Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice

Romania

First thematic evaluation report



GREVIO

Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

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

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on Action against Violence against Women
and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

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Executive summary

This evaluation report addresses progress made in bringing support, protection and justice to victims of violence against women and domestic violence under selected provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). It offers an assessment made by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), an independent human rights monitoring body mandated to monitor the implementation of the convention. GREVIO's findings identify developments that have taken place since the publication of its baseline evaluation report on Romania on 16 June 2022 and are based on the information obtained during its first thematic evaluation procedure as set out in Article 68 of the convention. These include written reports (a state report submitted by the country authorities and additional information submitted by association UNIC, Community Safety and Mediation Centre Foundation, association ANAIS and association A.D.E.P.T.) as well as a five-day evaluation visit to Romania. A list of the bodies and entities which GREVIO had exchanges with can be found in Appendix II.

The report assesses the wide variety of measures taken by the Romanian authorities to prevent violence against women and domestic violence and to deliver protection, support and justice for victims – the theme chosen by GREVIO for its first thematic evaluation round. In identifying emerging trends in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, GREVIO shines a light on laudable efforts made for the implementation of this convention. Moreover, it provides in-depth information on the implementation of selected provisions in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution as building blocks for a comprehensive response to the different forms of violence against women that instils trust in victims.

In this regard, GREVIO welcomes the important legislative developments undertaken since the baseline evaluation report and the continued strengthening of the institutional and policy framework to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence in Romania. A major legislative development is Law No. 53/2026 on Preventing and Combating Femicide and the Forms of Violence Preceding It, which introduces a definition of gender-related killings of women (femicide) in the Romanian legal framework, amends some provisions of the Criminal Code and establishes specific mechanisms for the prevention of such killings. The National Strategy for Promoting Equal Opportunities and Treatment between Women and Men and for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence (2022–2027) is another important development, which identifies gender stereotypes as the primary cause of gender inequality and foresees a wide range of measures to promote equality and counter domestic violence. GREVIO further acknowledges the pivotal role of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men in designing policies and co-ordinating the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania.

As regards the prevention of violence against women, GREVIO recognises the Romanian authorities' continued efforts to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and promote gender equality through awareness raising activities among the general population, youngsters and professionals. Increased attention is afforded to strengthening the capacity of relevant professionals - police officers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, healthcare professionals - to respond to violence against women and domestic violence and to improve multidisciplinary co-operation. Progress has also been made in the field of education, with improvements to teaching materials and activities promoting gender equality and respectful relationships among students. Moreover, the Romanian authorities have taken steps to increase the number of shelters for victims of domestic violence across the country. As regards substantial law, the Criminal Code now criminalises the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images and includes distinct offences of rape and sexual assault committed against a child. Moreover, the scope of protection orders has been expanded beyond domestic violence to encompass all persons exposed to threats, stalking, sexual, physical or psychological violence, covering also different forms of online violence.

Beyond the progress made in Romania to implement the convention, GREVIO has identified areas which require urgent action by the authorities to comply fully with the convention's provisions. First, adequate and sustainable funding is needed for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, as well as for the provision of support services for women, including those provided by women's rights

organisations. Another area requiring further efforts is the collection of data. Romania still lacks a system for collecting comprehensive and harmonised administrative data on violence against women across all relevant sectors, including law-enforcement agencies, judicial authorities, healthcare services and social services. Moreover, despite increased training activities, mandatory and systematic initial and in-service training on violence against women remains insufficient for most professionals, including teachers. In the area of protection and support for women victims of violence, the number and geographical coverage of specialist support services for women victims of domestic violence are insufficient, and barriers to accessing shelters still exist for many women victims and their children. While noting the efforts made to provide victims of sexual violence with emergency medical care and refer them to specialist support services, there is an urgent need to establish one-stop-shop facilities providing comprehensive, victim-centred and trauma-informed support, free-of-charge, and addressing all relevant needs of victims (medical, psychological, forensic and counselling/information). Serious concerns also remain regarding the protection of women and children in the context of judicial proceedings, where more efforts must be made to ensure that incidents of domestic violence are systematically taken into account in decisions concerning custody and visitation rights and to remove from legislation concepts such as parental alienation and similar notions that risk portraying women victims of domestic violence as alienating, hostile or unco-operative. The report further points to the urgent need to strengthen criminal investigations and prosecutions in cases of violence against women and to ensure the effective enforcement and monitoring of protection orders. These measures are essential to strengthen victims' trust in the justice system and to ensure effective protection from further violence.

