



Establishment of the procedural and organisational framework of GREVIO's activities

1. The monitoring mechanism of the Istanbul Convention has been set up to assess and improve the implementation of this innovative instrument by states parties. It consists of two distinct but interacting pillars: the **Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)**, an independent expert body, and the **Committee of the Parties**, a political body composed of official representatives of the states parties to the convention.

Membership

2. GREVIO's mandate and composition requirements are set out in Article 66, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the convention and expounded in the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers on rules on the election procedure of the members of GREVIO (hereafter referred to as Resolution CM/Res(2014)43). GREVIO members must be nationals of different states parties to the convention. They are nominated by the states parties and elected for a four-year term, renewable once. The composition of GREVIO must reflect the main legal systems, gender and geographical balance, as well as multidisciplinary expertise.

3. GREVIO members' eligibility criteria and the election process have been established in Article 66, paragraphs 4 and 5, and Article 67, paragraph 2, and are further developed in Resolution CM/Res(2014)43. GREVIO members' impartiality and independence in the exercise of their function remains one of the core principles of the convention as set out in its Article 66, paragraph 4. Moreover, GREVIO members must be chosen transparently, based on their recognised competences or experience in the fields of violence against women, gender equality and human rights. Concerning the election process, Article 67, paragraph 2, and Rule 1 of Resolution CM/Res(2014)43 provide that the Committee of the Parties is the body in charge of electing GREVIO members.

4. The Committee of the Parties elected the first 10 GREVIO members on 5 May 2015, at its first meeting, held in Strasbourg. In accordance with Article 66, paragraph 2, of the convention, their term of office was defined as running from 1 June 2015 to 31 May 2019. The first GREVIO brought together highly respected professionals known for their wide range of expertise in the field of violence against women, rooted in years of civil society advocacy, victims' assistance, academic research and legal practice. After the ratification of the convention by Germany on 12 October 2017, which brought the number of states parties to 25, a procedure was set in motion to fill five additional seats within GREVIO. Subsequently, at its fifth meeting on 24 May 2018, the Committee of the Parties elected five new members whose mandate started on 1 September 2018. In view of the termination of the first mandate of GREVIO's initial members on 31 May 2019, the election of 10 members of GREVIO was organised at the seventh meeting of the Committee of the Parties, on 3 May 2019.³ Following these elections, six former GREVIO members were reappointed and four new members were elected.

5. At its first meeting, on 21 September 2015, GREVIO elected, by secret ballot, Feride Acar as its President, Rosa Logar as its First Vice-President and Marceline Naudi as its Second Vice-President, for a term of office of two years, renewable. At the 12th GREVIO meeting on 12 October 2017,⁴ by secret ballot, GREVIO re-elected Feride Acar as its President. Marceline Naudi was elected as its First Vice-President and Simona Lanzoni as its Second Vice-President. They served their term of office from 13 October 2017 to 31 May 2019.

6. At its sixth meeting, from 23 to 26 May 2016, GREVIO appointed Biljana Branković and Simona Lanzoni as its Gender Equality Rapporteurs.

Internal Rules of Procedure

7. In accordance with Article 66, paragraph 6, GREVIO adopted its Rules of Procedure at its first meeting held in Strasbourg from 21 to 23 September 2015. During the period covered by this report, GREVIO's Rules of Procedure have been amended three times, in February and October 2017 and in February 2018. While generally drawing on those of other Council of Europe independent human rights monitoring bodies, they include several innovative features, such as the encouragement of

3. For an overview of the elections of GREVIO members please see Appendix 1.

4. For a list of GREVIO meetings please see Appendix 1.

national parliaments to become involved in the evaluation procedure. They govern GREVIO's functioning as well as the specificities of GREVIO's evaluation and special inquiry procedures and the adoption of general recommendations. Moreover, they lay out general rules on the communication and protection of persons and organisations interacting with GREVIO, the co-operation between GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties, and the provisions on the suspension, amendments and entry into force of the Rules of Procedure. The following features of GREVIO's Rules of Procedure should be highlighted.

a) General Rules (Rules 1-27)

8. GREVIO members are required to exercise their function impartially and independently (Rule 2). GREVIO holds meetings at its seat in Strasbourg but may, on occasion, decide that meetings will take place elsewhere (Rule 13 (1) and 13 (2)). During the period covered by this report, **GREVIO held a total of 17 meetings, two of which took place outside Strasbourg**. To maintain confidentiality, GREVIO meets in camera, unless decided otherwise (Rule 17). Decisions are usually taken by consensus. Where voting is required, decisions of GREVIO are taken by a majority of the members present (Rule 24). A list of the decisions adopted during the meeting is made public afterwards to ensure the transparency of GREVIO's work (Rule 25).

