing exposure to (violent) pornography on their sexual relations and the expectations placed on young women and girls.[50] Finally, in its first thematic evaluation report on Italy, GREVIO noted research on the digital dimension of violence against women and girls, conducted by universities and research institutions with funding from the Ministry of University and Research, which have contributed to a better understanding of how gender-based violence against women is perpetrated in digital spaces, including by children and young adults.[51]

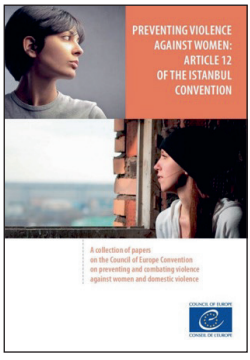
44. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, paragraph 58.
45. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, paragraph 55.
46. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, paragraph 57.
47. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 55.
48. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 19.
49. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Serbia, paragraph 64.
50. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 117.
51. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Italy, paragraph 42.

Progress and challenges in preventing violence against women as identified in GREVIO's monitoring reports

106. GREVIO's findings from its monitoring work offer important insights into the current situation regarding primary prevention efforts undertaken by the parties to the Istanbul Convention. The presence of specific primary prevention measures within wider policies on violence against women and domestic violence is a critical factor in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The extent to which this is ensured in practice has been evaluated by GREVIO across its baseline evaluation cycle and forms part of its ongoing first thematic evaluation procedure under the theme of "Building trust by providing support, protection and justice". The section below groups together shared shortcomings as well as progress made, with a focus on the evaluation reports adopted by GREVIO in more recent years, notably during the reporting period.

107. These must be seen in the context of the impact that violence against women has on the enjoyment of their human rights in all aspects of life, including their political participation. Stronger engagement with primary prevention of violence against women, in particular online and tech-facilitated violence against women that all too easily silences the voices of women and girls, can therefore contribute to ensuring their contribution to democratic processes and public debates. As a concrete example of preserving diversity in discourses and opinion, this can contribute to protecting democracy in line with the aims of the New Democratic Pact for Europe as set out in the Roadmap towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe.[52]

Strengthening conceptual clarity in definitions and measures related to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention



108. While a growing number of GREVIO's thematic evaluation reports identify specific measures of prevention as embedded in national strategies or policy documents on violence against women, the concepts and terminology in use do not always sufficiently distinguish between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures.[53] Listing multiple measures ranging from single awareness-raising events or campaigns, to school-based interventions and work with perpetrators, prevention is often treated as a single, overarching concept.

109. Moreover, GREVIO has frequently identified a strong focus on awareness-raising campaigns as a measure of choice, with less attention placed on primary prevention measures addressing the relational, community or societal level. Whether integrated in policy documents such as national action plans or conducted outside such policy frameworks, parties to

52. Roadmap towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe – Building a resilient, inclusive and agile democracy, SG/Inf(2025)14, published on 29 April 2025.
53. See for example GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Italy, paragraph 42; Montenegro, paragraph 48; on Portugal, paragraph 41.

the Istanbul Convention frequently report on multi-annual, well-funded national or regional awareness-raising campaigns, often focusing on domestic violence.[54] While GREVIO welcomes such campaigns, it frequently points to their limited scope in terms of target audience, type of violence addressed or aim pursued, finding that many focus on encouraging victim reporting or raising societal awareness more generally. In such instances, GREVIO has emphasised that both awareness-raising campaigns and primary prevention measures must be in place to effectively prevent violence against women, calling on parties to step up primary prevention efforts in relation to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.[55]

110. The results from the first thematic evaluation round so far demonstrate the need for more conceptual rigour when it comes to the design and implementation of preventive measures. The emphasis on awareness-raising campaigns, the frequent use of this term as a synonym for (primary) prevention, leads to an amalgamation of approaches that risks obscuring the importance of comprehensive primary prevention programmes addressing all levels of the ecological model (individual, relational, community and societal). Such programmes require careful evidence-based design, a long-term vision, skilful implementation allied with effective monitoring and evaluation, and adequate funding. However, the frequent lack of distinction between primary, secondary and tertiary approaches masks the need for greater policy attention on primary prevention measures in relation to all forms of violence against women – a concern frequently expressed by GREVIO (see below).

Ensuring appropriate levels of funding for primary prevention

111. Since the beginning of its monitoring, GREVIO has identified a growing number of parties to the Istanbul Convention that have increased their funding for measures taken in its implementation, for example by stepping up the number of specialist support services for women victims, by introducing or increasing funding for national co-ordinating bodies or other relevant public bodies, or by investing in large-scale training initiatives on violence against women.[56]

112. From the information available on public expenditure for preventing and combating violence against women, it is, however, difficult to discern the specific extent of the funding allocated to primary prevention measures or any increases in such funding over time. While some examples exist of funds specifically dedicated to or earmarked for the prevention of violence against women more generally, these refer to funding allocated to civil society organisations for general awareness-raising

54. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Austria, paragraph 41; Belgium, paragraph 57; France, paragraph 62; Portugal, paragraph 41; Sweden, paragraph 33.
55. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Belgium, paragraph 58; France, paragraphs 63 and 68; Serbia, paragraph 67; Italy, paragraph 46; Netherlands, paragraph 59; Montenegro, paragraph 52.
56. See for example the baseline evaluation country impact fact sheets, available at: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/impact-and-results. See also for example GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on: Albania, paragraph 23; Andorra, paragraph 30; Austria, paragraph 24; Belgium, paragraph 34; Denmark, paragraph 26; France, paragraph 33; Finland, paragraph 29; Italy, paragraph 26; Spain, paragraph 38.

activities and hence represent only one aspect of prevention.[57] They may also refer to preventive action listed within the framework of a national action plan.[58] Frequently, GREVIO has found such preventive action to cover only certain forms of violence, often domestic violence, and to insufficiently distinguish between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Also, preventive measures stated in national action plans may be expressions of intent and may not represent the full extent of preventive action taken within the country. In its thematic evaluation report on Sweden, GREVIO identified large increases in the funding made available for measures to prevent and combat violence against women, and that €3.7 million per biennium had been made available by public ordinance to civil society, municipalities and regions to strengthen and evaluate preventive measures on violence against women.[59] The information did not, however, provide detail on whether this included primary prevention measures.

113. In its evaluation reports, GREVIO has also identified specific information on (primary) prevention measures taken at national level without, however, any specification regarding the resources applied or available, adding to the difficulties in assessing the funding levels applied.[60] This is exacerbated by the persisting challenges in many parties to the Istanbul Convention to identify the level of public expenditure on policies and measures in the area of violence against women more generally.[61] Where steps have been taken to introduce dedicated budget lines for measures related to violence against women or to increase attention on gender budgeting, GREVIO has welcomed these in its first thematic evaluation reports.[62] To date, however, GREVIO has not identified specific budget lines listing the funding allocated to primary prevention measures.

Involvement of NGOs or civil society in primary prevention

114. Another recurring observation made by GREVIO across several of its reports adopted in 2025, however, is that despite some positive examples, the central role of women's rights organisations in (primary) prevention continues to be insufficiently recognised and supported.

57. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Andorra, paragraph 32, indicating an increase in the number of organisations receiving funding for awareness raising on gender equality and violence against women.
58. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 56, which found that the National Action Programme on Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and Sexual Violence included a strong preventive angle, the implementation of which was leading to some positive results according to the preliminary impact assessment. See also GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Montenegro, paragraph 48, referring to donor funding made available for the measures of prevention listed in the national action plan.
59. GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Sweden, paragraph 19.
60. See for example GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Andorra, paragraph 34.
61. Mid-term horizontal review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, paragraph 68. See also GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on: : Albania, paragraph 22; Andorra, paragraph 33; Austria, paragraph 24; Belgium, paragraph 27; Finland, paragraph 32; France, paragraph 41; Italy, paragraph 27; the Netherlands, paragraph 35; Serbia, paragraph 39; and GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on: Cyprus, paragraph 34; Germany, paragraph 42; Iceland, paragraph 38; Ireland, paragraph 40; Luxembourg, paragraph 28; Poland, paragraph 39; Norway, paragraph 38; North Macedonia, paragraph 48; Switzerland, paragraph 37 and the United Kingdom, paragraph 63.
62. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Austria, paragraph 25; Belgium, paragraphs 28-31.

115. Despite the emphasis placed by Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention on the importance of their contribution to preventing and combating violence against women and their strong involvement in primary prevention as a result of their knowledge and expertise, GREVIO's monitoring work reveals a mixed picture as to the financial support provided to women's rights organisations for dedicated primary prevention measures. Some examples exist of civil society funding from the authorities for the specific purpose of the prevention of violence against women, albeit limited.[63] A specific example to cite is the specialised financing instrument dedicated to organisations in Portugal who work on preventing and combating female genital mutilation, introduced in 2018, with the allocated funding growing from €10 000 to €80 000.[64]



116. This contrasts with GREVIO's observations made since its baseline evaluations that funding insecurities among women's rights organisations active in the field of violence against women persist.[65] At the same time, structural barriers to a more sustainable and comprehensive level of funding for women's rights NGOs remain, standing in the way of the ability of the development of an NGO landscape with organisations that provide specialist support services and those that engage in primary prevention measures. Among these structural barriers as identified by GREVIO are short-term contracts, often on an annual basis to be re-applied for, and increasing competition for funding with for-profit entities and non-specialist service providers.[66] Concerns related to the sustainability of funding opportunities, often made in relation to women's rights organisations operating at local level – community-based grassroots organisations serving women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination – were also expressed in several of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports published in the course of 2025.[67]

117. Moreover, in its first thematic evaluation report on France, GREVIO had noted that measures to prevent sexual violence and rape were lacking, with most such initiatives implemented by NGOs with limited resources.[68] Similarly, in Italy, the absence of dedicated state funding for preventive work addressing women with disabilities, Roma women, LBTI women, women in prostitution and women with addiction issues was found to be an inhibitor for such work.[69]

Narrow scope of primary prevention measures

118. The above funding issues for primary prevention work and the limited use made of the potential for effective primary prevention that women's rights organisations offer result in an overall lack of comprehensive prevention efforts, with a predominant focus on domestic violence.

