



# The Istanbul Convention

Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

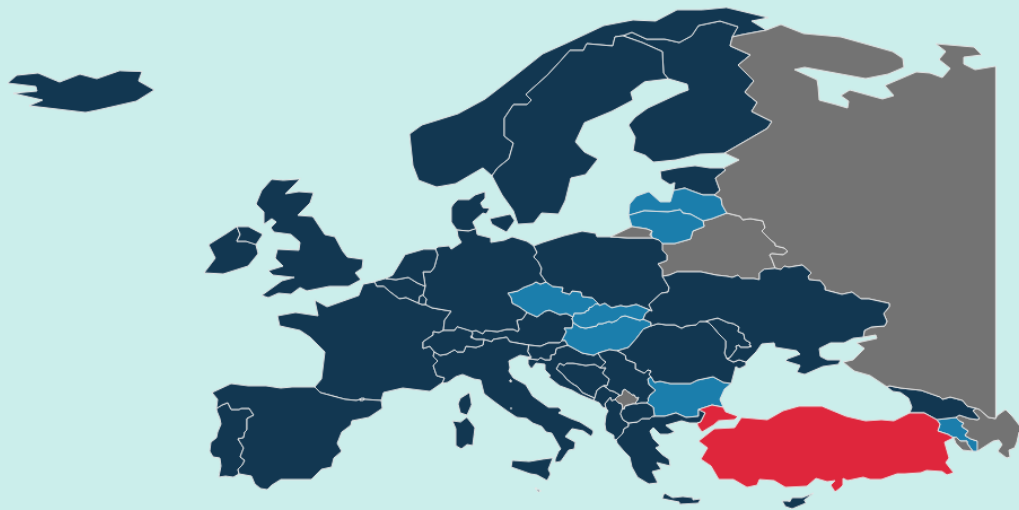
COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# Signature and ratification

The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on violence against women



● Ratified/In force ● Signed but not ratified ● Not signed ● Withdrawn

\*The EU as a whole signed the convention on 13/06/2017, but has not yet ratified it; source = [Council of Europe](#) (last updated 22/07/22)



- The European Union has also signed it but not ratified it

# State of ratifications

- ratified by 37 member states of the Council of Europe, of which Moldova, Ukraine and the United Kingdom in 2022
- several CoE member-states have signed but not ratified
- three non-member states invited to accede at their request: Israel, Kazakhstan and Tunisia. No non-CoE states have acceded as of yet

# Aims and scope of application

- ❖ **Purposes, Article 1:** to protect women from all forms of violence, prevent and prosecute such violence and thereby contribute to the elimination of discrimination against women
- ❖ **Scope, Article 2:** all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, “encouragement” to apply standards to all victims but no legal obligation under international law
- ❖ **Definitions, Article 3:** VAW, DV, gender, gender-based violence against women, victim...
- ❖ **Criminalisation** of psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence/rape, stalking, forced marriage, FGM, sexual harassment, forced abortion and forced sterilisation



# The content of the Convention: An approach based on “4 Ps”



## Prevention

Preventive measures aiming at changing attitudes and gender roles: campaigns, education, training of professionals, data collection (Chapter 3)

## Protection

The general obligation to protect victims from further violence and to set up support services for them and their children: counseling, psychological support, shelters, national helpline (Chapter 4)

## Istanbul Convention

## Prosecution

The existence of procedures and legislation ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators: criminal offences, appropriate sanctions, swift investigations, risk assessment, protection orders (chapters 5 and 6)

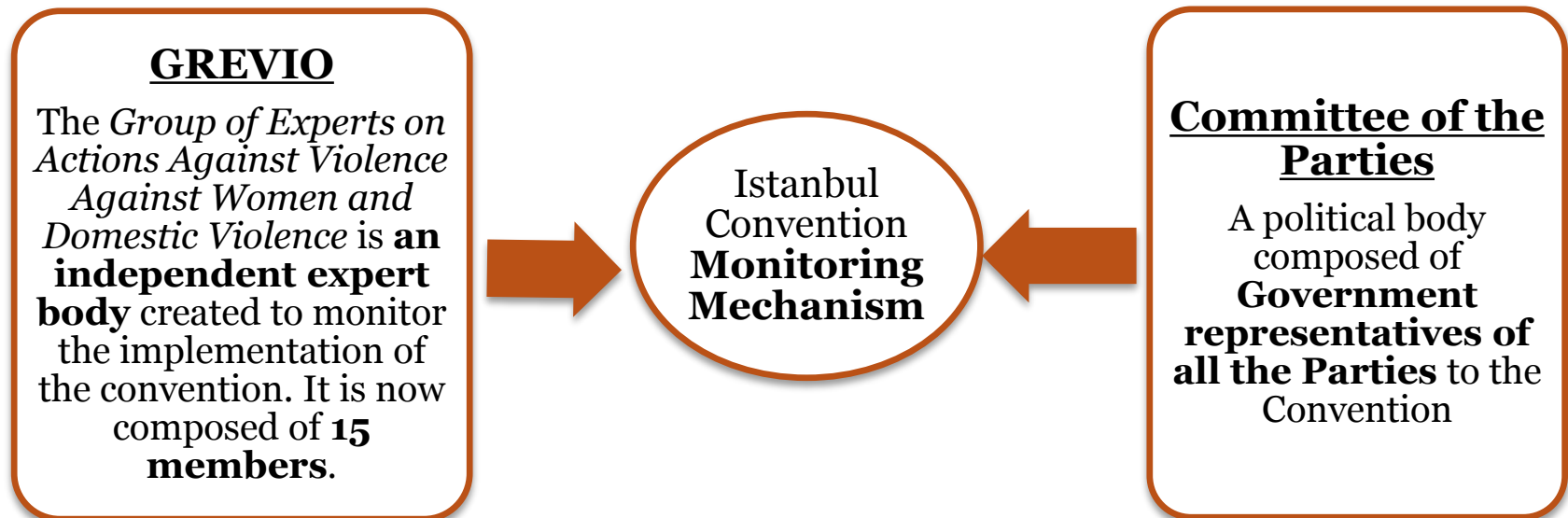
## Integrated Policies

Adoption of policies enabling that all the above measures become part of a coordinated and holistic response to all forms of VAW and domestic violence (chapter 2)

# The Istanbul Convention monitoring mechanism: a two-pillar system

The monitoring mechanism seeks to assess and improve the implementation of the Convention by State parties

A two-pillar system → it consists of two distinct but interacting bodies



# The Istanbul Convention monitoring mechanism: a two-pillar system (2)

## GREVIO:

- **monitors the implementation** of the Convention **on a country-by-country basis using a timetable**
- may adopt appropriate, **general recommendations**
- may open a **special inquiry procedure**



## Committee of the Parties:

- **follows up on GREVIO reports/findings, adopts recommendations to Parties** concerned and supervises their implementation
- it is responsible for the **election of GREVIO members**
- The recommendations are to be implemented by the state parties **ASAP**

# How it works in practice (Article 68)

1. **Questionnaire** is addressed to state party by GREVIO (through the Secretariat)



2. State report is received



3. A GREVIO (incl. secretariat and experts) **visit** is organised to the State party



4. A **draft report** is prepared, then sent to the Government for comments



5. A **final report** is adopted, sent to the Government, to the Committee of the Parties and published online



6. The Committee of the Parties adopts **recommendations** to rectify the shortcomings and gives a deadline to the State party to report (3 years)





## How it works in practice (part 2)

Special inquiry procedure: GREVIO can request a **special report** concerning measures taken to prevent a **serious, massive or persistent** pattern of violence against women.



GREVIO may designate one or more of its members to conduct an **inquiry** and to report urgently to GREVIO. Where warranted and with the consent of the Party, the inquiry may include a visit to its territory.



GREVIO shall transmit these findings to the Party concerned and, where appropriate, to the Committee of the Parties together with any comments and recommendations.

# Challenges for the IC:

As any other international law instrument, the IC relies on compliance by State parties – there is no enforcement mechanism. Political pressure by peers in the CoP helps.

Backlash against the Istanbul Convention has created lots of false narratives

- Part of democratic backsliding and post-truth as broader phenomena

Serious barriers to support services for women facing intersectional discrimination:

- Women with disabilities
- Women with a refugee / migration background
- National minorities
- Women in prostitution
- women in addiction
- general lack of specialist support services in terms of numbers and geographic distribution



## Role of NGOs (general)

NGOs are major partners in the implementation of the IC - state parties have a legal obligation to recognise, encourage and support their work and to establish effective co-operation with them (Article 9).

Submitting information to GREVIO is possible **by any NGO, at any point in the evaluation process**, using the Secretariat's dedicated email address ([conventionviolence@coe.int](mailto:conventionviolence@coe.int)) or the online information submission form (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/form>), in English or French

Any and all information submitted to GREVIO (electronically or during a visit) by An NGO is treated as **confidential** (the source will not be revealed)



# Role of NGOs in practice:

## Submitting information or shadow reports:

- Follow the [evaluation calendar](#) on GREVIO's website to spot the window when information is most useful – next are Moldova, Greece, Ireland...
- Information or shadow reports don't have to be comprehensive – a detailed report on only one Article of the IC (ex. perpetrator programmes, stalking...) or focusing on a specific phenomenon (ex. underreporting of GBV) is **very helpful**
  - Depending on the speciality of the NGO
  - Use an existing network of specialised NGOs to submit a comprehensive report

## During a visit:

- GREVIO announces its visit to a state party to relevant NGOs and invites them for a meeting – information can be collected by the delegation at the meeting
- Written comments vs. attending the meeting – pros and cons
- GREVIO might ask for help from an NGO during a visit – for ex. to organise a visit to a shelter

# Points to take away

- The Istanbul Convention is an important tool to ensure a comprehensive response to all forms of violence against women and domestic violence because it calls for:

- Concrete **changes in the legal framework** and policies;  
- Effective **law-enforcement and judicial responses** to all forms of violence against women;

- Independent external evaluation by GREVIO and the CoP leads to concrete recommendations

- NGOs have an important role – they provide the response to the Governments' claims and inform GREVIO about the implementation of any measures in practice

- Communicate to us any relevant information at any point in an evaluation – via the online form

(<https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/form>) or via email ([conventionviolence@coe.int](mailto:conventionviolence@coe.int)).



# Mihail Stojanoski, Lawyer/Administrator

Violence against Women Division  
Secretariat of the Istanbul Convention monitoring mechanism  
Council of Europe

<http://www.coe.int/web/istanbul-convention>

conventionviolence@coe.int

mihail.stojanoski@coe.int

Twitter: @CoE\_endVAW



## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

#IstanbulConventionSavesLives



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE