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**COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES
COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON PREVENTING
AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
(ISTANBUL CONVENTION)**

Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties

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The Committee of the Parties,

Having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210) (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”),

Pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article 67 of the Convention,

Adopts the present rules:

Rule 1 – Functions

1. Election of members of GREVIO

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 67 of the Convention, the Committee of the Parties (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) shall elect the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “GREVIO”) in accordance with the rules on the election procedure of the members of GREVIO adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.*

2. Adoption of recommendations

- a. Pursuant to paragraph 12 of Article 68 of the Convention, without prejudice to the evaluation procedure described in paragraphs 1 to 8 of the same Article, the Committee may adopt, on the basis of the report and conclusions of GREVIO, recommendations addressed to the Party concerned (a) as regards the measures to be taken by that Party to implement the conclusions of GREVIO, and (b) aiming at promoting co-operation with that Party for the proper implementation of the Convention.
- b. The Committee shall supervise the implementation of its recommendations addressed to the Party concerned.
- c. Where appropriate, the Committee may forward a communication, including its recommendations addressed to the Party concerned together with any other related material, to the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

3. Examination of the findings of special inquiries

- a. Whenever GREVIO transmits to the Committee the findings of a special inquiry pursuant to paragraph 15 of Article 68 of the Convention, the Committee shall examine these findings at the earliest opportunity and consider taking any necessary measures pursuant to these findings.
- b. Where appropriate, the Committee may invite the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to take action within their statutory powers.

Rule 2 – Composition

1. Members

- a. Pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 67 of the Convention, members of the Committee shall be the representatives of the Parties to the Convention.

* At the time of adoption of the present rules, the election procedure is described in the Resolution CM/Res(2014)43 on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 19 November 2014 at the 1212th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.

- b. Parties to the Convention shall endeavour to nominate, as their representatives, experts of the highest possible rank in the field of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and with knowledge of the Convention.
- c. Where a Party designates more than one representative, only one of them shall have the right to vote and defrayal of expenses. Where necessary, the Party which holds the Chairmanship of the Committee may appoint a second representative with the right to the defrayal of expenses.
- d. The Parties shall promptly notify the Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as "the Executive Secretary") of any change in the nomination of their representative(s).

2. Participants

- a. The following may appoint representatives to participate in the meetings of the Committee without the right to vote:
 - i) the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
 - ii) the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
 - iii) the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
 - iv) the European Court of Human Rights;
 - v) the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
 - vi) the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe;
 - vii) any other Council of Europe body invited to do so by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe after consulting the Committee.

Where applicable, the defrayal of expenses of these participants shall be governed by the rules or terms of reference of the institutions and bodies listed above.

- b. The following may appoint representatives to participate in the meetings of the Committee without the right to vote or the defrayal of expenses:
 - i) States which have signed but not yet ratified the Convention;
 - ii) States which have ratified or acceded to the Convention but for which it has not yet entered into force;
 - iii) States invited to accede to the Convention;
 - iv) the European Union.

3. Observers

- a. The Committee may authorise States other than those mentioned in Rule 2 of the present rules to send representatives as observers to its meetings on an ad hoc basis.
- b. The Committee may authorise intergovernmental organisations to send representatives as observers to its meetings on an ad hoc basis, in particular:
 - i) the United Nations;
 - ii) the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
 - iii) the International Organisation for Migration (IOM);
 - iv) the Organisation of American States (OAS);
 - v) other intergovernmental organisations and any other entity authorised to participate in meetings of steering and ad hoc committees by virtue of a resolution or decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.
- c. The Committee may authorise representatives of civil society, in particular non-governmental organisations active in combating violence against women and domestic violence, to send representatives as observers to its meetings on an ad hoc basis.
- d. Observers shall have no right to vote or to the defrayal of expenses.

Rule 3 – Restricted composition

The Committee may decide to hold sessions in a more restricted composition than that outlined in Rule 2; however, it may not restrict the participation of members in any session.

