

**Group of Experts on Action against Violence
against Women and Domestic Violence
(GREVIO)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Comments submitted by Albania
on GREVIO's first thematic evaluation:**

**Building trust by delivering support, protection and
justice**

Received by GREVIO on 17 September 2024

GREVIO/Inf(2024)10

Published on 17 September 2024

COMMENTS OF ALBANIA ON GREVIO'S FINAL REPORT ON THE FIRST THEMATIC
EVALUATION REPORT "BUILDING TRUST BY PROVIDING SUPPORT, PROTECTION,
AND JUSTICE"

TIRANA, September 2024

Executive Summary

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) has been part of the Albanian legal system since August 1, 2014. The process began with the signing of the Convention on December 19, 2011, and its ratification on February 4, 2013, making Albania the second member state of the Council of Europe to ratify the Convention without any reservations.

The first thematic evaluation procedure was initiated by GREVIO in accordance with Article 68 of the convention with a letter and transmission of the first thematic questionnaire of GREVIO on January 16, 2023. Albanian authorities submitted their state report on June 30, 2023 – the deadline set by GREVIO. After a preliminary review of Albania's state report, GREVIO conducted an evaluation visit to Albania from October 2 to 6, 2023. During the evaluation visit, the delegation met with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental representatives working in the field of preventing and combating violence against women.

The initial version of the report was approved by GREVIO and submitted to the Albanian authorities for comments. On May 27, 2024, the Albanian state submitted comments and updates on major legal developments and measures taken following GREVIO's evaluation visit. Based on final report prepared by GREVIO and prior to its publication, Albanian authorities submitted additional comments to GREVIO on September 2024.

Albanian authorities remain highly committed to guaranteeing and ensuring the respect of women's rights as human rights and, consequently, to undertake all necessary legislative measures to bring Albanian legislation fully in line with international standards in general and the Convention in particular. Albanian authorities are aware of the four levels of urgency identified by GREVIO's observations and the need for a prioritized and timely implemented approach.

This document contains comments on GREVIO's final report on the first thematic report for Albania, titled "Building Trust by Providing Support, Protection, and Justice," aiming to identify and describe the measures and actions taken and/or planned by Albanian authorities to effectively and timely implement important aspects of the Convention and GREVIO's recommendations. Albanian authorities remain committed to continuing to fulfill the obligations arising from the Istanbul Convention and other international human rights treaties.

II. Changes in definitions, comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence

D. Data collection (Article 11)

30. INSTAT, the national statistics agency, being the main stakeholder in the field of data collection in Albania, has also undergone reforms in the period under review. The police, judiciary, prisons and other bodies submit regular reports to INSTAT, which compiles and disaggregates the data for publication in the form of annual reports.¹ GREVIO notes that although comprehensive, INSTAT's reports on violence against women do not contain data on the type and length of sentences given for offences of domestic violence or other forms of violence against women. **Data on the types of sentences (but not their length) are collected by the Ministry of Justice and published in their annual yearbooks, but it appears that they are not communicated to INSTAT.**²

Regarding the last sentence, the albanian aothorities tend to bring to GREVIO's attention that Ministry of Justice sent to INSTAT the data as soon as the statistical yearbook of MoJ is published. Therefore, the data for the year 2022 were sent on April 15 and the Ministry of Justice is in the process for publishing the data for year 2023.

33. **As regards data on gender-based killings, this is currently collected annually by the Ministry of Justice, albeit not broken down by sex.** GREVIO notes with interest the plans to create an observatory on femicides, a project originating from the office of the People's Advocate (the Ombudsperson) which is expected to improve data collection by creating a central point of reference for the issue of femicide in Albania.

Regarding the collection of data prescribed on this paragraph, the albanian authorities clarify that the data collected by the ministry of Justice on this field are dissagregated by sex.

III. Analysis on the implementation of selected provisions in priority areas in the fields of prevention, protection and prosecution

A. Prevention

1. General obligations (Article 12)

45. Since the baseline evaluation report, little progress has been made to scale up the authorities' efforts in challenging social norms, attitudes and gender stereotypes by undertaking both general and targeted measures to raise awareness about gender-based violence. The efforts during the 16Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, as well as limited campaigns initiated and fully funded by external donors have limited reach. Therefore, a national, long-term campaign targeting domestic violence and other forms of violence against women remains a necessity.⁴¹

¹. Many of the reports are also available in English. See www.instat.gov.al/en/.