63. See for example GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Austria, paragraph 24; Andorra, paragraph 34; Monaco, paragraph 21; Netherlands, paragraphs 29 and 35; Sweden, paragraph 19.
64. GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Portugal, paragraph 21.
65. See GREVIO's 6th report on its general activities, paragraphs 100-101.
66. Ibid., paragraphs 102-108.
67. See for example GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 31.
68. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on France, paragraph 62.
69. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Italy, paragraph 45.

119. Since its baseline evaluations, GREVIO has highlighted the need for awareness-raising campaigns to address all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.[70] While identifying some examples of prevention measures that address forms of violence against women such as sexual harassment,[71] female genital mutilation and forced marriage,[72] the general focus of prevention efforts, whether they are primary or secondary, continues to be on domestic violence and therefore remains insufficiently broad. This is confirmed by GREVIO's findings made throughout the course of 2025.[73]

120. Another concern frequently expressed by GREVIO since its baseline evaluations was the need to more specifically address, in prevention measures, the gendered nature of violence against women and domestic violence. It found that prevention policies too often did not address the causes of perpetration as rooted in gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, norms of masculinity and widespread acceptance of patriarchal notions. For example, in its first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, GREVIO had noted some progress since the baseline evaluation report in recognition of violence against women as a gendered phenomenon but stressed that the gendered dimension of violence against women had not been sufficiently emphasised in any awareness-raising campaigns.[74]

121. Similarly, the need to use approaches that challenge and counter underlying patriarchal societal attitudes, cultural norms, prejudice and harmful gender stereotypes rooted in the perceived inferiority of women was identified across several reports.[75] In these instances, GREVIO encouraged the relevant authorities to increase their efforts to eradicate prejudice, harmful gender stereotypes and all forms of violence against women across society, through wider prevention measures on violence against women and girls that form part of a comprehensive and holistic approach as required by the Istanbul Convention, and to seek inspiration from the measures set out in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on preventing and combating sexism.[76]

122. On a positive note, GREVIO commended the Dutch authorities for recognising gender stereotypes, underlying misogyny and oversexualisation of women and girls as playing into the issue of sexual violence, making it a central element of awareness raising on sexual violence.[77] In a similarly positive vein, GREVIO welcomed in its first thematic evaluation reports on Belgium, the Netherlands and Serbia, as well as in

70. Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports, paragraph 143.
71. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 114.
72. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Portugal, paragraph 44; Sweden, paragraph 33.
73. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 110, and GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Andorra, paragraph 59; France, paragraph 67; Italy, paragraph 45; the Netherlands, paragraph 55; Portugal, paragraph 46; Serbia, paragraph 65.
74. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraphs 4 and 54.
75. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on France, paragraph 68; Italy, paragraph 46; the Netherlands, paragraph 59; Portugal, paragraph 47; Serbia, paragraph 67; and GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 111.
76. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Italy, paragraph 46; and Serbia, paragraph 67; and its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 111.
77. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 56.

its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, the specific inclusion of men and boys in primary prevention efforts.[78]

123. Further limiting the scope of prevention policies and measures are the specific characteristics of primary prevention programmes, as noted by GREVIO in several evaluation reports adopted throughout 2025. Primary prevention programmes, if they exist, are often too one-dimensional in terms of levels of the ecological model, settings, target groups, exposure, goals for change (attitudes and beliefs versus skills and behaviour), teaching methods or strategies for action. Comprehensive programmes that combine educational interventions, awareness-raising/social marketing campaigns, policy change, community organising and changes to the environment, in spite of being more impactful, remain the exception. For example, while GREVIO acknowledged the wide range and reach of awareness and education campaigns across the United Kingdom, it still encouraged the government to develop and deliver wider prevention measures in all areas, such as media, policy and workplaces, that form part of a comprehensive and holistic approach as required by the Istanbul Convention.[79] GREVIO made similar findings in its first thematic evaluation report on Serbia, highlighting that prevention efforts must expand to the workplace and targeted sectoral interventions, for example within the arts, sport and journalism sectors.

124. Another recurring finding made by GREVIO throughout its monitoring work is the absence across a range of parties to the convention of sustained and long-term efforts to raise awareness and thus the need to ensure regular and long-term awareness-raising campaigns and activities to help all members of society recognise violence against women, speak out against it and support its victims.[80] This is confirmed by GREVIO's findings made throughout the course of 2025. For instance, in its first thematic evaluation report on Serbia, while recognising prevention efforts, GREVIO noted with regret that systematic and long-term prevention initiatives were absent.[81] Moreover, in its first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, GREVIO noted that culture change did not happen overnight and thus encouraged the Dutch authorities to continue to invest in long-term prevention efforts.[82] Noting such positive initiatives, GREVIO called for more sustained measures ensured in a systematic manner.[83]

Untapped prevention potential

125. In view of the wide scope of primary prevention measures required by the Istanbul Convention, specifically the obligations set out in Article 12 of the convention, a range of opportunities present themselves to promote changes in mentality

78. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Belgium, paragraph 56; Serbia, paragraph 63; the Netherlands, paragraph 54; and its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 109.
79. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraphs 109-111.
80. Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports, paragraph 144.
81. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Serbia, paragraph 65.
82. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on the Netherlands, paragraph 56.
83. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Portugal, paragraph 47; the Netherlands, paragraph 56.

and attitudes and to reach the hearts and minds of individuals, who through their behaviour contribute to or perpetuate violence against women.[84] These include the obligation to encourage all members of society, especially men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, as set out in Article 12, paragraph 4.

126. While GREVIO's monitoring work over time has revealed some interesting examples of primary prevention measures specifically targeting men and boys, comprehensive and systematic approaches that promote positive concepts of masculinities, gender roles and attitudes are rare or limited in scope. Similarly, prevention measures focusing on bystander intervention skills exist, but are few and far between. Due to a lack of evaluation, the evidence base for these programmes remains slim in the European context.

127. In its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, published in 2025, GREVIO therefore welcomed the multitude of measures and initiatives conducted at national or regional/municipal level, asking men and boys to engage with harmful attitudes towards women and girls that they or their peers might harbour and identifying how to safely challenge abuse.[85] The evaluation of the campaign included quantitative and qualitative research and considered the impact on both the public and on proxy perpetrators. It found that it had led to greater levels of confidence among members of the public to take action to tackle violence against women and girls.[86] In addition, campaigns carried out at the municipal level targeted male behaviour and encouraged active bystander behaviour, highlighting the potential of peer-based interventions in cases of misogynistic behaviour.[87] Additional examples of measures addressing male perpetration by involving men and boys were highlighted in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Belgium, the Netherlands and Serbia, the latter specifically focusing on Roma men and attitudes to forced marriage.[88] Such approaches offer potential that is important to explore.

128. In a similar vein, GREVIO has consistently pointed to the potential offered by the education sector in terms of shaping positive attitudes towards gender roles, the deconstruction of stereotypes and fostering a culture of equality between men and women. Article 14 requires the design of teaching material that promotes such equality, as well as non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and the right to personal integrity and that informs learners of the different forms of violence against women and domestic violence. It also requires that parties to the convention promote these principles in informal educational facilities, as well as in sports, cultural and leisure facilities.

129. Across many of its baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO had found that teaching material insufficiently addressed these issues, or that the use made of any existing

84. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 85.
85. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraphs 109 and 112.
86. Ibid., paragraph 112.
87. See for example the campaign #isthisokay conducted in Manchester and described in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, paragraph 112, among other relevant initiatives and campaigns.
88. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Belgium, paragraph 56; Serbia, paragraph 63; the Netherlands, paragraph 54; and its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 109.

material was not monitored, hence unknown.[89] These findings were echoed in many of GREVIO's more recent reports, including for example its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, as well as several thematic evaluation reports.[90]



130. Another recurrent concern highlighted relates to the important role of sexuality and the notion of freely given consent in the context of the prevention of violence against women, which GREVIO found to not always be covered in teaching material or through comprehensive sexuality education,[91] a concern reiterated and further developed in the context of women's increasing exposure to harmful sexual practices such as strangulation in several of its first thematic evaluation reports.[92] This issue is also addressed in the context of the ongoing drafting process of a Council of Europe recommendation on the protection of children against violence through age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education. This new standard addresses consent and respect with a view to supporting children, and the adults they become, to live in a society free from violence, particularly gender-based violence against women and girls.

131. Efforts to expand target groups and sectors addressed through primary prevention initiatives beyond those described above have been identified in recent thematic evaluation reports, including attempts to engage in primary prevention of violence against women in the sports sector, as identified in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on France and on the Netherlands.[93]

Monitoring and evaluation of primary prevention measures

132. Another recurrent observation made by GREVIO across its evaluation reports is the importance of monitoring and evaluating the impact of any preventive measures. The first thematic evaluation reports on Portugal, France, Serbia, the Netherlands, Andorra, Belgium and Italy stressed the need for the authorities to carry out research on the impact that awareness-raising campaigns have had on the population.[94] For example, in its first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, GREVIO reiterated the

89. See Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports, paragraphs 161-2 and 166.
90. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 131; and GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Austria, paragraph 55; Albania, paragraphs 57 and 59; Belgium, paragraph 66; Denmark, paragraph 62; Finland, paragraph 66; France, paragraph 76; Italy, paragraph 52; Monaco, paragraph 45; Montenegro paragraph 64; the Netherlands, paragraph 66; Portugal, paragraph 58; Serbia, paragraph 74; and Sweden, paragraph 43.
91. See Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports, paragraphs 164-165.
92. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Austria, paragraph 56; Belgium, paragraph 66; Montenegro, paragraph 65; the Netherlands, paragraph 68; and Portugal, paragraph 57. See also the emerging trends in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence identified in relation to Austria and France, among others.
93. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on France, paragraph 7; and on the Netherlands, paragraph 7.
94. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Andorra, paragraph 62; Belgium, paragraph 58; France, paragraph 68; Italy, paragraph 46; the Netherlands, paragraph 59; Portugal, paragraph 47; Serbia, paragraph 67.

importance of ensuring impact assessments of any awareness-raising campaigns and primary prevention measures in order to ensure their relevance and to allow for the possibility to adjust them.[95] Against the backdrop of a growing body of scientific literature on the evaluation of the impact of primary prevention programmes aimed at reducing violence against women and domestic violence developed over the past 25 years, a number of factors need consideration. First, most of this research focuses on evaluating changes in attitudes and behavioural intentions but does not examine the impact on violence perpetration and/or victimisation rates. In addition, the long-term impact of programmes remains severely under-researched, most impact evaluations either being limited to the immediate impact at the end of an intervention or examining the sustainability of impact over only a few months. For instance, in its first thematic evaluation report on Andorra, GREVIO highlighted the relevance of longitudinal impact assessment of various awareness-raising activities on the public perceptions of the role of women and men in society, to ensure their preventive purpose.[96]

133. Where such long-term monitoring and impact assessment is not ensured, funding may be allocated to programmes with no impact on violence perpetration and/or victimisation, while existing effective programmes remain unidentified for lack of evidence or, as outlined above, for lack of appropriate funding.

