

**Raising awareness to prevent
violence against women
and domestic violence**

Council of Europe Istanbul Convention's Contribution to

UN Sustainable Development

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

A Side Event to mark the 25 November,
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
and the 60th anniversary of the Membership of Albania to the United Nations
co-organised by the Council of Europe
and the Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations.

Venue: Trusteeship Council Chamber
Conference Building, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Date: Wednesday, 25 November 2015
Time: 1.15 – 2.30 pm

Violence against women is one of the most flagrant violations of human rights; an issue which concerns all countries in the world. It touches women from all walks of life, irrespective of cultural, religious, economic, social or geographical backgrounds. It happens everywhere: in the “safety” of their own homes, at work, on the streets and in the media, among others. Every day, women are stalked, harassed, raped, mutilated, forced by their family to enter into a marriage, sterilised against their will or psychologically and physically abused. The examples of violence against women are endless, its victims countless. Many women are too afraid or ashamed to seek help, often paying for their silence with their lives. Those that do speak out are not always heard. With the adoption of the Istanbul Convention in 2011 and its entry into force on 1 August 2014, the 47 member States of the Council of Europe made an important step towards the recognition of their responsibilities in addressing this concern.

The Side Event will present the added value of the Istanbul Convention in the framework of international and regional legally-binding treaties. It will also highlight its significance as an efficient and practical tool for governments to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence in Europe and beyond.

Speakers:

- Marja Ruotanen, Director of Human Dignity and Equality, **Council of Europe**
- Iris Luarasi, GREVIO Member, Director Counseling Line for Men and Boys, **Republic of Albania**
- Liesl Gerntholtz, Executive Director, Women's Rights Division, **Human Rights Watch**
- Riet Groenen, Chief, Ending Violence Against Women Section of **UN Women**

- **Moderator:** Liri Kopaçi-Di Michele, Head of Equality Division, Council of Europe



Council of Europe Istanbul Convention

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (Istanbul Convention) entered into force on 1 August 2014. The Convention has become a global reference to combat gender based violence and has received two prestigious awards.

It breaks new ground by requesting states to criminalise the various forms of violence against women, including physical, sexual and psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation.

Building on the jurisprudence of the European and Inter-American Courts of Human Rights, the Istanbul Convention integrates the “*due diligence*” standard and defines it as the obligation of states to “*prevent, investigate, punish and provide reparation for acts of violence perpetrated by non-state actors*”. Of particular relevance in the international context, the Istanbul Convention explicitly states that it shall apply in times of peace and in situations of armed conflict.

The side event will also present three papers on prevention of violence against women as tools for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Each of the papers is designed as an easy to use, ‘how to’ dedicated to a specific article of the Convention. They include a detailed description of the nature of the obligations contained in the respective article, good practice examples, and information on state-of-the-art research and resources for the implementation of the provisions, with particular focus on raising awareness, preventing violence against women and working with perpetrators.

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VIOLENCE

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