

# **Committee of the Parties**



Council of Europe Convention  
on preventing and combating violence  
against women and domestic violence  
(Istanbul Convention)

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## **Conclusions on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Serbia adopted by the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention**

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Adopted on 1 June 2023

Published on 2 June 2023

The Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”), acting under the terms of Article 68(12) of the Convention and Rule 1(2b) of the Committee of the Parties’ Rules of Procedure;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 66(1) of the Convention concerning the monitoring role of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “GREVIO”);

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by Serbia on 21 November 2013;

Having regard to the Baseline Evaluation Report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Serbia adopted by GREVIO at its 19<sup>th</sup> meeting (14-15 November 2019), as well as the comments of the Government received on 17 January 2020;

Having regard to the recommendation on the implementation of the Convention addressed to Serbia by the Committee of the Parties, published on 4 February 2020;

Bearing in mind the adoption, at its 9<sup>th</sup> meeting on 15 December 2020, of a reporting form which focuses on a maximum of ten areas of the Convention and which states are required to use to report back to the Committee of the Parties on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to their authorities;

Having examined the information provided by Serbia in the implementation of the recommendation addressed to its authorities, through the reporting form provided for that purpose, as well as the information submitted by non-governmental organisations and civil society;

A. Welcomes the measures taken and progress achieved by Serbia in the implementation of recommendations for the implementation of the Convention, noting in particular:

- the adoption of the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the Period 2021-2025 which foresees the criminalisation of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention and recognises the importance of adopting a holistic approach to preventing and combating violence against women;
- the full institutionalisation of the National Council on Gender Equality by allocating permanent financial and human resources to carry out its mandate as the co-ordination body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies including on violence against women;
- the setting-up of the Council for the Suppression of Domestic Violence to co-ordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies concerning domestic violence;
- the possibility of financing small-scale projects carried out by women’s rights organisations from the state budget;
- the positive steps taken by the Ministry of Justice to collect additional data on domestic violence, including the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;
- the two surveys carried out by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, in co-operation with Eurostat: “Woman victims of violence from the point of view of statistics” and “Quality of life and safety of women”, to establish the prevalence of certain forms of violence against women.

B. Encourages the Government of Serbia to take further measures to implement the recommendations addressed to its authorities, in particular by:

1. ensuring the independent monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women;

2. identifying and expanding the human and financial resources allocated at both state and local levels for the implementation of policies, measures and legislation to prevent and combat violence against women; and providing stable and sustainable funding levels for women's NGOs that support victims of violence against women;
  3. ensuring that all sectors of the administration, including law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, social services and the health sector collect at regular intervals data disaggregated, at a minimum, by sex, age, type of violence, type of relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, the age of the victim and the place where the violence took place, so that the prevalence of violence against women and women's experiences can emerge and inform policy-making;
  4. setting up rape crisis and/or sexual violence referral centres offering free of charge support services and professional forensic examinations to victims of sexual violence;
  5. ensuring the safety of children witnesses of domestic violence by improving their access to support services, including long-term psychological support, and by allowing them to remain with the non-abusive parent, preferably in their own home;
  6. ensuring that courts are under the obligation to consider the detrimental effects on children of witnessing domestic violence when deciding on custody and visitation rights, and upholding the safety and well-being of children in the exercise of parental responsibilities;
  7. amending the definition of rape and sexual violence to align it with the requirements of Article 36 of the Convention.
- C. Invites the Government of Serbia to report back on these measures by 2 June 2025.
- D. Invites the Government of Serbia to continue taking measures to implement the Convention, particularly on the basis of the conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report.