Outlook

134. As parties to the Istanbul Convention aspire to create a Europe free from violence against women and domestic violence, and in light of the specific requirements to achieve this vision through effective primary prevention, the challenges and shortcomings described in this focus section demonstrate the need to increase attention on primary prevention. Garnering an understanding of primary prevention as an integral component of the convention's implementation across its four pillars is essential. Achieving this objective requires a range of measures and changes in policy-making practices in relation to the vast field of prevention, as well as a long-term perspective and sustained commitment. The below action points may serve as guidance in this endeavour.

- Embed primary prevention measures on all forms of violence in wider policy making for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and firmly anchor it in policy documents such as national action plans or national strategies as part of the required comprehensive and co-ordinated set of policies required by the convention.
- Ensure a co-ordinated and inclusive approach to the design of primary prevention measures by involving all relevant actors, in particular women's rights organisations and providers of women's specialist services, to harness their knowledge and potential.
- Promote a shift in perspective and actively advocate the Istanbul Convention's strategic vision of ending violence against women and girls.

95. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, paragraph 58.
96. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Andorra, paragraph 56.

- Consider theoretical frameworks for policy and programme design (the primary, secondary, tertiary prevention model and the ecological model) and take inspiration from international frameworks for successful interventions.
- Focus on gender-sensitive and evidence-based approaches proven to lead to behavioural change while ensuring continuous learning and country-specific or local adaptation.
- Strengthen the knowledge base around primary prevention by conducting research and impact evaluation to develop an adequate evidence base for effective interventions in relation to the different forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.
- Ensure appropriate financial investment for policies and programming, including their evaluation and impact assessment, as well as accompanying research and data collection for impact measurement.
- Build capacity in the area of primary prevention among relevant professionals across all levels of policy making and programme design.
- Share and exchange knowledge and good practices within and across parties to the Istanbul Convention.



18th meeting of the Committee of the Parties, Strasbourg, France, 5-6 June 2025

Relations with the Committee of the Parties

135. The Committee of the Parties and GREVIO represent the two pillars of the monitoring system set up by the Istanbul Convention. In 2025, the close relationship between the two bodies continued under the committee's president, Tanja Gonggrijp, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Council of Europe, whose mandate expired at the end of December 2025. She is succeeded by Vebjørn Heines, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Norway to the Council of Europe, who was elected president of the committee on 11 December 2025.

136. In accordance with Article 68, paragraph 12, the Committee of the Parties may, on the basis of GREVIO's evaluation reports and conclusions, issue recommendations to parties, thus ensuring the equal participation of all parties in the monitoring procedure of the convention, strengthening co-operation among parties and between them and GREVIO to ensure the proper and effective implementation of the convention. In 2025, under its baseline evaluation procedure, GREVIO transmitted its report on the United Kingdom for consideration by the committee, which recommended, as per its standard approach, measures to be taken in respect of the findings that GREVIO found to require immediate action, as well as shortcomings identified in relation to Chapters I to III of the Istanbul Convention that GREVIO considered in need of remedial action in the near future in order to ensure comprehensive implementation of the convention.

137. Under its first thematic evaluation procedure, GREVIO transmitted seven evaluation reports, covering Andorra, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Serbia. The Committee of the Parties, applying its approach to recommendations to be issued based on GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports, recommended that the respective governments take measures in respect of the findings made by GREVIO that require both immediate action and action in the near future.[97]

138. Under both procedures, the committee requested the respective authorities to report to the Committee of the Parties, within three years, on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the convention in those areas and to take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report. As in previous years, members of the Committee of the Parties highlighted the fruitful co-operation between GREVIO and the national authorities in the process of evaluation and expressed appreciation for the guidance offered by GREVIO.

139. Moreover, under Rule 26 of GREVIO's internal rules of procedure, the President of GREVIO may periodically meet with the Committee of the Parties to inform it about its work, as well as about any other issue relating to the good functioning of the monitoring mechanism of the convention. During the period covered by this report, one such exchange of views was held at the committee's 18th meeting on 5 and 6 June 2025.

140. On this occasion, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, the President of GREVIO, noted that 2024 had been a productive year, marking the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention, referring to the 6th general activity report of GREVIO published on 13 May 2025. The anniversary had prompted a flurry of activities showcasing the progress made in implementing the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's role in offering detailed and practical guidance for its further implementation. This role of GREVIO had allowed for increased exchanges, collaboration and synergies to emerge between GREVIO and other stakeholders, both within the Council of Europe and with external partners. GREVIO and its Secretariat had responded favourably to over 100 invitations to speak at national, regional and international events, demonstrating the increasing visibility of its monitoring work. This showed that violence against women remained a truly transversal issue, of concern to many bodies and entities, with its cross-cutting nature contributing to its growing relevance for human rights organisations.

141. However, noting persistent challenges in the implementation of the convention, the president also expressed concern about a rising number of instances where policies addressing violence against women were being questioned or challenged by different actors, and about the provision of specialist support to victims offered by women's rights organisations becoming increasingly challenging and their contribution not always being recognised or sufficiently funded. For this reason, the president explained that GREVIO had decided to dedicate the thematic focus section of its 6th report on its general activities to the issue of the shrinking of space

97. Decision adopted at the 17th meeting of the Committee of the Parties on 17 December 2024 as set out in its list of decision, IC(2024)LD17.

for women's rights defenders – a topic that emerged across GREVIO's eight thematic evaluation reports published in 2024.

142. Additionally, the president informed the committee that GREVIO had recently decided to embark on the process of developing its next general recommendation, dedicated to the theme of gender-related killing of women and girls. Last, the president paid tribute to the women of Ukraine and to all those who contributed to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention under the extremely difficult circumstances created by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. She thanked the Ukrainian authorities, NGOs and all those who contributed to the successful conduct of GREVIO's baseline evaluation visit to the country in May 2025.



Co-operation with other Council of Europe bodies and institutions

Committee of Ministers

143. In 2025, GREVIO continued its fruitful co-operation with the Committee of Ministers with a view to furthering the common goal of strengthening the impact of the Istanbul Convention.

144. An example of engagement with the Committee of Ministers was the annual exchange of views that took place between the GREVIO President and the Committee of Ministers on 7 November 2025. During this exchange, GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou informed the Committee of Ministers of recent developments involving GREVIO, including the publication of GREVIO's 6th general activity report, which contained a focus section on the shrinking space for women's rights defenders. She outlined the findings made by GREVIO regarding the difficulties many women's rights organisations active in preventing and combating violence against women faced, ranging from reduced funding opportunities and limited opportunities for involvement in policy design and evaluation, to strict licensing requirements that threatened the existence of some organisations and examples of attempts to intimidate and silence women's rights advocates.

145. Moreover, the GREVIO President explained some of the emerging trends in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence that GREVIO's recent first thematic evaluation reports had highlighted. These included the growing digital dimension of all forms of violence against women and the difficulties in responding adequately to it, as well as the growing exposure of young women and girls to sexual violence by peers. Those in the age group of 24 and younger have seen the greatest increase in levels of victimisation; levels of perpetration have also risen the most in the same age group. In view of the emerging research on the linkages between the growing rates of consumption of violent pornography by younger and younger people and their increasingly harmful sexual behaviour, she explained that GREVIO has been consistently pointing to the need to step up prevention. As a positive trend frequently described in GREVIO's reports, she gave the example of the close alignment of criminal legislation in many countries with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention across a wide spectrum of offences, such as forced marriage, sexual harassment and stalking, including in their online forms.

146. Providing an outlook on GREVIO's future output, the GREVIO President informed the Committee of Ministers of the ongoing work within GREVIO to develop its second general recommendation, this time focusing on the theme of gender-related killings of women and girls. The aim is to offer an interpretation of the provisions of the convention in terms of their relevance for the prevention of, and the protection of women and girls from, gender-related killings. This announcement was met with great interest among the committee members, who expressed their appreciation for the work of GREVIO and reiterated the importance of the Istanbul Convention.

Parliamentary Assembly



Sara Uhnoo, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, Zita Gurmai, meeting with the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence, Paris, France, 3 December 2025

147. Throughout 2025, GREVIO engaged with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in various ways, consolidating its long-standing co-operation. One such example is the hearing on the preparation of the report "Paving the way for a culture of consent", organised by the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination and held in Paris on 3 December 2025, in which a member of GREVIO, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, took part as an expert. In her presentation, she underlined the lack of consent given voluntarily and according to a person's free will as being the central legal element of the convention's definition of sexual violence, including rape, as set out in Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention. Speaking on the basis of GREVIO's findings in this regard, she explained that the criminalisation of sexual violence, including rape, by parties to the convention was characterised by differences not only in their definitions but also in the scope of behaviours covered and the level of applicable sanctions.

148. Presenting the four different approaches to the criminalisation of sexual violence, including rape, by parties to the convention, as highlighted in the focus section of GREVIOs 4th general activity report, she explained that the first approach was one of requiring the use of force, coercion or vulnerability. The second consisted of a two-tiered approach, comprising a legal provision that required force, threat or coercion, alongside a separate offence based solely on the lack of consent to the sexual act. She explained the third approach, known as the "no-means-no" model, which did not require force, threat or coercion but instead proof that the sexual act was committed against a person's will. Finally, she described a fourth approach, often referred to as the "only-yes-means-yes" or "affirmative consent" model, in which the voluntary participation of all parties was required for sexual acts not to be criminalised. She informed the committee that GREVIO had noted a positive trend towards the "only-yes-means-yes" model among some parties to the convention evaluated to date under GREVIO's first thematic evaluation procedure.

