

12 steps to comply with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

1. **Condemn discrimination against women** and recognise that violence against women is a violation of human rights and a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men.
2. **Invest in preventive measures** by changing attitudes, gender roles and stereotypes through education, training and awareness raising, by empowering women, by involving men and boys and by creating new partnerships with the media and the private sector.
3. **Help victims get support** by running a free national telephone hotline, offering shelters, medical, psychological and legal counselling, help with housing and financial issues and in finding employment.
4. **Protect victims at risk** with the help of emergency barring orders, restraining and protection orders, risk assessment and risk management.
5. **Change the law** so that it includes specific criminal offences for psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence including rape, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation and that it prohibits sexual harassment.
6. **Enhance the performance** of the police, the prosecution services and the judiciary in handling such cases.
7. **Empower victims in judicial proceedings** by ensuring they are supported and protected throughout the proceedings, informed on the general progress of the case, their role therein and by enabling victims to be heard and supply evidence without having to confront the perpetrator.
8. **Design comprehensive policies** for all branches of government to ensure that professionals join forces to better protect and assist victims, to prevent more violence and to end impunity for acts of violence against women or domestic violence.
9. **Recognise gender-based violence as a form of persecution** when determining refugee status of women asylum seekers and respect the principle of non-refoulement.
10. **Respond to the special needs of children** as victims or witnesses of domestic violence in all measures of protection and support.
11. **Recognise and support the role of NGOs and civil society** in combating violence against women and domestic violence by allocating adequate financial and human resources and by establishing effective cooperation with these organisations.
12. **Collect national data and support research** to expand the knowledge base on violence against women and domestic violence.