GREVIO has identified a number of additional issues that require sustained action in order to effectively build trust by delivering protection, support and justice for acts of violence against women. These relate to the need to:

- ensure that the body responsible for co-ordinating policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women is provided with adequate and sustainable human and financial resources to accomplish its mandate;
- devise comprehensive policies and measures addressing all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention and ensure that they fully reflect the needs of women exposed to intersectional forms of discrimination;
- strengthen multi-agency co-operation and harmonise the implementation of policies and measures throughout the country, including in rural areas;
- pursue the primary prevention efforts to eradicate harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes and extend awareness-raising activities to all forms of violence against women, including in their digital dimension and the heightened risks faced by women exposed to intersectional discrimination; and regularly evaluate the impact of these activities and identify any undesirable effects in order to improve their effectiveness;
- ensure the teaching in practice of equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution and the right to personal integrity, and provide information on the digital dimension of violence against women and the concept of freely given consent;
- develop more programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence that aim to achieve behavioural change, while also ensuring their systematic impact evaluation;
- improve access to long-term financial assistance, social housing and employment support for women victims of violence in order to help them to gain their economic independence;
- ensure that healthcare services assist women victims of violence through gender-sensitive, trauma-informed and non-judgmental approaches and facilitate referrals to appropriate specialist support services;
- strengthen risk assessment and risk management procedures through guidance and training for police officers and other relevant stakeholders, and ensure the involvement of healthcare services and specialist non-governmental organisations;
- systematically implement all available measures to prevent secondary victimisation and protect victims of violence against women and their children throughout judicial proceedings.

Additionally, GREVIO has identified further areas in which improvements are required in order to comply fully with the obligations of the convention under this round's theme. These relate, among others, to the fact that further efforts are needed to strengthen the integration of a gender-sensitive understanding of domestic violence across legislation, policies and professional practice. Improvements are also necessary to ensure that mediation in family-law proceedings is considered only following the effective screening for and assessment of incidents of domestic violence, and that women victims provide their free and fully informed consent before any referral to mediation.

Lastly, GREVIO points to several emerging trends, which include, for example, the persistence of harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes that undermine efforts to prevent and combat violence against women. It further highlights continuing shortcomings in the practical implementation of protection measures, including the fragmentation of specialist support services and multi-disciplinary co-operation, and institutional responses that fail to adequately identify and address patterns of domestic violence and post-separation abuse, thereby compromising the safety and rights of women and children.

Introduction

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, the Istanbul Convention) is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle violence against women and domestic violence.

It sets up a two-pillar monitoring mechanism to assess the level of implementation by its parties: 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 parties to the convention. In line with Article 68 of the convention, GREVIO has been providing country-based monitoring reports under its baseline evaluation procedure since 2017. Its baseline evaluation report on Romania, offering a comprehensive assessment of the convention's implementation in its entirety, was published on 16 June 2022, following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Romania on 23 May 2016. Romania's original reservations not to apply provisions under Articles 30, 33, 34, 44, 55 and 59, entered in accordance with Article 78, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the convention, lapsed on 1 March 2022.

This report was drawn up under GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round launched in 2023, focusing on the theme of building trust by delivering support, protection and justice. To address this overarching theme, it describes emerging trends in the areas of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in the country. Section two aims to identify developments in key areas such as comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection that have ensued following the completion of the baseline evaluation procedure. Section three sets to obtain more in-depth information on the implementation of selected provisions in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution, in respect of which baseline evaluation procedures and the Conclusions on the implementation of recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention have revealed significant challenges and the need for further action.

In respect of Romania, the first thematic evaluation procedure was initiated in accordance with Article 68 of the convention by letter and transmission of GREVIO's first thematic questionnaire on 16 December 2024. The Romanian authorities subsequently submitted their state report on 16 May 2025, the deadline set by GREVIO. Following a preliminary examination of the state report, GREVIO carried out an evaluation visit to Romania, which took place from 25 to 31 October 2025. The delegation was composed of:

- Aleid van den Brink (Second Vice-President of GREVIO)
- Angelina Zaporojan-Pirgari (First Vice-President of GREVIO)
- Severina Spassova, legal adviser at the Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Istanbul Convention.