149. On 1 October 2025, amid a parliamentary procedure at national level aimed at withdrawing Latvia from the Istanbul Convention, eminent voices from the Parliamentary Assembly publicly spoke about the importance of remaining a party to the convention, arguing against such a step. In particular, the Chair of the Equality Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, Catia Polidori, called on Latvia's MPs to support the Istanbul Convention and stressed that the main losers of such a debate around the convention would be Latvian women. She stressed that it is essential that women who are victims of violence in Latvia can benefit from the protection and support mechanisms of the Istanbul Convention.[98] A few weeks later, on 23 October, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Theodoros Rousopoulos, ahead of a fast-tracked voting procedure on the bill of withdrawal from the convention, strongly urged the Saeima (Latvian Parliament) to vote to maintain the protection of women's rights and their lives as established by the Istanbul Convention, which is considered in Europe and beyond as a "gold standard" in the fight to prevent and punish violence against women.[99]

Commissioner for Human Rights



GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, 5 June 2025, Strasbourg, France

150. In 2025, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, continued to actively address issues pertaining to violence against women. Addressing an informal meeting organised under Malta's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in June 2025, Commissioner O'Flaherty delivered a keynote speech, focusing on

98. See: https://pace.coe.int/en/news/10085/pace-equality-committee-chair-deplores-the-latvian-parliament-s-decision-to-withdraw-from-the-istanbul-convention-and-asks-for-its-reversal.
99. See: https://pace.coe.int/en/news/10084/statement-by-pace-president-on-latvia-s-withdrawal-from-the-istanbul-convention.

dismantling harmful gender stereotypes and reaffirming that combating violence against women must remain a top priority in Europe. Drawing on recent data from the European Union revealing persistently high levels of violence against women, the commissioner underscored the central role of harmful gender norms and the growing impact of the internet, artificial intelligence and disinformation on violence against women. He urged investments in education to be made to ensure digital literacy and to step up data collection to tackle disinformation, among other issues. Moreover, the commissioner reiterated the importance of legal protection against violence against women and urged countries that had not ratified the Istanbul Convention to do so and to show commitment to preventing and combating violence for all women and girls in Europe.

151. Moreover, the commissioner issued a short statement on social media in the context of the discussions on the bill of withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in the Latvian Saeima, calling on Latvian parliamentarians to "disregard the waves of disinformation around the Istanbul Convention and consider the hard-gained protection from gender-based violence for women and girls and the comprehensive framework the Istanbul Convention offers to safeguard women's rights".[100]

European Court of Human Rights

152. Since its entry into force, the Istanbul Convention has provided new international law standards that can serve as guidance to the European Court of Human Rights (the "Court") when issuing judgments related to member states' legal obligations to prevent and prosecute violence against women, including domestic violence, and to protect victims. GREVIO's past activity reports have systematically referenced these, tracing the increasing variety of thematic areas within the wider field of violence against women as covered in case law of the Court.

153. In several judgments concerning violence against women and domestic violence delivered in 2025[101], the Court addressed, among other issues, domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, rape, secondary victimisation and digital violence, frequently referring to the Istanbul Convention and/or GREVIO baseline evaluation reports.

154. The case of *Scuderoni v. Italy* concerned domestic violence suffered by the applicant over a period of nine months following her separation from her partner. The Court found that the authorities' response had fallen short of their duty to act with due diligence, in particular as no immediate risk assessment had been carried

100. Post available at: https://tinyurl.com/2ta644cf.

101. *H.W. v. France*, Application No. 13805/21, 23 January 2025; *P.P. v. Italy*, Application No. 64066/19, 13 February 2025; *X v. Cyprus*, Application No. 40733/22, 27 February 2025; *I.C. v. the Republic of Moldova*, Application No. 36436/22, 27 February 2025; *K.M. v. North Macedonia*, Application No. 59144/16, 4 March 2025; *N.D. v. Switzerland*, Application No. 56114/18, 3 April 2025; *L. and Others v. France,* Application No. 46949/21, 24 April 2025; *N.T. v. Cyprus*, Application No. 28150/22, 3 July 2025; *M.A. v. Iceland*, Application No. 59813/19, 26 August 2025; *B.A. v. Iceland*, Application No. 17006/20, 26 August 2025; *E.A. and Association européenne contre les violences faites aux femmes au travail v. France*, Application No. 30556/22, 4 September 2025; *Scuderoni v. Italy*, Application No. 6045/24, 23 September 2025.

out, her request for a protection order had been refused without such an assessment, and delays had occurred in both civil and criminal proceedings. It further held that the authorities had failed to adequately take into account the specific context of domestic violence and to provide a response proportionate to the seriousness of the allegations. The Court found violations of Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights ("Convention") on account of the Italian authorities' failure to effectively protect the applicant and to respond adequately to her situation.

155. In *N.D. v. Switzerland,* the Court dealt with violence inflicted on the applicant by her partner, culminating in her kidnapping, false imprisonment, rape and ill-treatment after she had attempted to end the relationship. The Court found that the authorities had failed to comply with their positive obligation to protect her life, despite being aware of the real and immediate risk posed by the perpetrator and the applicant's particular vulnerability, including the fact that she had not been aware of the danger he posed or of his criminal record. While noting that a police officer had, on his own initiative, sought to inform her of the risk to the maximum extent possible given the information available to him and the legal constraints on disclosing this application, the Court held that the authorities had failed to carry out an adequate risk assessment or to take measures capable of preventing the harm. The Court found a violation of Article 2 of the Convention.

156. The case of *X v. Cyprus* concerned the applicant's report of having been gang-raped while on holiday in Cyprus. The Court found that the investigative and prosecutorial authorities' response had fallen short of the state's duty to effectively investigate the applicant's allegations. The credibility of her allegations appeared to have been assessed through prejudicial gender stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes. The Court referred to GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Cyprus, which discussed under-reporting by victims of violence against women due to the lack of trust in institutions. The Court found violations of Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights on account of the Cypriot authorities' failure to adequately respond to and investigate allegations of rape.



GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou addressing the audience remotely, Strasbourg, France, 18 September 2025

157. Not only do the above judgments demonstrate the importance of GREVIO's work for the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, but the Court's case law continues to serve as a vital source for GREVIO's work. This ongoing interaction is reflected, *inter alia*, in GREVIO's evaluation reports, both baseline and first thematic reports, which contain numerous references to the Court's jurisprudence and regularly draw on its interpretative guidance. GREVIO is continuing to build on and further deepen this exchange, ensuring that its monitoring practice remains closely aligned with the Convention standards in the field of violence against women and domestic violence.

158. In view of the growing cross-fertilisation between the two conventions, GREVIO also took the initiative to organise a high-level scientific dialogue with the European Court of Human Rights, marking a milestone in the co-operation between the two bodies. Held on 18 September 2025 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights, and co-organised with the Law Faculty of the University of Oxford and the Open Council of Europe Academic Networks, the event was the first of its kind to bring together, in a structured and forward-looking dialogue, judges of the Court and members of GREVIO. By bringing together representatives of Council of Europe member states, academics, practitioners and civil society, it provided a unique platform for interdisciplinary exchange and practical collaboration, aimed at fostering more coherent and effective implementation of European human rights standards in the field of violence against women and domestic violence.

159. Together with Mattias Guyomar, President of the European Court of Human Rights, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, President of GREVIO, opened the scientific dialogue between the two institutions. President Guyomar emphasised that gender-based violence remains a persistent and pervasive human rights violation and highlighted the Convention's character as a "living instrument", capable of evolving to address new societal realities. He further highlighted the Court's developing jurisprudence, including its increasing focus on issues of consent, secondary victimisation and intersectionality.

160. GREVIO President Kostopoulou stressed in her opening remarks that standards set in Strasbourg, whether through judgments or monitoring processes, must resonate in the everyday lives of women and girls and that they should not be perceived solely as victims of crime, but as rights holders whose dignity requires full protection. She underscored the complementary roles of the two institutions, noting that while GREVIO assesses the lived reality of states' implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Court ensures judicial redress where rights are not secured in practice. In this sense, one acts preventively and the other remedially; one guides and advises, the other adjudicates and enforces. Together, they contribute to an evolving and mutually reinforcing system of protection in which legal standards are continuously shaped through dialogue between principle and practice.

161. The opening session was followed by three panel discussions bringing together Court judges (including Kateřina Šimáčková, Oddný Mjöll Arnardóttir, Frédéric Krenc and Anne Louise Bormann), academics, the Executive Secretary to the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO members (Pascale Franck, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop and Helmut Tichy), who addressed issues such as barriers to justice, the Istanbul Convention's framework, protective measures and state obligations, implementation gaps, judicial dilemmas and the role of stereotypes. The conference was closed by Ivana Jelić, Vice-President of the Court, and GREVIO member Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, who highlighted that persistently low reporting rates of violence demonstrate the distance still to be travelled to ensure effective access to justice.

162. The event underscored the significant convergence between the Court's jurisprudence and GREVIO's monitoring findings, revealing numerous points of overlap in their interpretation of states' obligations. By strengthening legal coherence and

reinforcing shared standards, this exchange contributed to a more robust and integrated European framework for the prevention of and protection from violence against women and domestic violence.

Gender Equality Commission

163. Synergies and co-operation between GREVIO and the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), and their respective secretariats, continued and were further strengthened throughout 2025.

164. On 3 and 4 April, the Committee of Experts on Combating Technology-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls (GEC/PC-eVIO), a joint subcommittee of the GEC and the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), held its third meeting to devise a Committee of Ministers recommendation on combating technology-facilitated violence against women. GREVIO member María Rún Bjarnadóttir took part in this meeting to provide input from the perspective of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, as well as emerging trends identified in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports. Her comments during the meeting were essential for highlighting the much-needed accountability angle, both for perpetrators and for technology companies, in light of the lived experiences of victims of online and technology-facilitated violence against women observed by GREVIO.