Rule 4 – Chair and Vice-Chairs

1. The Committee shall elect a Chair and a first and second Vice-Chairs from among its members entitled to vote.
2. The term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be one year. It may be renewed once.
3. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall require a two-thirds majority at the first ballot and a simple majority at the second ballot.
4. The elections are held by secret ballot, unless the Committee decides otherwise by unanimity.
5. The Chair shall conduct proceedings and sum up the conclusions whenever she/he thinks necessary. She/he may call to order a speaker who departs from the subject under discussion or from the Committee's functions set out in Rule 1. The Chair shall retain the right to speak and to vote in her/his capacity as a member of the Committee, except in cases where at least one additional representative from the same Party has been appointed to sit on the Committee. The Chair shall perform all other functions conferred upon her/him by these Rules of Procedure or by the Committee.
6. The first Vice-Chair shall replace the Chair if the latter is absent or otherwise unable to preside over the meeting. If the first Vice-Chair is absent, the Chair shall be replaced by the second Vice-Chair or, in the absence of both Vice-Chairs, by a Committee member appointed by the Committee.
7. The Chair, Vice-Chairs or any other member carrying out the duty of chairing the meeting, shall be replaced in the Chair during the discussion and adoption of decisions under Rule 1, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the present rules concerning the Party she/he is representing. As from the second meeting of the Committee, the election of the members of GREVIO under Rule 1, paragraph 1, of the present rules shall not be chaired by a member representing a Party which nominated candidates for GREVIO membership.
8. The Chair and Vice-Chairs shall function as the Bureau of the Committee.

Rule 5 – Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Committee shall consist of the Executive Secretary and other necessary staff appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Rule 6 – Languages

1. The official languages of the Committee shall be those of the Council of Europe (English and French).
2. A Committee member may speak in a language other than the official languages, in which case she/he must herself/himself provide for interpretation into one of the official languages.
3. Any document written in a language other than the official languages shall be translated into one of the official languages, the member, participant or observer submitting it being responsible for making the necessary arrangements and covering the costs.

Rule 7 – Seat of the Committee

The Committee shall be convened at the premises of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

Rule 8 – Convening meetings

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 67 of the Convention, the Committee shall meet whenever one-third of the Parties, the Chair of the Committee of the Parties or the Secretary General of the Council of Europe so requests. It shall hold such meetings as are required for the exercise of its functions as set out in Rule 1.
2. The Executive Secretary shall notify the members of the Committee of the date and opening time of the meeting, its probable duration and the subjects to be dealt with, as well as any other practical modalities. Convocations shall be circulated, except on grounds of urgency which shall be duly explained, at least six weeks prior to the meeting.
3. Analogous arrangements shall apply to the participants and to observers when invited.

Rule 9 – Agenda

1. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Chair, shall draw up the draft agenda for a meeting.
2. The agenda shall be adopted by the Committee at the beginning of its meeting.

Rule 10 – Documents, lists of decisions and meeting reports

1. The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for preparing and distributing working documents for the Committee and shall bring to the Committee's attention any relevant communications containing information submitted for the Committee's consideration.
2. Documents requiring a decision shall be sent, in both official languages, to members at least three weeks before the opening of the meeting at which the decision is to be taken. In exceptional cases, the Committee may, if no member objects, consider a document submitted at a later stage. Documents shall be made public after the meeting of the Committee for which they were prepared, unless the Committee decides otherwise.
3. At the end of each meeting, the Executive Secretary shall submit to the Committee a draft list of decisions taken during the meeting for its approval. Unless the Committee decides otherwise, the approved list of decisions shall be made public.
4. As soon as possible after each meeting, the Executive Secretary shall submit to the Chair and the members of the Committee for their approval a draft meeting report, in both official languages, containing a summary of the Committee's deliberations. Meeting reports shall be made public shortly after approval. However, the Committee may decide not to make public any part of a meeting report related to a session conducted in accordance with Rule 3.

Rule 11 – Privacy of meetings

Meetings shall be held in camera, unless the Committee decides otherwise.

Rule 12 – Working methods

1. The Committee may appoint a rapporteur or set up a working party, or both.
2. The Committee may entrust a rapporteur or a limited number of its members with a specific task to be fulfilled by its next meeting.

3. The Committee may request, within the limits of budgetary appropriations, the Executive Secretary to have recourse to the service of one or more consultants.

Rule 13 – Hearings

The Chair or the Committee may decide to organise hearings with any person considered to be in a position to contribute to the work of the Committee, within the limits of resources available.

Rule 14 – Proposals

1. Any proposal must be submitted in writing in one of the official languages if a member so requests. In that case, it shall not be discussed until it has been circulated.
2. Proposals made by participants and observers may be put to a vote if sponsored by a member of the Committee.

Rule 15 – Quorum

There shall be a quorum if a majority of the members of the Committee are present.

Rule 16 – Order of voting on proposals or amendments

1. Where a number of proposals relate to the same subject, they shall be put to the vote in the order in which they were submitted. In case of doubt as to the order of priority, the Chair shall decide.
2. Where a proposal is the subject of an amendment, the amendment shall be put to the vote first. Where two or more amendments to the same proposal are presented, the Committee shall vote first on whichever departs furthest in substance from the original proposal. It shall then vote on the next furthest removed from the original proposal, and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote. However, where the acceptance of one amendment necessarily entails rejection of another, the latter shall not be put to the vote. The final vote shall then be taken on the proposal as amended or not amended. In case of doubt as to the order of priority, the Chair shall decide.
3. Parts of a proposal or amendment may be put to the vote separately.
4. In the case of proposals with financial implications, the most costly shall be put to the vote first.