During the evaluation visit, the delegation met with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental representatives working in the area of preventing and combating violence against women. GREVIO wishes to highlight its constructive exchanges with the Romanian authorities, in particular Luminita Popescu, State Secretary of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, Dragos Mihai Hotea, State Secretary, the Prime Minister's Office, Derzsi Akos, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Bogdan Despescu, State Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ionut Ciprian Spiridon, First Deputy of the Prosecutor General, Teodora Stoian, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Stela Firu, State Secretary, Ministry of Health, Irina Danielescu, State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Research, Cerasela Claudia Banica, member of the Board of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, Alexandra Ana Maria Zara, President of the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Iulian Paraschiv, National Roma Agency, Helena Omna Raicu, President of the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption, Mihaela Danian, Association of Municipalities in Romania, Ioan Silviu Virva, Vice President and Andoria Ionita, Director in the National Institute of Statistics, and Cynthia Carmen Deaconescu, Deputy Ombudsperson of Romania. A list of the national authorities, non-governmental organisations and others met is set out in Appendix II of this report. GREVIO is grateful for the valuable information

provided by all of them. For the co-operation and support provided throughout the entire evaluation procedure, it wishes to extend its gratitude Andreea Băluță-Pascu, who was the contact person. The state report and the written contributions submitted by civil society are available on the country monitoring website of the Istanbul Convention.[1]

The present assessment was drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of GREVIO and is based on the information collected during the various steps of the evaluation procedure. In keeping with the approach adopted in its baseline evaluation reports, the findings made reflect different levels of urgency, indicated in order of priority by the following verbs: “urges”, “strongly encourages”, “encourages” and “invites”.

Resulting from a process of confidential dialogue with the aim of offering country-specific proposals and suggestions for improvement within the national context of the party under review, this report describes the situation as observed by GREVIO up until 25 March 2026. Where applicable, relevant developments up until 30 June 2026 have also been taken into account.

According to the convention, national parliaments shall receive this report from the national authorities (Article 70, paragraph 2). GREVIO requests the national authorities to translate this report into their official national language(s) and to ensure that it is widely disseminated, not only to the relevant state institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the government, the ministries and the judiciary, but also to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civil society organisations that work in the field of violence against women.

1. www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/romania.

I. Emerging trends in the areas of violence against women and domestic violence

Promising legislative and policy developments

1. In recent years, Romania has continued to strengthen its legislative and policy framework to address violence against women and domestic violence, demonstrating a political and institutional commitment to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The current Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy (2022-2027) and the Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY (2021-2030) reflect a clear determination to advance equality between women and men and to prevent and combat domestic and sexual violence in their different forms. Both strategies are supported by action plans that include awareness raising, professional training, development of integrated support services and improvements in data collection, investigation and prosecution. Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence (the Domestic Violence Law), amended several times until December 2025, remains the cornerstone of the Romanian legislation in the area. It provides a comprehensive definition of domestic violence that is aligned with the Istanbul Convention, introduces protection orders and guarantees support services for victims and their children. Recent amendments have removed the possibility for victims to withdraw protection orders initiated by institutions; require courts to carry out their own risk assessment if no records of the perpetrator have previously been drawn up by the criminal justice system; ensure the automatic renewal of emergency barring orders until the court grants a protection order; and increase the sanctions for breaches of protection orders. Building on the model of the Domestic Violence Law, Law No. 26/2024 has expanded access to protection orders beyond family-related situations. Protection orders have become available to all victims of threats, stalking, online harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, unlawful access to private communications or data and sexual violence. Important progress has been made in addressing the digital dimension of violence against women through Law No. 171/2023, which amended the Criminal Code to criminalise the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images.

2. Moreover, the regulatory framework governing the institutional response to violence against women has been completed through a series of ministerial orders, internal instructions and operational methodologies to improve the management of cases of domestic violence and data collection. The establishment of the National Mechanism for Supporting Crime Prevention, which reallocates confiscated criminal assets to victim assistance and crime-prevention activities, has created a source of funding for vouchers, granted to support victims of crime to cover their basic needs.

3. Last, a major step has been taken in response to the increase in gender-related killings of women in Romania through the adoption of Law No. 53/2026 on Preventing and Combating Femicide and the Forms of Violence Preceding It, which introduces a definition of femicide, establishes aggravating circumstances and higher sanctions for certain offences causing death, and requires systematic data collection and analysis of femicide and other homicides committed in the context of domestic violence in order to strengthen prevention measures. .