165. On 14 May 2025, GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou took part in an exchange of views with the GEC. While highlighting progress achieved since the entry into force of the convention, she shared with the GEC a number of concerns. First, she regretted the increase in examples of policies questioning or challenging the approach to violence against women as something that affects women specifically. She also pointed at the many technical and administrative barriers that put established feminist organisations at a disadvantage in providing services or advocacy for violence against women. In this context, she hinted at the theme of a shrinking space for women's rights defenders, which was selected by GREVIO as the theme for the focus section of its 2024 activity report. Moreover, she conveyed GREVIO's concerns regarding the increase in sexual violence among the age group of 24 and younger. She also informed the GEC that GREVIO chose as a theme for its General Recommendation No. 2 the topic of preventing and combating gender-related killings (femicides).

Capacity-building and co-operation projects on gender equality and violence against women

166. Throughout 2025, GREVIO members and its Secretariat contributed to capacity-building and co-operation projects on gender equality and violence against women, thus helping to provide national authorities with the information, tools and expertise necessary to comply with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. Among the many examples to cite, in the framework of the project entitled Supporting the

Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Hellenic Republic[102], which aimed to provide support to women victims of sexual violence, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, member of GREVIO, participated in a conference held on 31 March in Athens. Marking the finalisation of the feasibility study for the setting up of rape crisis centres in Greece, the conference offered an opportunity for her to present on the role of rape crisis centres under the Istanbul Convention and provide insights into the setting up and running of such centres in Ireland.

167. Moreover, GREVIO regularly exchanges with the Secretariat responsible for the running of the relevant capacity-building and co-operation projects and has on two occasions in 2025 received updates on the projects carried out and the aspects covered. Elena Jovanovska-Brezoska, Head of the Co-operation and Capacity Building Unit in the Gender Equality Division, provided the Group of Experts with an update on the ongoing co-operation activities during GREVIO's 35th meeting (24-27 March 2025) and its 36th meeting (30 June to 3 July 2025).

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child

168. In the course of 2025, GREVIO continued to contribute to the work of the Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence (ENF-VAE), established under the supervision of the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF). ENF-VAE is mandated to develop a non-binding instrument on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen, *inter alia*, efforts to prevent and combat violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful behaviour. GREVIO member Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop was appointed to represent GREVIO on this committee and, together with a member of the Secretariat, provided input on the draft recommendation on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen responses to – *inter alia* – preventing and combating violence, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour by children and its draft explanatory memorandum. To this end, they attended three meetings in the course of 2025, offering GREVIO's perspective and expertise. Such synergies were ensured with a view to ensuring the compliance of the committee's work with the standards of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's findings regarding its implementation.

169. Additionally, GREVIO contributed to the action plan for the implementation of the Council of Europe's Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2025) by reporting on the mainstreaming of children's rights in its evaluation reports published during the year, particularly on issues concerning the provision of support services to children exposed to violence against women as well as the protection of children in parental separation proceedings.

102. See: https://rm.coe.int/prems-164924-gbr-2573-supporting-the-implementation-of-the-istanbul-tx/1680b3620a.

Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)

170. In 2025, in the context of the ongoing work of the CDDH Drafting Group on Eradication of Impunity for Serious Human Rights Violations (CDDH-ELI) to prepare a study on the need for and the feasibility of (an) additional non-binding instrument(s) to complement the 2011 Committee of Ministers' guidelines on eradicating impunity for serious human rights violations[103], the drafting group held a hearing, on 14 January 2025, entitled "Integrating a gender perspective in the fight against impunity". Offering insights into the premise of the Istanbul Convention that addresses violence against women as a form of gender-based violence, and in full recognition of its structural and gender-based nature, the Executive Secretary to the Istanbul Convention addressed the drafting group. She covered the due diligence principle set out in Article 5 of the convention as a recognition of the responsibility of the state to prevent, protect, prosecute and compensate acts of violence against women, while also referring to the need to address individual perpetrator impunity.

171. Moreover, the CDDH and the Pompidou Group established a drafting Committee on Human Rights and Drug Policies (DH-PDA), with a mandate that foresees for the first time a GREVIO member among its full committee members. This demonstrates the growing relevance of GREVIO's work in the field of healthcare. The purpose of the drafting committee is to promote a human rights-based approach to drug policy by developing standards for adoption by the Committee of Ministers. At its 35th meeting between 24 and 27 March 2025, GREVIO designated member Marie-Claude Hofner to represent GREVIO on this committee in order to offer not only her individual expertise in the area of health and violence against women, including on the intersection of women in addiction, but also the findings made by GREVIO across its baseline and first thematic evaluation reports in this regard. With a view to integrating a gender perspective into the committee's work, notably by highlighting the increased exposure of women with addiction issues to gender-based violence, as well as the specific barriers they face in accessing support services and justice, she has attended several meetings and provided written comments on the draft recommendation and its explanatory memorandum.

Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)

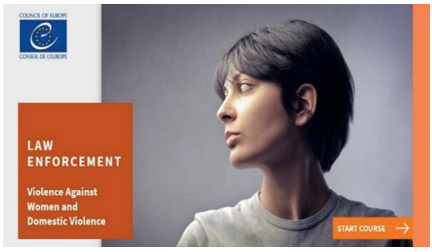


172. GREVIO held an exchange of views at its 37th meeting with Ms Karin Rowhani-Wimmer, member of the CPT from Austria, and Hugh Chetwynd, Executive Secretary to the CPT, as well as with a member of the CPT Secretariat. An in-depth presentation was provided on women in detention, the risk of violence they face while in detention and issues related to reintegration and support. This was followed by

103 See: https://rm.coe.int/1680695d6e.

a fruitful exchange with GREVIO members on these topics, during which GREVIO members referred to their findings on gender-based violence experienced by women with disabilities in institutions or asylum-seeking women in detention. During 2025, the secretariats of the two monitoring mechanisms (GREVIO and the CPT) also met to discuss synergies and findings from country reports on these subjects.

Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)



173. The Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) aims to enhance and improve the capacity of all legal professionals – judges, lawyers and prosecutors – in all Council of Europe member states and beyond. Its key goal is to encourage legal professionals to apply European human rights standards in their daily work, through free and accessible online courses on human rights topics. The HELP course on violence against women, developed in 2017, has since been continuously adapted into a growing number of national versions and officially launched for different types of legal professionals, including law students. The course has been gradually integrated into the learning curricula of national institutions providing training for the judiciary and other categories of legal professionals. So far, the course has received a total of 14 465 enrolments and 4 468 individuals have completed it since its introduction. Of these, 1 307 individuals enrolled and 490 completed it in 2025 alone. The course is currently available in 37 languages.

174. In 2021, the online course "Violence against women and domestic violence for law enforcement" was added to the HELP online catalogue, offering law-enforcement professionals the opportunity to learn theoretical and practical concepts related to violence against women, its many forms and impacts on victims and society at large. The course also provides guidelines on how to respond to cases of violence against women and domestic violence, quickly and effectively, including techniques for interviewing victims and perpetrators and practical steps that should be followed by first responders, investigators and other stakeholders who work to combat violence against women and domestic violence and to protect victims. Since its inception, the course has had a total of 3 670 enrolments and 1 636 individuals have completed it since its introduction. Of these, 586 individuals enrolled and 234 completed it in 2025 alone.

175. In a bid to expand the provision of specialist training on violence against women, in w2025 the Council of Europe's HELP Division established a working group to develop a short course on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. The aim of this course is to support legal professionals to fully understand this phenomenon and to enhance their ability to identify and apply existing European and international legal standards in a trauma-informed manner. This includes, in particular,

the Istanbul Convention as interpreted by GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women.

176. Through its Secretariat, GREVIO contributed to the development of this HELP course by providing input on the gendered dynamics of such forms of violence and their continuum with violence occurring in the offline world. It also facilitated the translation of the principles stemming from GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 into practical guidance for legal professionals, including strengthening their capacity to effectively hold perpetrators accountable, gather evidence from service providers and ensure the timely removal of harmful content from digital platforms, while avoiding re-traumatisation and secondary victimisation of victims. The course is scheduled to be launched on the HELP platform in 2026.

Convention on Cybercrime ("Budapest Convention")

177. The Secretariat of the Istanbul Convention monitoring mechanism collaborated with the Secretariat of the Budapest Convention to organise a flash session on combating online and technology-facilitated violence against women during EuroDIG 2025, which took place between 12 and 14 May in Strasbourg. This event aimed to present the synergies between these two conventions to a diverse audience, including representatives of information technology regulatory bodies from various European states, technology companies, academics and other practitioners active in the field. Findings from GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round highlighted to the audience the severity and prevalence of this phenomenon, as well as its gendered nature and the challenges faced by different stakeholders in protecting victims and holding perpetrators to account. A presentation of GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women informed the audience about the measures that states can take to address this issue in a co-ordinated manner, targeting prevention, protection and prosecution, with particular emphasis on improved co-operation with the technology sector to ensure the timely removal of violent content, a vital requirement for victims. The presentation of the measures provided under the Budapest Convention, in particular its Second Additional Protocol on enhanced international co-operation and the disclosure of electronic evidence, complemented the prosecution aspect given the often anonymous and cross-border nature of this from of violence.



Co-operation with GREVIO member, Laura Albu, Brussels, Belgium, 6 June 2025, at an event marking the 35 anniversary of the European Women's Lobby

Co-operation with civil society and national institutions for the protection of human rights

Role of NGOs and civil society, including national human rights institutions

178. Civil society has long played a very important role in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Their involvement includes advocacy, awareness raising and delivering essential services, which complement the efforts of state authorities. These services are crucial for women who have experienced violence, and women's rights organisations and civil society actors have accumulated valuable expertise through their long-standing work. The Istanbul Convention, particularly its Article 9, recognises the importance of involving NGOs in all efforts to end violence against women and domestic violence on a national and international level. It also provides a framework for civil society and national human rights institutions to participate in and contribute to the monitoring work of GREVIO.