9. With a view to ensuring close co-operation between GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties, the President of GREVIO periodically meets with the Committee of the Parties to keep it informed of the state of developments. The Chair of the Committee of the Parties may also be invited to GREVIO's meetings (Rule 26).

b) GREVIO's relationship with parliaments (Rules 55-60)

10. As a pioneering international human rights treaty, the convention, with its Article 70, is the only one to grant a specific monitoring role to parliaments both at national and international levels. In order to render this meaningful in practice, GREVIO's Rules of Procedure set out ways in which GREVIO may ensure the perspective of parliaments in the evaluation of the convention's implementation (Rules 55 to 60). For example, GREVIO may encourage states parties to enter into a dialogue with their parliaments during the preparation of the state report in replying to the questionnaire (Rule 55). GREVIO may also choose to meet with parliamentarians during the evaluation visits carried out in the context of its first evaluation procedure (Rule 56). **During the period covered by this report, five evaluation visits (Albania, Austria, Monaco, Portugal and Montenegro) led by GREVIO included meetings with national parliamentarians.**

11. Once GREVIO's baseline evaluation report is adopted, GREVIO may invite parliaments, within their mandate and through appropriate channels, to take action in the light of its report and conclusions (Rule 57). It is thus of utmost importance to ensure the transmission of all GREVIO baseline evaluation reports to national parliaments, which GREVIO regularly requests states parties to do along with the request to have them translated into their official national language(s) (Rule 59). A report

adopted in 2019 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)⁵ has highlighted the active role played by national parliaments in the monitoring of the convention. Over the last few years, new parliamentary committees have been set up (in Italy, Portugal and Turkey) and existing ones have adopted action plans (in Albania) to monitor and foster the domestic implementation of the convention.

Human and financial resources

12. To support the operability of the monitoring mechanism of the convention, GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties are assisted by a Secretariat composed of the Executive Secretary and other staff members appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The Secretariat was set up in 2014 and is now part of the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department within the Directorate General for Democracy (DGII). To respond to the growing number of ratifications of the convention and the subsequent increase in the workload of the Secretariat, the number of A grade staff was increased from two to three in April 2016, and then to four in April 2019, in addition to the Executive Secretary. The Secretariat also includes two B grade staff.⁶ GREVIO wishes to thank very warmly all staff that have served and currently serve in the Secretariat for their contribution and support.

13. During the period covered by this report, the financial resources allocated to GREVIO's operational activities enabled it to complete 13 evaluation procedures. They covered the costs of the different steps of the evaluation procedure, including the evaluation visits and the publication and dissemination of GREVIO's first baseline evaluation reports. It enabled GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties to offer high-quality output in both official languages of the Council of Europe. They also allowed GREVIO members and the Secretariat to present the convention and GREVIO's monitoring work at conferences, round tables, training sessions and meetings in Strasbourg and abroad. These contributions are essential to enhancing communication about GREVIO's activities, promoting ratification and encouraging engagement with the convention's monitoring mechanism.

14. The importance of completing GREVIO's tasks in line with the high standards set by the Council of Europe's other monitoring mechanisms cannot be overestimated. The initial results of GREVIO's work form the foundation for its reputation and credibility. It is therefore essential that adequate human and financial resources continue to be provided to the Istanbul Convention monitoring mechanism in the future, responding to the growth in volume of its activity and reflecting its priority nature for the Council of Europe. In this respect, GREVIO notably welcomes the initiatives aiming at ensuring that non-member states becoming party to the Istanbul Convention contribute to the financing of its monitoring mechanism. GREVIO also wishes to thank member states who supported the work in this area through voluntary contributions, scholarships and other schemes, and to encourage states to continue providing such support, including where appropriate under the form of staff secondments.

5. PACE (2019), the convention on violence against women: achievements and challenges, Doc. 14908, 8 June, Strasbourg: PACE.

6. See Appendix 5 for the list of the Secretariat members from June 2015 to May 2019.