Persistent gender stereotypes that contribute to the normalisation of violence against women

4. Deeply rooted gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes continue to shape both Romanian society and the practice of institutions, which undermines efforts to prevent and combat violence against women. Available studies show that a significant part of the population still tolerates unequal power relations and men's control over women, censuring physical violence but minimising the impact of psychological or other forms of non-physical violence.[2] A limited understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence, victim-blaming attitudes or suggestions to reconcile despite abusive behaviour disregard the impact of domestic violence on women and their children. Together, they constitute patterns that render the phenomenon invisible and under-reported, perpetuating

2. Rughiniș C. et al. (2024), "Tolerating violence against women: attitude evolution and typology in Romania", *Sociologie Românească*, Vol. 22, No. 2, available at: www.revistasociologieromaneasca.ro/sr/article/view/1811?utm.

a perception that domestic violence is a private matter and discouraging women from seeking support, protection and justice. Such attitudes can be observed among police officers and members of the judiciary and seem to result from their insufficient training levels – despite the Istanbul Convention's requirement for a victim-centred response.

5. The opportunities offered by the education sector to reduce harmful gender stereotypes and negative attitudes is hampered by the continuous resistance to the teaching of gender equality and age-appropriate sexuality education[3] and the lack of training of teachers on gender equality and violence against women. The capacity of teachers to instil in children a sense of women's equality with men, notions of non-violent conflict resolution, mutual respect and consent to sexual activity is thus limited. What is more, over-crowding and under-resourcing, especially in rural schools, seems to be contributing to the use of violence as disciplinary action against learners, thus further reducing children's ability to learn non-violent conflict resolution.[4]

A system of justice formally accessible but not yet consistently delivering protection and justice

6. While the Romanian legal framework grants women victims of violence access to protective measures and justice, shortcomings in its practical application continue to limit their effectiveness. Insufficiently institutionalised and fragmented specialist support services and multidisciplinary co-operation prevent the development of comprehensive and co-ordinated intervention plans and leave victims to navigate multiple institutions on their own, weakening the victim-centred nature of the institutional response. Weaknesses in the conduct of risk assessment, obstacles to accessing forensic examinations, evidentiary requirements for accessing specialist support services and the use of concepts in custody proceedings that portray victims of domestic violence as alienating their children hinder the ability of the Romanian institutional system to safeguard victim's safety and human rights. As a result, law-enforcement and judicial responses fail to identify patterns of control, repeated violence and post-separation abuse of women. This reduces their capacity to anticipate the escalation of violence and directly impacts decisions on whether to initiate criminal investigations and on custody and visitation arrangements after abuse.

7. In this context, GREVIO emphasises the grave concerns arising from the use of the concept of parental alienation, often referred to in practice as "estrangement" in family law proceedings. Its incorporation into the Romanian legislation and the training of professionals, without at the same time guaranteeing a comprehensive and gender-sensitive understanding of domestic violence, creates the risk that the quest for justice and safety of women and their children is seen as alienating behaviour that creates hostility towards the father, while children's reluctance to maintain contact with a violent father is not recognised as a reaction to trauma and fear. As GREVIO has noted across a wide range of its reports, the positioning of women victims of domestic violence as alienating mothers shifts the focus away from the perpetrator's violent conduct, masking the extent of the history of abuse and resulting in unsafe custody and visitation decisions. The protection of children, recognised as victims when exposed to domestic violence, is further weakened by the limited consideration given in judicial proceedings to the adverse effects and impact of domestic violence. This is further compounded by the fact that protection orders do not systematically extend to children, and where they do, their shorter duration and the priority given to re-establishing contact with the father create opportunities for continued control and abuse. Addressing these gaps in order to deliver support, protection and justice, and to ultimately reinforce the trust of women in the justice system, requires a gender-sensitive and victim-centred approach to be embedded at all stages, from mandatory training of all relevant professionals to strengthened multi-agency co-operation and judicial decisions that prioritise the safety and human rights of women and their children.

3. See the open letter from 45 NGOs: https://glasul.info/2022/11/07/ideologia-scrisoare-deschisa-45/.
4. Written submission by Association UNIC, p. 11.