179. The number of civil society organisations participating in GREVIO's work has grown significantly over the years, which is evidenced by the number of consolidated reports submitted to GREVIO concerning the Istanbul Convention. In the course of baseline evaluations that took place in the period under review, a number of relevant reports from NGOs were received. For example, with regard to the baseline evaluation of the EU, six shadow reports were received from NGOs in 2025, some of which were submitted under the auspices of umbrella organisations or coalitions, for example the submission of the shadow report by ECRE-AMAL, representing 130 NGOs, or by WAVE, representing 1 600 women's organisations across 46 European countries. NGOs dedicated to addressing the needs of women who are, or may be, exposed to intersectional discrimination have demonstrated a keen interest in participating in GREVIO's work.

180. This trend also continued in the first thematic evaluation round. During its evaluations of Belgium, Estonia, Malta, Romania and Slovenia, GREVIO received several contributions from civil society organisations and ombudsperson offices, indicating a sustained interest in GREVIO's monitoring process. For the first thematic evaluation of Estonia, a report by the Chancellor of Justice of the Republic of Estonia was submitted as well as a submission from the Estonian Women's Shelters Union and the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable. In the context of its evaluation of Romania, GREVIO received four shadow reports from civil society organisations, including a joint shadow report co-authored by 10 NGOs, three university research centres and three independent experts (ANAIS Association). Similar trends of local and international organisations co-operating to address specific issues together in one or more states parties were noted in several of the monitoring procedures that took place during the reporting period (for example in Belgium and Malta). Civil society organisations, including organisations providing specialist support services for women victims, are also regularly consulted during GREVIO's on-site visits.

181. GREVIO continues to recognise the need to exchange in depth with national human rights institutions, including ombudspersons and other national human rights bodies. As key stakeholders, they are consistently invited to offer their expertise during the evaluation procedure, by submitting shadow reports and/or attending fact-finding meetings during evaluation visits. In addition to the example of a shadow report received from the Chancellor of Justice of the Republic of Estonia mentioned above, GREVIO received a report from the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia in 2025. During its visit to Andorra, it met with the Ombudsperson of Andorra, and did the same during its subsequent visit to Romania.

182. Moreover, on 6 June 2025 an event was organised to mark the 35th anniversary of European Women's Lobby. GREVIO member Laura Albu attended this event and participated in an intergenerational dialogue. Similarly, GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou attended an event organised by the European Anti Violence Network (EAVN) on 25 June 2025 in Athens, Greece.

Findings of GREVIO on state recognition of and support for NGOs and civil society

183. The importance of involving civil society, including in particular NGOs, in the design and implementation of policies and measures to combat violence against women is explicitly recognised in Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention. In its baseline evaluation procedure, GREVIO therefore systematically assessed whether parties to the convention honour this obligation. GREVIO has emphasised the need for parties to adopt an inclusive approach to NGOs and to conduct a systematic consultation process with them about preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. In its baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, it positively noted the frequent inclusion of NGOs in the preparation of draft laws and policy-making initiatives. Nevertheless, GREVIO emphasised that this is not always done in an institutionalised or inclusive manner, emphasising that the solid expertise of the specialist women's support sector, firmly rooted in feminist, intersectional and victim-centred principles, needs to be included in an effective manner.[104]

184. While Article 9 does not form part of the first thematic evaluation procedure that was launched in 2023, GREVIO reports still cover the issue of support for and co-operation with NGOs in parties if it finds that there is a particular trend in this regard, in particular in relation to the funding of women's rights organisations. Across its thematic evaluation reports adopted so far, such issues feature regularly under Article 8 or are addressed in the section entitled "Emerging trends in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence".

185. In the eight first thematic evaluation reports adopted in 2025, GREVIO noted several trends in terms of facilitating NGO participation in policy making (Article 7) and their level of funding (Article 8). For example, in its first thematic evaluation report on Andorra, GREVIO observed a trend of limited NGO involvement in the preparation and implementation of public policies to prevent and combat violence against women.[105] Similar findings under Article 7 (Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies) were highlighted in the first thematic evaluation reports on France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Serbia, referring specifically to the lack of or limitations in the consultation with NGOs.[106] GREVIO recalls that parties should not limit themselves to formally consulting NGOs but must ensure that their views are genuinely heard and taken into account. Moreover, in its first thematic evaluation report on Serbia, GREVIO expressed concerns over the shrinking of the space for women's rights organisations active in preventing and combating violence against women.[107] Since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Serbia, women's rights NGOs have been operating under considerable strain, facing persistent online and physical attacks from groups contesting the need for women's rights advocacy and support services for women victims of violence, alongside limited government funding. Concerns relating to Article 8 have likewise been highlighted by GREVIO in its

104. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 65.
105. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Andorra, paragraph 26.
106. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on: France, paragraph 27; Italy, paragraph 22; the Netherlands, paragraph 25; Portugal, paragraph 25; and Serbia, paragraph 28.
107. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Serbia, paragraphs 5-8.

reports on Andorra, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom, particularly regarding the lack of sufficient, sustainable and transparent funding.[108] In contrast, GREVIO welcomed the increased and sustainable funding made available to women's rights organisations in the first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, which is an encouraging sign that the role of civil society in policy making in the field of violence against women and domestic violence is given serious consideration by authorities.[109]

186. The findings made by GREVIO on the decrease in the funding and/or involvement of women's rights organisations with decades of experience in service provision or advocacy around violence against women is to be seen as a continuation of the shrinking of space for women's rights defenders as described by GREVIO in its 6th activity report.

108. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Andorra, paragraph 35; France, paragraph 38-40; Italy, paragraph 29; the Netherlands, paragraphs 31-33; Portugal, paragraphs 23-24; and Serbia, paragraph 41.
109. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Belgium, paragraph 32.



Co-operation with international organisations

187. Since its inception, GREVIO has engaged in co-operation with international organisations, intergovernmental structures and international and regional monitoring bodies that operate in the area of violence against women.

United Nations

188. Throughout 2025, GREVIO pursued its exchanges with several UN entities, in particular in the context of the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform).

189. In March, GREVIO's President represented GREVIO at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where she participated in various side events, organised by a variety of stakeholders, including governments, parliamentarians and NGOs. Speaking on topics as diverse as GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, growing concerns around sexual violence and GREVIO's findings, as well as GREVIO's findings under the first set of thematic evaluation reports, she added GREVIO's perspective to global discussions, including in a set of bilateral meetings as part of the EDVAW Platform, which met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the UN General Assembly, among other high-level mandate holders (see below).

190. With a view to deepening the exchange between GREVIO as a regional treaty body and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), GREVIO held an exchange of views at its 37th meeting, held from 13 to 16 October in 2025, with Marianne Mikko, Vice-Chairperson of the CEDAW Committee. She presented a brief overview of CEDAW's mandate, followed by an extensive discussion on General Recommendation No. 40 on equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems and a presentation of the key elements of CEDAW's forthcoming General Recommendation No. 41 on harmful gender stereotypes. In presenting General Recommendation No. 40, she stressed that young women aged 30 and under make up only 1.4% of the world's MPs, despite making up about 25% of the world's population. This under-representation was not merely a matter of numbers; it represents a democratic deficit that can undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of parliaments.

191. Offering GREVIO's expertise in the area of policing and risk assessment, GREVIO member Ivo Holc was designated to participate in a comparative legal analysis of domestic laws enacted by selected countries to address and respond to firearms-related gender-based violence against women – research initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In this capacity, he attended a meeting as a subject matter expert to provide a peer review of the report on preventing and addressing firearms-related gender-based violence against women: an analysis of legislative responses,110 prepared and subsequently issued by UNODC. The report provides a comparative analysis of domestic laws in selected countries to effectively respond to cases of domestic violence and violence against women committed with the use of firearms and emphasises the connection between violence against women and the availability of firearms in certain countries. GREVIO subsequently invited Sven Pfeiffer of UNODC who was leading this work at UN Secretariat level to present the report to GREVIO at its 36th meeting held from 30 June to 3 July 2025.

Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform)

192. The EDVAW Platform comprises seven United Nations and regional independent expert mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights operating at the international and regional levels. It aims to strengthen institutional co-operation between the mechanisms with a view to undertaking joint action to harmonise and improve the implementation of the existing international legal and policy frameworks on violence against women.

193. GREVIO has long played an important role in the EDVAW Platform, chairing it for one year from 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023 as the first ever president. As agreed by the EDVAW Platform at the time, GREVIO's mandate focused on the digital dimension of violence against women at the global level, leading to the publication of the platform's first thematic paper, entitled "The digital dimension of violence against women as addressed by the seven mechanisms of the EDVAW Platform".

110 See: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/search/index.html.

194. Since then, the presidency of the EDVAW Platform has rotated among the members of the platform. In 2025, it was co-chaired by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, its causes and consequences, Reem Alsalam, and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Janet Sallah-Njie. Under their leadership, and with GREVIO's active involvement, the EDVAW Platform adopted two important position papers. The first, adopted in February 2025, was a contribution to the 30-year review process of the Beijing Platform for Action, entitled "30 Years in Review of the Beijing Platform for Action – Position paper of the EDVAW Platform on the urgent need to address violence and discrimination against women and girls in the context of rising gender equality regression". The second presented a strategic intervention in support of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, leveraging the symbolic weight of this quarter-century milestone to issue an urgent call for accountability and a reassertion of an unwavering commitment to its implementation. This paper was issued on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the WPS agenda – a moment not only to take stock but also to highlight the tangible outcomes required to ensure a secure and just future.

195. Ahead of its publication, the platform organised a dedicated (online) event on 3 July 2025, on the theme of the Women, Peace and Security agenda as part of its preparatory efforts for the position paper. It gathered from civil society and other fields collaborative strategies and policy recommendations to strengthen the global commitment to women's participation in peacebuilding and security. In addition, the platform held several online meetings throughout the year, as well as an in-person meeting on the margins of the 69th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in New York in March 2025.

196. At its last meeting of the year, and in a bid to ensure continuity in the platform's activities and the rotation of its presidency, the platform's members designated GREVIO to preside over the EDVAW Platform from 1 January to 31 December 2026. GREVIO will thus assume this role for the second time, offering it another opportunity to promote the platform's uniqueness and enhance synergies and joint papers among its members.

World Health Organization

197. The launch of the WHO European Regional Director's Special Initiative on Violence Against Women and Girls in 2025 led to increased co-operation between GREVIO and WHO to strengthen health-sector responses to violence against women and girls. Covering the period 2025-2030, this initiative aims to enhance the role of healthcare systems in preventing and combating violence against women and girls through increased investment, capacity building and evidence-based action.