Rule 17 – Points of order

During the discussion of any matter, a member of the Committee may at any time raise a point of order which shall immediately be decided upon by the Chair in accordance with these rules. Any appeal against the decision of the Chair shall immediately be put to a vote. A member may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Rule 18 – Order of procedural motions

Procedural motions shall take precedence over all other proposals or motions except points of order. They shall be put to the vote in the following order:

- a. suspension of the sitting;
- b. adjournment of discussion on the item in hand;
- c. postponement of a decision on the substance of a proposal until a specified date;
- d. closure of discussion on the item in hand.

Rule 19 – Reconsideration of a question

When a decision has been taken it may only be re-examined if a member of the Committee so requests, and if this request receives a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Rule 20 – Voting

1. Each member of the Committee shall have one vote. Where the delegation of a Party is composed of more than one representative, only one of them is entitled to take part in voting.
2. Voting requires a quorum.
3. The decisions of the Committee are taken by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
4. Procedural questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast.
5. If any question arises as to whether a matter is procedural or not, it shall not be treated as procedural unless the Committee so decides by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
6. For the purposes of these Rules, “votes cast” shall mean the votes of members cast for or against. Members abstaining shall be regarded as not having cast a vote.

Rule 21 – Specific rules for the election of GREVIO members

1. Rules 16, 19 and 20 of the present rules do not apply to the election of members of GREVIO.
2. The Committee shall examine the manner in which candidates for GREVIO membership are selected at national level, having due regard to the requirements set out in the rules on the election procedure of the members of GREVIO, in order to facilitate the exchange of information and good practices between the Parties and to improve national selection procedures.
3. Once a nomination has been submitted to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, it shall not be modified before consideration by the Committee. A partial or complete modification of the nomination of candidates for GREVIO membership by the Party concerned shall only be accepted by the Committee on an exceptional basis.
4. A Committee decision to request the withdrawal of one or more candidates who do not meet the requirements for membership of GREVIO as set out in Rules 2 to 5 of the rules on the election procedure of the members of GREVIO requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. For the purposes of the present Rule, “votes cast” shall mean the votes of members cast for or against. Members abstaining shall be regarded as not having cast a vote.
5. The Executive Secretary shall draw up an overview of the nominations of candidates for GREVIO membership and any member of GREVIO whose term of office will not end until after the term of office of the member to be elected begins.
6. Voting requires a quorum.
7. Where the delegation of a Party is composed of more than one representative, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.
8. The members of the Committee can only vote for one national of each Party and give only one vote to each candidate.
9. The Committee shall elect members of GREVIO in as many rounds as may be necessary to fill the seats of GREVIO. In each round, up to a maximum of three seats can be filled. The candidate(s) who has/have received the most votes, and at least a majority of the votes cast, shall be elected as member(s) of GREVIO. In each round, the number of votes of each member of the Committee shall be the same as the number of seats of GREVIO to be filled.

10. Should two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, resulting in more than the maximum number of candidates to be elected in any given round, the Committee shall proceed with a vote to elect one or more of these candidates as (a) member(s) of GREVIO.
11. Should the preceding paragraphs of this rule result in the election of two candidates or more who are nationals of the same Party, only the candidate with the highest number of votes shall be elected as a member of GREVIO.
12. After a vote has commenced, there shall be no interruption of the voting except on a point of order raised by a member in connection with the voting.
13. Procedural matters shall be settled by a majority of the votes cast. For the purpose of votes on procedural matters, "votes cast" shall mean the votes of members cast for or against. Members abstaining shall be regarded as not having cast a vote.

Rule 22 – Periodic meetings with the President of GREVIO

The Committee shall periodically meet with the President of GREVIO to be informed about the state of the work of GREVIO and progress in preparing its reports and conclusions concerning the measures taken by the Parties to implement the provisions of the Convention, as well as any other issue relating to the functioning of the monitoring mechanism of the Convention.

Rule 23 – Periodic reports to the Committee of Ministers

The Committee shall periodically inform the Committee of Ministers on the state of its work.

Rule 24 – Suspension of a Rule

Upon the proposal of a Committee member, the application of a Rule may be suspended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, subject to the Statute of the Council of Europe and the provisions and spirit of the Convention. The suspension of a rule shall be limited to its operation to the particular purpose for which such suspension has been sought.

Rule 25 – Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

The Committee may amend these Rules of Procedure by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Rule 26 – Entry into force of the Rules of Procedure

These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force upon their adoption.