². The yearbooks are published online. The yearbook for 2021, for example, is available at the following link: www.drejtesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/REPUBLIKA-E-SHQIP%C3%8BRIS%C3%8B-Vjetari-Statistikor-2021-pdf.pdf.

Furthermore, an evident need remains to reach women and girls exposed to or at risk of intersectional discrimination. Apart from a limited effort on behalf of the Municipality of Tirana to reach out to women with disabilities, no information about other outreach or campaign efforts to reach these groups on the part of the authorities reached GREVIO.⁴² Specific campaigns and primary prevention activities for and with Roma and Egyptian women or initiatives at educational institutions, the armed forces, police forces or similar, are lacking.⁴³ The limited campaigns led by civil society and some municipalities⁴⁴ cannot substitute the wide-ranging effect which a nation-wide concerted effort led by the authorities can have in addressing the root causes of violence against women.

Regarding the evaluation by the GREVIO expert group, Albanian authorities wish to bring to GREVIO's attention that the State Police, as one of the main responsible institutions and part of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism for cases of domestic violence, has joined activities organized by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and various organizations operating in this field for the prevention and protection of domestic violence victims. Additionally, every year an order from the General Director of Police is prepared and sent to local directorates titled "On taking measures in the framework of the awareness campaign against domestic violence from November 25 to December 10," based on which local police directorates have planned programs and participated in awareness activities on domestic violence and gender-based violence and held meetings in schools with different target groups. Furthermore, the State Police has participated in several television shows on local and national TV channels, given support messages, and shared good practices on the State Police's social networks. These campaigns aimed to:

- Show that violence against girls and women is a crime and unacceptable;
- Increase knowledge about the role of the police in this process;
- Provide accurate information to the public on where to turn and what to do in cases of violence.

Moreover, one of the initiatives taken by the State Police is Community Policing through youth education. The creation of the specific role of Community Policing Specialist/Assistant Specialist for Youth Education and Work in all police directorates has significantly improved the implementation of awareness campaigns by the State Police. These specialists, in addition to planning awareness and educational campaigns in schools and with youth, developing lesson themes with students (related to education on traffic rules, the negative effects of smoking, alcohol, drugs, prevention of radicalism and violent extremism, addressing other security issues), collaborate with youth organizations, teachers, psychologists, and school security officers to identify, address, and resolve together issues of bullying, crime, domestic violence, law violations to prevent youth involvement in criminal activities and improve security standards in educational institutions and the community. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ombudsman, the State Police has a pact on "Safe Children on the Internet," under which periodic awareness meetings are held in schools where children receive information and knowledge about internet use and related risks. Within this pact, awareness-raising meetings have been held with schools, and leaflets have been distributed advising on safety measures regarding social networks.

Furthermore, within the “Youth Safety” program/pact that the State Police has with the Ministry of Education, the topics developed in public and non-public schools include:

- Against violence in schools and trafficking;
- Against bullying and cyberbullying.

In a school year, this program is implemented in about 1,296 schools, of which 1,192 are public schools and 106 are non-public schools, benefiting approximately 25,800 students.³

Albanian authorities also clarify that the main campaigns during the 16 days of activism, as well as other awareness campaigns for violence against women, are implemented within the framework of cooperation programs between UN agencies and other international organizations, based on agreements to which the Albanian Government is a party. These campaigns, in recent years, have been quite innovative and have had a wide reach throughout the country, targeting a considerable number of individuals, especially young people, thanks to the wide use of media and social networks. The increase in the number of cases of reporting violence has also come thanks to these campaigns. Also, the Albanian authorities clarify that the main campaigns during the 16 days of activism as well as other awareness campaigns for violence against women are implemented within the framework of cooperation programs implemented in cooperation between UN agencies and other international organizations, based on agreements, in which the Albanian Government is a party. These campaigns, in recent years, have been quite innovative and have had a wide reach throughout the country, targeting a considerable number of individuals, especially young people, thanks to the wide use of media and social networks. The increase in the number of cases of reporting violence has also come thanks to these campaigns.

Lastly, it is important to highlight that only during November 2022/2023, *more than 150 activities were held throughout Albania with a focus on raising awareness of women and girls on measures against violence*. Also, during 2022, a special attention was given to youth in the framework of the program Tirana European Youth Capital aiming to include more young boys and girls in the debate about gender based domestic violence

3. Training of professionals (Article 15).

62. As regards training levels of law enforcement officers, GREVO notes that the teaching plan adopted by the Police (Security) Academy for the period 2017-2020 included mandatory initial training on investigation of cases of domestic violence, including a separate course concerning child victims. Training on sexual harassment, sexual violence and co-operation with the CRM, however, are made available as in-service training only and remain voluntary. While many in-service training modules are on offer and seem widely attended, GREVO notes their voluntary nature. **It considers it vital to ensure the same type of diversified training in a mandatory manner, including in particular training on non-fatal strangulation but also on trauma-informed police responses.** GREVO received information that the digital aspects of domestic

³ According to official data from 2022.

violence and violence against women are not treated in an integrated fashion with their non-digital counterparts.⁵⁹ GREVIO notes that this may be one of the causes for the subsequent lack of integration of the work of the cybercrime unit and the remainder of the police observed in practice.⁶⁰

Regarding the finding mentioned above, Albanian authorities clarify that the Security Academy consists of two main units:

1. The Professional College of Police Education, which is responsible for the schooling, training, and specialization of implementation-level employees. This college also conducts specialized training and career advancement for the implementation level.
2. The Faculty of Security and Investigation, which prepares specialists for managerial and leadership levels in “Bachelor” and “Master” level programs and career advancement.

Gender-based violence is a concerning issue today, constituting a violation of human rights and leading to long-term consequences in the community. Because the State Police is the first point of contact with victims of gender-based violence and there is a continuous need to implement effective methods to prevent this phenomenon, the Security Academy has included gender-based violence issues in its curricula. Below is a detailed but not exhaustive presentation of the curriculum on gender-based violence issues in the Security Academy for its two main units.

Based on the study program for basic police education “General Patrol,” the module of general policing is approved by the Order of the Director/Rector of the Security Academy No. 90, dated 08.03.2021, “On approving the revised curriculum of studies for basic police education for ‘General Patrol,’ the module of general policing,” with the students of the Professional College of Police Education developing teaching topics on gender equality, domestic violence, and discrimination as follows:

1. Gender equality is addressed in teaching topics such as:
 - Teaching topic #04 - Principles and procedures in the State Police;
 - Teaching topic #08 - Human rights and freedoms;
 - Teaching topic #10 - Hate crimes;
 - Teaching topic #12 - Attributes of the State Police;
2. Domestic violence is addressed in teaching topics such as:
 - Teaching topic #52 - Domestic violence;
 - Teaching topic #53 - Legal issues on domestic violence;
 - Teaching topic #54/A - Response to domestic violence;
 - Teaching topic #54/B - Domestic violence (practical);
3. Discrimination is addressed in teaching topics such as:
 - Teaching topic #08 - Human rights and freedoms;
 - Teaching topic #10 - Hate crimes;
 - Teaching topic #11 - Dealing with stress;
 - Teaching topic #13 - Community policing;

- Teaching topics #40/A and 40/B - Arrest and detention of minors/adults;
- Teaching topic #58 - Human trafficking.

In the Faculty of Security and Investigation, based on the “Bachelor” Study Program 2021-2024 approved in the Academic Senate of the Security Academy, the following courses are held:

1. The subject “Equality and Law,” taught over one semester, explains concretely:
 - Concepts of gender discrimination;
 - Gender stereotypes and prejudices;
 - Gender integration and justice;
 - Analyzes gender equality issues in the legal field;
 - Examines how legislation shapes traditional gender inequalities and sexuality;
 - Provides students with international norms and standards and advanced legislative models in the field of gender equality;
 - Addresses topics such as hate crimes, sexual harassment at work, gender equality in employment and education, etc. (Total 75 hours).
2. Domestic violence and sexual crimes are addressed as criminal offenses (with the elements of the criminal offense) in the course of “Criminal Law” (8 hours).
3. The victim as a subject in the criminal process, especially after the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code in 2017, is addressed in the course of “Criminal Procedure Law” (6 hours).
4. In the subject of Conflict Sociology, topics covered include:
 - Family conflicts;
 - Sources and factors that incite violent behavior in families;
 - Recommendations for efficient resolution of these conflicts.
5. Sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual sadists, and rapists are covered in the course of “Legal Psychology” (6 hours).
6. In the training program for career progression to the rank of Commissioner, the topic “Legal Issues - Gender Equality” is addressed (3 hours).

The Department of Continuous Professional Development offers other gender-based violence training sessions for ongoing training of State Police employees based on an annual training plan approved.

Under the General Directorate of State Police is the Directorate of Police Training and Planning, which annually prepares the “Mandatory In-Service Training” program, which includes topics on domestic violence, diversity, etc.

Additionally, specialized training has been continuously provided to understand and implement legal and sub-legal acts on domestic violence, professional and correct handling of domestic violence cases, coordinated response to violence not only by the relevant sector in the General Directorate of State Police but also by cooperating with national and international institutions and organizations operating in this field, including the Council of Europe, UNDP, OSCE, SIDA, etc.

63. As per information received from the Ministry of Justice, the topic of domestic violence is present in the mandatory curricula for initial training at the School of Magistrates with two classes in the fifth week, and sexual violence is taught as part of a broader course on criminal law. Although assigning domestic violence a separate place in the initial training course is commendable, GREVIO notes that none of the other types of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention appear to be covered in the initial training package.⁴ As regards in-service training, five days of training per year are mandatory for serving judges and prosecutors, but it appears that they are free to select and attend courses other than those concerning violence against women. Considering the extensive changes in the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations passed recently and the new instruments introduced (discussed under Articles 52, 53 and 56 below), GREVIO is concerned that this may be insufficient if any change in attitudes among serving professionals in the judiciary is to be expected.

With regard to this statement, Albanian authorities wish to bring to GREVIO's attention that regarding the Continuous Training Program, on May, 2024, was approved the 3 year thematic program for years 2024-2027, and was also approved the calendar of training activities for the next academic year 2024-2025. These documents present a new methodology of the School in the training offer, according to which, the training activities will be presented to the beneficiaries of the training in the form of modules. A module contains several topics, i.e., several days of training, where, an institute or an important case from practice will be elaborated in a chronological, integrated and almost final manner. In these modules is included the module of *gender based violence*, where are anticipated to be done trainings as follows:

- The access of women to justice, the rights of women, gender equality, avoiding gender stereotyping and the use of methods of interrogation with gender sensitivity. Domestic legislation and international standards in the ground of gender based violence and domestic violence. Obligations that derive from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) and of Grevio's General Recommendations and CEDAW for the system of justice. The application of provisions of the Istanbul Convention and interpretation of national legal provisions under its spirit and its specific features. The role of the psychologist and of the social worker in the framework of the civilian access in the organs of justice, as well as for the protection of the best interest of minors.
- Forms of gender – based violence. International provisions and ECtHR practice. Measures against gender based violence.
The application of the measure of the immediate removal of the abuser from residence (Law 125/2020), on the right protection of the survivors of gender based violence, of family violence and of harmful practices.

Gender based violence on women.

⁴. Information submitted by the Ministry of Justice.

Efficiency of the criminal pursuit in cases of gender based violence. Efficiency of the application of orders of protection and proceedings in the case of their violations.

- Problems in the judicial practice in relation to the declaration of the victims of violence because of not claiming criminal proceeding except for the issuing of the protection order and the approach of the proceeding organ. The obligation of the court to refer cases in the proceeding organ. The obligation of the court to refer cases to the proceeding body. protection of the gender based violence.
The effect of criminal proceedings in relation to domestic violence on the decision – making of the court for the dissolution of marriage and the exercise of parental responsibility after the dissolution of marriage.
- Application of prohibition by law of hate crimes and the language of hatred focused on LGBTIQ+.
- The efficiency of the criminal proceeding in cases of gender based violence. The efficiency of the implementation of protection orders and proceedings in the case of their violation.
- Domestic violence according to the Article 130/a of the Criminal Code. The amendments of the provision and the report with the law on domestic violence. Interpretation of terms “closes gender” and “close intermarriage”. Different judicial points regarding the circle of family members that are subject of the criminal offense of domestic violence. Interpretation of qualifying circumstance “more than once” and “in the presence of children” according to the fourth paragraph of the Article 130/a of the Criminal Code.
International anticipations and judicial practice.
- Digital violence – violations committed on the internet, such as the disclosure of private information and ‘cyberflashing’
General Recommendation no.1 of Grevio for the digital dimension of violence of women approved on 20 October, 2021.
EU Regulations on the war against the violence on women and domestic violence – cyber violence, the support for victims and steps to prevent raping.

Another module that will be elaborated regarding GRIEVO is “VICTIM AND THE MINOR IN THE CRIMINAL PROCESS” where are foreseen to be elaborated the following trainings:

- The meaning of the victim from the criminal offense. Legal persons and public organs in the quality of the victims from the criminal offense. The rights of the victim from the criminal offense, accusing victim. The exercise of the rights during the stages of the criminal process and consequences of their non-respect. Problems and judicial practice.
- The meaning of the “confident person”, the criteria of the evaluation of the suitability of the confident person, different legal anticipation and application in practice. Protection of confidentiality, Directive 2012/29 of the European Parliament and of the Council, date

25.10.2012, regarding the rights of the victim. Protection of the privacy of the victim of the criminal offense as an important instrument to prevent the second and the repeated victimization. The recording of the conversation with the victim through audiovisual tools and the possibility of its use as evidence in the criminal proceeding.

- Civil lawsuit in the criminal process. The term for the legitimating of the civil plaintiff. The assuring of the civil lawsuit in the criminal process according to the Article 63 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the difference with the assuring of the lawsuit according to the Article 202 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Resignation from the judgment of the civil lawsuit according to the anticipations of the Article 64 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and differences with the giving up from the Article 201 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Judicial practice regarding the application of the Article 64 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The effects of the decision of the stay of the case/innocence on the civil lawsuit in the criminal process.

It is estimated that this way provides more specialization for magistrates, help them be focused on the trainings they need to carry out, increases the efficiency of the School of Magistrates to identify focused groups for each training.

B. Protection and support

3. Specialist support services (Article 22)

108. Legal counselling services for victims of violence have been improved in the period under review by means of a new law introduced in 2017 on legal aid guaranteed by the state, which provides for the possibility of victims of domestic and sexual violence to benefit from free primary (counselling) and secondary (representation before a court) legal aid. The services are provided by municipal primary legal aid centres, higher education institutions and NGOs. Although the numbers of victims benefiting from legal aid are low compared to the number of reported cases of violence and the overall number of beneficiaries of legal aid,⁵ the numbers should increase over the years, especially if supported by appropriate funding and awareness-raising measures.

The albanian authorities thank GREVIO for this evaluation and wish to bring to their attention additional information. Over the years, the numbers victims of domestic and sexual violence that have benefited Free primary (counselling) and secondary (representation before a court) legal aid has been increased. Since the adoption of the Law nr.111/2017 “On Free Legal Aid guarantee by the state”, year 2018 and today the number of beneficiaries of primary and secondary legal aid has increased. This increase has also been evidenced in the special categories provided by the Law, such as victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual abuse and victims of trafficking. If for 2018, the beneficiaries for primary legal aid were 365, for 2023 there were 7008 and for secondary legal aid, the beneficiaries for 2018 were 0 and 44 beneficiaries for 2019, for 2023 there were 773 beneficiaries. For the year 2023, 1243 victims of domestic violence, 12 victims of sexual abuse

⁵. State report, page 47. For issues concerning the financing of NGOs providing legal aid to victims, see Article 8 of the Istanbul Convention, Financial resources.

and 93 victims of human trafficking have benefited (primary and secondary legal aid). In relation to the awareness campaigns held by the Free Legal Aid Directorate, 364 activities were carried out for the year 2023.

D. Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

1. General obligations, immediate response, prevention and protection (Articles 49 and 50)

138. A key principle of an adequate response to violence against women is that of swift and effective investigations and judicial proceedings that are based on a gendered understanding of these types of offences and that take into consideration the rights of the victim during all stages. Those in law-enforcement officials or the judiciary actors often do not prioritise incidents of violence against women and domestic violence, thereby contributing to the impunity of perpetrators and reinforcing the misconception that this type of violence is “acceptable” in society. A consequence of assigning low priority to incidents of violence against women and domestic violence are delays in initiating investigations and judicial processes, which in turn may lead to the loss of vital evidence and to an increased risk for the victim of repeated violence. For these reasons, Article 49 of the convention requires parties to ensure that investigations and judicial proceedings are conducted without undue delay, while at the same time respecting the rights of victims during each stage of these processes. Article 50 further reinforces these obligations by requiring that law-enforcement agencies react promptly and appropriately in cases of violence against women, including by offering victims immediate protection and by engaging in the prevention of violence. GREVIO reports focus on the application of Article 50 at key stages of the criminal justice process, notably reporting, investigation, prosecution and conviction, all of which are key contributors to victims’ sense of support, protection and justice.

Albanian authorities thank GREVIO for their evaluation and seek to bring to the attention of the group of experts that the State Police treats cases of domestic violence with priority, without delay, and focusing on the victim. Based on legal acts, the State Police completes within the specified deadlines the request for a Protection Order/Immediate Protection Order, which is sent to the District Court for review. The risk assessment report is attached in every case. According to the law, the request for a protection order can be submitted to the court of the victim's residence or location, as well as to the court of the perpetrator's residence or location.

In cases where the risk assessment shows that the life and health of the domestic violence victim or their family members are threatened, the officer handling the case completes and suggests to the structure head the issuance of the Immediate Preliminary Protection Measures Order (IPPMO), recommending one or more of the most effective protective measures provided in Article 13 of Law No. 9669 dated 18.12.2006 “On measures against violence in family relations,” as amended.

144. The barriers to reporting are even more pronounced when it comes to women victims faced with intersectional discrimination, in particular women of Roma and Egyptian origin, women with disabilities and women in closed institutions such as psychiatric hospitals. Victim-blaming attitudes are still widely present in law enforcement, especially in smaller towns outside of Tirana.

Cases of psychological violence alone are rarely deemed to require a response by law enforcement.⁶ Similarly, GREVIO has heard accounts of instances where police officers have attended a scene of domestic violence without conducting a risk assessment or having the perpetrator removed from the shared household, instead only warning them not to commit further violence.

Referring to this paragraph, the Albanian authorities bring to the attention of GREVIO that the operation of the 24/7 toll-free telephone line with the number 129 and 112 as well as the availability of the address policiaeshtetit@asp.gov.al where anyone who wants to report a crime can call illegal action, including cases of violence against women or in the family. The immediate reaction of the state police in these cases has strengthened the confidence of citizens and increased the number of calls from each category.

145. Moreover, there seems to be little oversight or accountability when the police fail to comply with their due diligence obligation to protect women victims and investigate violence against women and domestic violence.⁷ Urgent measures are necessary to improve women's trust in the system, including, but not limited to, ensuring that each and every complaint of domestic violence and violence against women is taken seriously, processed speedily and dealt with in a victim-sensitive manner. To do so would entail addressing the high rate of staff turnover among the police force, ensuring victims' access to trained female officers on a systematic basis and other more systematic measures to change the prevailing attitudes about gender-based violence among the police, improve retention of experienced police officers and encourage knowledge sharing inside the police force.

Regarding the finding mentioned in the paragraph above, Albanian authorities wish to bring to GREVIO's attention that in the General Directorate of the State Police, the Directorate of Professional Standards has been set up and operates, which is directly dependent on the General Directorate of the State Police. This directorate has the task of handling requests/complaints against police officers made by the community and persons deprived of their liberty in the premises of the State Police for violations of human rights, violence and other ill-treatment; conducts the administrative/disciplinary investigation process; issues responsibilities and gives disciplinary measures to responsible police officers up to their dismissal from the State Police. Also, the Ministry of the Interior has a Police Surveillance Agency which examines and verifies the complaints of different entities and in cases where it comes to the conclusion that the violations constitute a criminal offense, it refers the material for the initiation of criminal proceedings to the prosecutor's office. Likewise, the monitoring process is followed and implemented by civil society organizations with which the State Police has cooperation agreements, such as the Albanian Committee of Helsinki, the Center for Human Rights in Democracy, the Albanian Center for Trauma Rehabilitation, etc. These organizations have been given full access to enter and conduct

⁶. See the report by the Human Rights in Democracy Centre, page 11.

⁷. GREVIO was informed that data about police officers being sanctioned for failing in their duty of due diligence to protect victims or otherwise discharge their duties when it comes to reports of violence against women are not collected.

monitoring visits to the premises of the state police in order to closely verify the respect of human rights. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination exercises the same powers in external monitoring.

5. Measures of protection (Article 56)

192. Lastly, no information reached GREVIO about any measures introduced since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline report to address the specific needs of women victims faced with intersectional discrimination, such as rendering court houses and police stations accessible for victims with physical disabilities, providing interpretation for victims with hearing impairments or providing for specially adapted assistance for victims with intellectual disabilities.

Regarding the lack of information on measures presented by GREVIO's baseline report to address the specific needs of women victims facing discrimination, such as providing accessible facilities in courts or police stations for victims with disabilities, offering interpretation for victims with hearing impairments, or providing specially adapted assistance for victims with intellectual disabilities, Albanian authorities wish to inform GREVIO that the State Police has evaluated this problem and in the construction projects of new facilities, in the reconstructed facilities and in the occasional interventions with funds from the state budget, ramps for the disabled have been made available. In all newly built facilities, the guarantee of the necessary infrastructure for persons with limited abilities has been set as a condition. Almost all facilities of the state police structures are accessible to persons with limited abilities, except where due to the terrain it is not possible to create/equip with ramps (only in two Police Stations and 2 police stations of the State Police).