198. Within this initiative, the GREVIO Secretariat participated throughout 2025 in expert consultation meetings with multiple national and international stakeholders, providing input based on GREVIO's evaluation reports on the role of healthcare services in preventing and combating violence against women. Contributions highlighted, in particular, the need to improve data collection on experiences of violence within the health sector, the impact of mandatory reporting obligations

on victims' trust in the system, the importance of strengthened training and awareness to enable healthcare professionals to identify and treat victims, and the need to expand access to sexual assault and rape crisis centres across the WHO European Region. The input gathered through these expert consultation meetings fed into the development of various WHO publications, including the report "Care, courage, change: health-sector leadership in tackling violence against women and girls", published on 20 November 2025, with further deliverables currently in the pipeline.

European Union

199. Following its signature of the Istanbul Convention in 2017, the EU acceded to the convention by depositing two instruments of approval on 28 June 2023, triggering the entry into force of the convention for the EU on 1 October 2023. On that date, the EU became the 38th party to the Istanbul Convention, representing a significant development as it binds the EU by the highest standards in the fight against violence against women. Accession to the Istanbul Convention allows the EU to benefit from multilateral exchanges within the Committee of the Parties, as well as from the external assessment of the progress made and the expert guidance provided by GREVIO in the framework of its evaluation procedure carried out in accordance with Article 66, paragraph 1, of the convention. GREVIO launched its baseline evaluation procedure in respect of the European Union on 14 January 2025, by sending it its "Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) as adapted for the European Union" (the EU Questionnaire). This questionnaire served as a basis for the EU to prepare a report on its implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which was submitted to GREVIO on 24 November 2025. The report, together with the shadow reports received by GREVIO from various NGOs and women's rights organisations, will inform GREVIO's evaluation visit to the EU planned in 2026.

200. As regards co-operation with EU entities and agencies, in the course of 2025 GREVIO and its Secretariat continued to hold fruitful exchanges with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), including on the topic of data collection.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

201. As highlighted in the section in Chapter V on participation in events, GREVIO's expertise and in-depth information on the Istanbul Convention and its monitoring were solicited throughout 2025 in the context of several OSCE conferences. This demonstrates the continued relevance of GREVIO's work and findings for the OSCE's participating countries and the reliance on GREVIO's insights as evidenced in previous general reports on GREVIO's activities.[111]

202. GREVIO has actively contributed to events organised by the OSCE Chairpersonship, held by Finland during the reporting period, such as the OSCE

111. See in particular GREVIO's 6th report on its general activities, covering the period of 1 January to 31 December 2025, paragraphs 173-174.

Chairpersonship Conference on Gender Equality "Building Resilience through Inclusion and Empowerment", held on 6 and 7 May 2025, attended by the President of GREVIO where she participated in a panel discussion on violence against women and girls. Her intervention focused on the progress made and the ongoing challenges to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention across the OSCE region. She pointed to developments driven by the Istanbul Convention in its states parties, such as the adoption of laws criminalising specific forms of violence like forced marriage and image-based abuse, the shift towards consent-based definitions of sexual violence and rape, improved prosecution rates and better access to legal aid and compensation for victims. At the same time, she highlighted persistent challenges, including low reporting and conviction rates, over-reliance on victims' testimonies in criminal proceedings, lack of trauma-informed approaches by different professionals and insufficient recognition of forms of violence such as psychological abuse and sexual harassment in legal frameworks. She also raised concerns about inadequate protection of victims in family law proceedings, the rise of the digital dimension of violence against women and broader trends concerning the erosion of gender equality.

203. GREVIO's perspective was of equal relevance in the context of a high-level conference on the topic of femicide held on 21 November 2025 in Rome. This event was attended by Angelina Zaporojan-Pirgari, first Vice-President of GREVIO, who explained the relevance of the Istanbul Convention for this extreme form of gender-based violence against women, covering the convention's provisions in detail.



GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou at the meeting of the Committee of Ministers, 7 November 2025, Strasbourg, France

Concluding remarks

204. The activities carried out by GREVIO as described in this report, as well as the wider developments around the Istanbul Convention in 2025, show that the convention's standards have taken firm root at national level and in the standard-setting and co-operation activities carried out by the Council of Europe itself. Moreover, the convention's obligations and GREVIO's findings in relation to their implementation have become essential guidance for the European Court of Human Rights in its case law on topics related to violence against women and domestic violence. The synergies created by GREVIO with Council of Europe bodies and entities, as well as with those outside the Organisation, and the exchanges it has held have grown both in number and in depth during the reporting period, as has the progress identified in the convention's implementation since the baseline evaluation procedure. These developments are a stark expression of the transformative impact the Istanbul Convention has had since its entry into force in 2014.

205. This general report on GREVIO's activities, the seventh of its kind since 2019, is a continuation of GREVIO's annual stocktaking of its actions and assessments and provides readers with insights into the functioning of an independent human rights monitoring mechanism. GREVIO's work has continually shown the importance for the European region of legally binding standards on violence against women and domestic violence. While it has revealed over the years strong engagement among parties to the convention with the requirements to align their legislative frameworks

and policy documents with the definitions and concepts of the convention, the findings analysed in this report's focus section testify to the continuous need to implement the standards of the Istanbul Convention in the area of prevention, in particular primary prevention of violence against women.

206. As the analysis shows, there is a clear need across most, if not all, parties to the convention evaluated to date to step up efforts to ensure long-term, structural and sustainable primary prevention measures, and to build a knowledge base of what works for the lasting prevention of all forms of violence against women. This is crucial to ensure that root causes are addressed before violence occurs, rather than responding only after harm has been done. By challenging harmful gender norms, stereotypes and power imbalances, primary prevention efforts aim to change the social and cultural conditions that allow violence to persist. This includes early intervention strategies that promote respect, equality and healthy relationships.

207. Preventing violence against women before it happens not only reduces the human suffering and long-term trauma among women and girls but also lessens the social and economic costs associated with healthcare, legal systems, victim support and lost productivity. Ultimately, primary prevention contributes to building safer, more equitable societies where women and girls can live free from fear and discrimination. This is essential to ensuring that the convention's commitments are not merely symbolic but effectively implemented in practice, contributing also to the enjoyment of women's and girls' human rights in all other areas of life. This is of particular relevance to enabling women's and girls' effective participation in political and public life, to cite a particularly important aspect of their human rights that women and girls are increasingly retreating from.

Appendix 1 – list of GREVIO activities between january and december 2025

GREVIO meetings

- 35th GREVIO meeting, Strasbourg, 24-27 March 2025
- 36th GREVIO meeting, Strasbourg, 30 June-3 July 2025
- 37th GREVIO meeting, Strasbourg, 13-16 October 2025

GREVIO's evaluation reports (in order of publication)

Baseline evaluation reports

- United Kingdom: adopted on 27 March 2025 and published on 18 June 2025
- First thematic evaluation reports
- Portugal: adopted on 27 March 2025 and published on 27 May 2025
- France: adopted on 3 July 2025 and published on 16 September 2025
- Serbia: adopted on 3 July 2025 and published on 25 September 2025
- Netherlands: adopted on 3 July 2025 and published on 21 October 2025
- Andorra: adopted on 16 October and published on 26 November 2025
- Belgium: adopted on 16 October and published on 27 November 2025
- Italy: adopted on 16 October and published on 2 December 2025

Evaluation visits

Baseline evaluation visits

- Ukraine: from 12 to 18 May 2025
- Latvia: from 3 to 7 November 2025

First thematic evaluation visits

- Belgium: from 3 to 7 February 2025
- Andorra: from 10 to 12 February 2025
- San Marino: from 24 to 26 February 2025
- Malta: from 20 to 24 October 2025
- Slovenia: from 20 to 24 October
- Romania: from 25 to 31 October 2025
- Estonia: from 27 to 31 October 2025

Appendix 2 – Timetable for GREVIO's baseline evaluation procedure (2016-2028)

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO reports
Austria	March 2016	September 2016	November 2016	September 2017
Monaco	March 2016	September 2016	December 2016	September 2017
Albania	September 2016	January 2017	April 2017	November 2017
Denmark	September 2017	January 2017	May 2017	November 2017
Montenegro	January 2017	May 2017	November 2017	November 2024
Turkey* **	January 2017	May 2017	November 2017	September 2018
Portugal	May 2017	September 2017	February 2018	January 2019
Sweden	May 2017	September 2017	February 2018	January 2019
Finland	November 2017	March 2018	October 2018	September 2019
France	November 2017	March 2018	October 2018	December 2019
Italy	February 2018	June 2018	March 2019	January 2020
Netherlands	February 2018	June 2018	March 2019	January 2020
Serbia	February 2018	June 2018	March 2019	January 2020
Spain	September 2018	February 2019	October 2019	November 2020*
Belgium	September 2018	February 2019	October 2019	September 2020
Andorra	September 2018	February 2019	February 2020	November 2020
Malta	September 2018	February 2019	February 2020	November 2020
Poland	February 2019	September 2019	September 2020	September 2021
San Marino	September 2019	February 2020	September 2020	September 2021
Slovenia	February 2019	October 2019	September 2020	September 2021
Romania**	September 2019	February 2020	July 2021	June 2022

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO reports
Bosnia and Herzegovina**	September 2019	February 2020	Sept./October 2021	October 2022
Germany**	February 2020	June 2020	Sept./October 2021	October 2022
Estonia*	October 2020	March 2021	Feb./March 2022	November 2022
Cyprus	October 2020	March 2021	Feb./March 2022	November 2022
Switzerland	February 2021	June 2021	Feb./March 2022	November 2022
Iceland	February 2021	June 2021	Feb./March 2022	November 2022
Norway**	February 2021	June 2021	Feb./March 2022	November 2022
Georgia**	February 2021	June 2021	Feb./March 2022	November 2022
Croatia	September 2021	February 2022	Sept./October 2022	September 2023
Luxembourg	September 2021	February 2022	Sept./October 2022	September 2023
North Macedonia	September 2021	February 2022	Sept./October 2022	September 2023
Greece	February 2022	September 2022	March 2023	November 2023
Ireland	February 2022	September 2022	March 2023	November 2023
Liechtenstein	February 2022	September 2022	March 2023	November 2023
Moldova	February 2022	September 2022	March 2023	November 2023
Ukraine	January 2023	June 2023	May 2025	September 2026
United Kingdom	January 2023	June 2023	Jan./February 2024	June 2025
Latvia	September 2024	March 2025	November 2025	September 2026
European Union	January 2025	November 2025	June 2026	December 2027

* Changes to the timeline due to the adoption of the reporting form.

** Changes to the timeline due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

*** With effect of 1 July 2021, Türkiye withdrew from the Istanbul Convention and is no longer a state party to this convention.

Appendix 3 – Provisional timetable for GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round procedure on the theme "building trust by delivering support, protection and justice" (2023-2031)

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO reports
Austria	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./October 2023	September 2024
Monaco	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./October 2023	September 2024
Albania	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./October 2023	September 2024
Denmark	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./October 2023	September 2024
Montenegro	May 2023	October 2023	Sept./March 2024	November 2024
Sweden	May 2023	October 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Finland	May 2023	October 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Spain	July 2023	December 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Portugal	May 2023	October 2023	June 2024	May 2025
France	January 2024	June 2024	September 2024	September 2025
Serbia	January 2024	June 2024	Novembre 2024	September 2025
Netherlands	January 2024	June 2024	Sept./October 2024	October 2025
Italy	January 2024	June 2024	October 2024	December 2025
Andorra	May 2024	October 2024	February 2025	November 2025
Belgium	May 2024	October 2024	February 2025	November 2025
San Marino	March 2024	September 2024	February 2025	April 2026
Malta	March 2024	September 2024	October 2025	September 2026
Romania	September 2024	March 2025	October 2025	September 2026

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO reports
Estonia	September 2024	March 2025	October 2025	September 2026
Slovenia	September 2024	March 2025	October 2025	November 2026
Switzerland	March 2025	October 2025	March 2026	November 2026
Norway	March 2025	September 2025	April 2026	November 2026
Georgia	March 2025	September 2025	February 2026	November 2026
Germany	October 2024	September 2025	April 2026	May 2027
Cyprus	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./October 2026	September 2027
Poland	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./October 2026	September 2027
North Macedonia	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./October 2026	September 2027
Iceland	September 2025	May 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Croatia	March 2026	September 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Bosnia and Herzegovina	March 2026	September 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Ireland	September 2026	March 2027	Sept./October 2027	September 2028
Liechtenstein	September 2026	March 2027	Sept./October 2027	September 2028
Moldova	September 2026	March 2027	Sept./October 2027	September 2028
Luxemburg	September 2026	March 2027	Sept./October 2027	September 2028
Greece	March 2027	September 2027	Feb./March 2028	November 2028
United Kingdom	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Ukraine	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Latvia	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
European Union	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Appendix 4 – signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

Party	Signature	Ratification	Entry into Force
Albania	19 December 2011	4 February 2013	1 August 2014
Andorra	22 February 2013	22 April 2014	1 August 2014
Armenia	18 January 2018		
Austria	11 May 2011	14 November 2013	1 August 2014
Azerbaijan			
Belgium	11 September 2012	14 March 2016	1 July 2016
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8 March 2013	7 November 2013	1 August 2014
Bulgaria	21 April 2016		
Croatia	22 January 2013	12 June 2018	1 October 2018
Cyprus	16 June 2015	10 November 2017	1 March 2018
Czech Republic	2 May 2016		
Denmark	11 October 2013	23 April 2014	1 August 2014
Estonia	2 December 2014	26 October 2017	1 February 2018
Finland	11 May 2011	17 April 2015	1 August 2015
France	11 May 2011	4 July 2014	1 November 2014
Georgia	19 June 2014	19 May 2017	1 September 2017
Germany	11 May 2011	12 October 2017	1 February 2018
Greece	11 May 2011	18 June 2018	1 October 2018
Hungary	14 March 2014		
Iceland	11 May 2011	26 April 2018	1 August 2018

Ireland	5 November 2015	8 March 2019	1 July 2019
Italy	27 September 2012	10 September 2013	1 August 2014
Latvia	18 May 2016	10 January 2024	30 April 2024
Liechtenstein	10 November 2016	17 June 2021	1 October 2021
Lithuania	7 June 2013		
Luxembourg	11 May 2011	7 August 2018	1 December 2018
Malta	21 May 2012	29 July 2014	1 November 2014
Monaco	20 September 2012	7 October 2014	1 February 2015
Montenegro	11 May 2011	22 April 2013	1 August 2014
Netherlands	14 November 2012	18 November 2015	1 March 2016
North Macedonia	8 July 2011	23 March 2018	1 July 2018
Norway	7 July 2011	5 July 2017	1 November 2017
Poland	18 December 2012	27 April 2015	1 August 2015
Portugal	11 May 2011	5 February 2013	1 August 2014
Republic of Moldova	6 February 2017	31 January 2022	1 May 2022
Romania	27 June 2014	23 May 2016	1 September 2016
San Marino	30 April 2014	28 January 2016	1 May 2016
Serbia	4 April 2012	21 November 2013	1 August 2014
Slovak Republic	11 May 2011		
Slovenia	8 September 2011	5 February 2015	1 June 2015
Spain	11 May 2011	10 April 2014	1 August 2014
Sweden	11 May 2011	1 July 2014	1 November 2014
Switzerland	11 September 2013	14 December 2017	1 April 2018
Türkiye*	11 May 2011	14 March 2012	1 August 2014
Ukraine	7 November 2011	18 July 2022	1 November 2022
United Kingdom	8 June 2012	21 July 2022	1 November 2022
International Organisation			
European Union	13 June 2017	28 June 2023	1 October 2023

* Withdrawn with effect from 1 July 2021.

Appendix 5 – list of GREVIO members

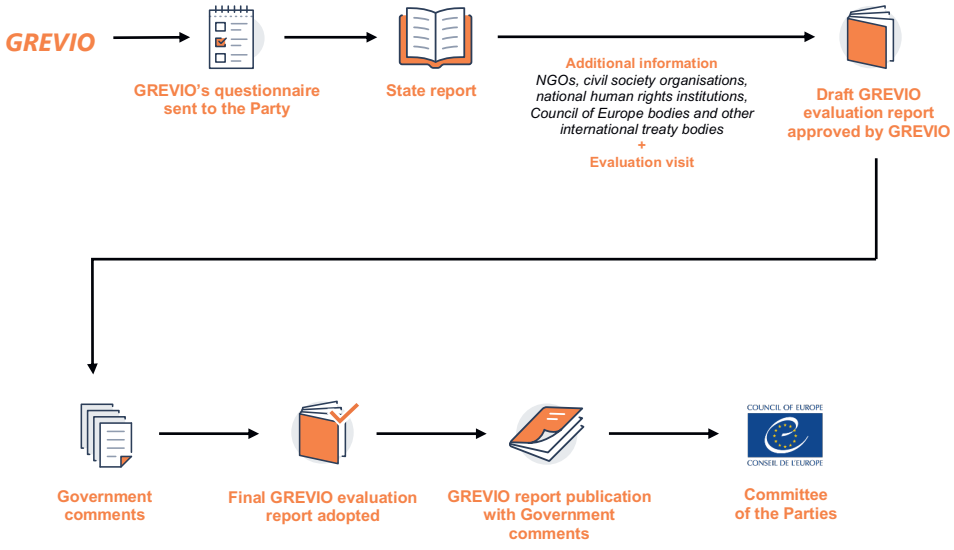
Member	Nominated by	Title	From	To
Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou	Greece	President (re-elected member)	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Angelina Zaporojan-Pirgari	Republic of Moldova	First Vice-President	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Aleid van den Brink	Netherlands	Second Vice-President	1 September 2022	31 August 2026
Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop	Ireland	Second Vice-President	1 September 2022	31 August 2026
Laura Albu	Romania	Member	1 September 2022	31 August 2026
Guillaume Barbe	France	Member	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
María Rún Bjarnadóttir	Iceland	Member (re-elected)	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Pascale Florence Egida Emilia Franck	Belgium	Member	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Päivi Hirvelä	Finland	Member	1 September 2022	31 August 2026
Marie-Claude Hofner	Switzerland	Member (re-elected)	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Ivo Holc	Slovenia	Member (re-elected)	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Olena Kharytonova	Ukraine	Member	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Helmut Tichy	Austria	Member	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Pille Tsopp-Pagan	Estonia	Member	1 June 2023	31 May 2027
Grzegorz Wrona	Poland	Member	1 September 2022	31 August 2026



Appendix 6 – GREVIO's secretariat (from january to december 2025)

- Johanna Nelles, Executive Secretary
- Francesca Montagna, Senior Legal Adviser
- Francoise Kempf, Senior Legal Adviser
- Elif Sariaydin, Legal Adviser
- Sabrina Wittmann, Legal Adviser (maternity leave from 1 June 2025)
- Mihail Stojanoski, Legal Adviser
- Severina Spassova, Legal Adviser
- Vera Fonseca, Legal Adviser (since 1 December 2025)
- Ivo Gruev, Legal Adviser (since 1 June 2025)
- Gaia Grippa, Project Officer (from 1 June 2025 until 31 December 2025)
- Vedrana Lacmanovic, Project Officer (from 1 August until 31 December 2025)
- Christine Ebel, Principal Administrative Assistant
- Ioana Voelkel, Principal Administrative Assistant
- Joanna Szelezniak, Administrative Assistant
- Zsuzsanna Molnar, Administrative Assistant
- Danilo Leal, Administrative Assistant
- Idil Igdir, Trainee (from 1 March to 31 July 2025)
- Daphne Best, Trainee (from 6 October 2025)

Appendix 7 – workflow of the monitoring mechanism



GREVIO is the independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) by the parties, made up of 15 independent experts. It draws up and publishes reports evaluating legislative and other measures taken by the parties to give effect to the provisions of the convention. In cases where action is required to prevent a serious, massive or persistent pattern of any acts of violence covered by the convention, GREVIO may initiate a special inquiry procedure. GREVIO may also adopt, where appropriate, general recommendations on themes and concepts of the convention.

PREMS 151826

ENG

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE