

# EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S WORK UNDER THE SUB-PROGRAMME "VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE" 2016-2020

Management response & Action Plan



<b>Name of Evaluation Report:</b>	<b>Evaluation of the Council of Europe’s work under the sub-programme “Violence against women and domestic violence” 2016-2020</b>		
<b>Date of Evaluation Report:</b>	<b>18 March 2022</b>	<b>Date of the Action Plan:</b>	<b>12 May 2022</b>

**Overall management response to the evaluation:**

The Council of Europe’s work under the sub-programme “Violence against women and domestic violence” (2016-2020) encapsulates all Council of Europe work on the issue of violence against women and domestic violence, ranging from standard setting around the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), the monitoring of States’ obligations as regards violence against women and domestic violence, and co-operation work with public authorities and civil society actors towards the implementation of the relevant standards. As the present evaluation sets out, the overall relevance of this work is high. GREVIO, the Convention’s monitoring body, has gained very high recognition and faces growing demand. Despite the fact that consensus about the Istanbul Convention, and more generally about the need and ways to address violence against women and domestic violence, has faced growing challenges and counter-rhetoric, changes have been triggered, in part thanks to enhanced co-operation activities and co-ordination between all Council of Europe stakeholders concerned, notably the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Commissioner for Human Rights (CommHR). In line with the Commissioner’s mandate and independent status, the Commissioner considers the issue of violence against women and in particular the promotion of the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention as a priority area of work. This includes, in particular, promoting the Istanbul Convention, its ratification and adequate implementation, and ensuring continuous monitoring in this field.

The Secretariat recognises the utility of the recommendations issued as a result of the present evaluation with a view to further enhancing the Organisation’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact in this essential field. All have been either accepted or are under active consideration by management. The actions envisaged for their implementation are set out in the Action Plan below.

## ACTION PLAN

Management Decision <sup>1</sup>	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions <sup>2</sup> (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
<p><b>Recommendation 1: The various administrative entities should reinvigorate internal consultation and co-ordination mechanisms, including at the technical level and in all administrative entities, in order to bring together the actors for advancing ratification and standards (political dialogue, promotion of the Istanbul Convention, recommendations to ratify emitted by various Council of Europe bodies), monitoring and co-operation in this field. (high<sup>3</sup>)</b></p>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII in co-operation with PO and all relevant actors mentioned under “planned actions”)	Internal coordination is an integral part of the current working methods and has proven successful, particularly with PACE. To complement the existing practice, one formal annual internal cross-sectoral meeting to facilitate exchange and consultations among all the relevant Council of Europe actors (PO, DGI, DGII, the Office of the CommHR, the Secretariats of PACE and Congress, ODGP, DC) will be introduced. Specific ad hoc meetings will be organised whenever deemed necessary.	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance
<p><b>Recommendation 2: The secretariat of the Istanbul Convention should provide clearer information to the public about the links between GREVIO findings and Committee of the Parties recommendations and, more generally, about the Committee of the Parties’ role and function. (high)</b></p>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (GREVIO Secretariat)	<p>The information leaflet will be improved and the website on the Istanbul Convention monitoring mechanism will be further improved to reflect the interplay between the GREVIO findings and recommendations adopted by the Committee of the Parties and their supervision;</p> <p>The interplay between GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties will be clarified whenever the Istanbul Convention is presented to the public or discussed with the member states.</p>	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance

<sup>1</sup> The Management decision concerns the Recommendation (Accepted, Rejected, Under consideration).

<sup>2</sup> For implementing accepted recommendations.

<sup>3</sup> Recommendations have been classified as either “high” or “medium” in terms of the assessment of their importance following the evaluation.

Management Decision <sup>1</sup>	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions <sup>2</sup> (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
<b>Recommendation 3: The bureau of the Committee of the Parties, supported by the secretariat, should actively engage and invite the signatory countries to observe committee sessions. (medium)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (GREVIO Secretariat)	In continuation of the existing practice of inviting signatories to the Istanbul Convention, reinforced efforts will be deployed to ensure their participation during meetings of the Committee of the Parties (such as sending regular reminders to Permanent Representations).	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance
<b>Recommendation 4: The Gender Equality Division should develop a concept/strategy on whether and how to engage in guidelines on data collection about violence against women and domestic violence, reflecting the expressed needs of Council of Europe member states in this area. (high)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (Gender Equality Division)	<p>The draft "Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029" will include guidelines on data collection concerning violence against women;</p> <p>The study on "Ensuring data collection and research on violence against women and domestic violence: Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention" published by the Council of Europe in 2016 will continue to be promoted, through e.g. translations into languages of the countries participating in co-operation projects;</p> <p>The co-operation with the European Institute for Gender Equality will be strengthened.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance

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<b>Recommendation 5: GREVIO should pay close attention in its second wave of monitoring to gaps in practices and the actual institutionalisation of integrated policies in all parts of a country and, at the same time, GREVIO should focus more on collecting and considering new and diverse practices that are emerging. (high)</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (GREVIO Secretariat)	The Secretariat will bring this recommendation to the attention of GREVIO when drafting the questionnaire for the next evaluation round.	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance
<b>Recommendation 6: The Gender Equality Division should consider updating the 2008 standards for protection services based on the Istanbul Convention and on GREVIO findings. This will also help highlight the generally very low funding of the sector across states parties. These updated standards should consider the special nature and needs of women affected by armed conflict and the specific vulnerabilities of refugees and internally displaced persons. (medium)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (Gender Equality Division)	<p>This topic will be included in the draft Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029, while highlighting the need to prioritise funding on protection services;</p> <p>The 2008 standards for protection services will be revised to align with the Istanbul Convention, while reflecting on the needs of women affected by armed conflict.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance

Management Decision <sup>1</sup>	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions <sup>2</sup> (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
<b>Recommendation 7: The Gender Equality Division, supported and advised by the Gender Equality Commission, and the PACE Secretariat should co-operate on the facilitation of multicountry dialogue platforms on topical and emerging issues for states parties, signatory states, and others on a voluntary basis. (high)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (Gender Equality Division) (in consultation with GEC and PACE Secretariat)	<p><i>“Supported and advised by the Gender Equality Commission” is understood as “with the input of”</i></p> <p>The GEC will continue to hold peer exchanges on trends, developments, and good practices in the member states, including on the basis of the findings of monitoring mechanisms. It will also identify emerging issues and advise the CM and the SG and future priorities in its sector;</p> <p>Based on this, the GED, in consultation with PACE Secretariat, will proactively propose emerging issues, such as the role of men and boys in tackling violence against women, as thematic focus areas to the upcoming Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers.</p>	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance
<b>Recommendation 8: The Organisation’s co-operation activities should focus more on the nexus between the four main pillars of the Istanbul Convention, in particular on protection and prevention, with a clear vision of the social integration of victims and including joint training on referral systems between shelter, protection and social services. (high)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (Gender Equality Division) and ODGP	<p>GED will continue to base its co-operation activities on the four main pillars of the Istanbul Convention and, in the light of GREVIO Recommendations. In devising co-operation projects, GED will systematically consider whether activities focusing on the nexus between the four pillars would be relevant and effective, with a view to integrating them into the project design and implementation. ODGP will facilitate this process as part of its coordination function in the co-operation sector;</p> <p>Focus on social workers will be piloted specifically in the Republic of Moldova through the co-operation project «Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova» with the aim to support the authorities in their first steps of implementation of the Istanbul Convention.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance and Director of ODGP

Management Decision <sup>1</sup>	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions <sup>2</sup> (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
<p><b>Recommendation 9: The Organisation should consider developing a strategy for countering disinformation and anti-gender narratives by combining factual, explanatory messages and positive examples of implementation to present a coherent and vivid depiction of how implementing the Istanbul Convention improves the lives of women, men, girls and boys. The strategy should include actively seeking human stories, articulating key messages and seeking champions for the Istanbul Convention on social media. Existing experiences of the Council of Europe itself and from CSOs and their advocacy work should be used and synergies created. (high)</b></p>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (in co-operation with PO, PACE Secretariat, ODGP, DC)	<p>Action on countering disinformation and anti-gender narratives will be included in the draft Gender Equality Strategy for 2024-2029;</p> <p>This action could be the object of cross-sectoral coordination meetings as suggested in Recommendation 1 above;</p> <p>In the field of co-operation and capacity building, activities on countering disinformation and anti-gender narratives could become necessary in certain appropriately identified projects/ countries.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance
<p><b>Recommendation 10: The Organisation should consider increasing funding for the secretariat from its core budget. (high)</b></p>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DPB (in consultation with PO, Sec-CM, DGII)	<p>Needs will be assessed in the framework of the mid-term review foreseen in the ongoing Programme and Budget (June 2023) and proposals will be made for the biennium 2024-2025 where relevant.</p>	31/12/2023 (Mid-term Review)	Director of Programme and Budget

Management Decision <sup>1</sup>	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions <sup>2</sup> (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
<b>Recommendation 11: Gender Equality Division and the Secretariat of the Convention should actively engage with other international organisations relevant to the topic, towards identification of synergies and complementarities, joint promotion of ratification and standards, and elaboration of possible Memoranda of Understanding. (high)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGII (Gender Equality Division)	<p>Co-operation with other international organisations, such as UN Women, will be enhanced. This will be reflected in the draft Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029;</p> <p>Increase in synergies between different global and regional monitoring mechanisms on violence against women and discrimination united in the End Discrimination and Violence against Women Platform, which the GREVIO President currently presides over.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance



Abbreviations	
CommHR	Commissioner for Human Rights
Congress	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
DC	Directorate of Communications
DGI	Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law
DGII	Directorate General of Democracy
DPB	Directorate of Programme and Budget
GEC	Gender Equality Commission
GED	Gender Equality Division
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against women and Domestic violence
ODGP	Office of the Directorate General of Programmes
PO	Private Office
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
SecCM	Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers
SG	Secretary General