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

8. Chapter I of the Istanbul Convention sets out general principles that apply to all the substantive articles contained in Chapters II to VII and therefore lay the foundation for a comprehensive and adequate response that ensures the delivery of support, protection and justice for all women and girls at risk of or who have experienced gender-based violence. These include, among other things, that it is a fundamental human right for everyone, particularly women, to live a life free from violence in both the public and the private sphere, that the convention must be implemented without discrimination on any ground, and that the potential for, and effects of, multiple forms of discrimination should be borne in mind. They also spell out that a gender perspective must be integrated into the implementation of the convention and the evaluation of its impact. Chapter II of the Istanbul Convention sets out the core requirement for a holistic response to violence against women: the need for state-wide effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, sustained by the necessary institutional, financial and organisational structures.

A. Definitions (Article 3)

9. Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention sets out key definitions of concepts that are fundamental to its implementation. “Violence against women” refers to “all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”, whereas the expression “domestic violence” is to be understood as referring to “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim”. The definition of “gender-based violence against women” provided in paragraph *d* of Article 3 seeks to ensure more clarity regarding the nature of the violence covered, by explaining that this is “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately”.

10. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had noted the existing legislation on gender equality and violence against women, which are still in force. This comprises, first, Law No. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment for women and men (the Gender Equality Law), which prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex, introduces provisions to eliminate gender stereotypes and foster equality in the labour market, and lists various forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, sexual harassment, human trafficking and forced prostitution; without however providing definitions. Second, Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence (the Domestic Violence Law), amended several times, introduces for the first time a definition of domestic violence that GREVIO had considered in full compliance with Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention.[5] Furthermore, the law recognises children from previous relationships and children who become relatives through adoption as family members and thereby as victims when exposed to domestic violence.

11. Since the baseline evaluation report, no changes have been made to the definitions contained in the Gender Equality Law, which still lists certain forms of gender-based violence against women, without defining them. The Domestic Violence Law still defines domestic violence in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. GREVIO notes that more and more training initiatives for professionals who deal with women victims of domestic violence have adopted a gender perspective of domestic violence.

5. Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, Article 3: “For the purposes of this law, domestic violence means any intentional act or commission of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social, spiritual or cyber violence that occurs in the family or domestic environment or between spouses or former spouses, as well as between current or former partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator lives or has lived with the victim”.

B. Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies (Article 7)

12. Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention requires parties to take co-ordinated and comprehensive measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women. Policies must ensure effective co-operation and place the rights of victims at their centre. This includes taking into account and addressing the specific circumstances and barriers experienced by women exposed to or at risk of multiple forms of discrimination,[6] in line with Article 4, paragraph 3, of the convention. Ensuring service delivery, effective protection and justice with a comprehensive understanding of intersecting forms of discrimination is a fundamental element in building trust among all women and girls.

13. Since the baseline evaluation report, the Romanian authorities have made notable efforts to develop the institutional and policy frameworks aimed at promoting equality between women and men, and at preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women. These efforts have focused on strengthening the institutional position of the co-ordinating body under Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, and on adopting strategic documents that embrace the convention's pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated policies. The co-ordinating body remains the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (NAEO), which is responsible for developing, implementing, co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating relevant policies in the field of gender equality and violence against women. The NAEO had its institutional standing enhanced by the appointment of a State Secretary for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men to lead the agency, and by its direct placement under the authority of the Prime Minister of Romania.[7]

14. GREVIO welcomes the pivotal role that the NAEO plays in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. In 2023, it took on the co-ordination of both the working group for strengthening the legal framework on domestic violence and the interinstitutional working group for transposing European Union Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. In addition, the NAEO chairs the National Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men,[8] which reviews public policies to integrate a gender perspective, and the Interministerial Committee on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence,[9] which has been established to align national legislation with the Istanbul Convention. In its work, the NAEO also focuses on building partnerships with local authorities and women's rights organisations and on conducting awareness-raising campaigns and training sessions for professionals, and it is also responsible for accrediting and co-ordinating victim support services.

15. While acknowledging the above progress, GREVIO notes that the current distribution of responsibilities among the multiple interinstitutional bodies is still complex. Moreover, despite the fact that the work of the NAEO is recognised by public institutions and many women's rights organisations, GREVIO's attention was drawn to the very limited operational budget available to the agency. An analysis of the budget for 2024 and 2025 reveals that the majority of funds are allocated to staff salaries and operational costs, leaving very limited resources for prevention, awareness raising and victim support services, which remain dependent to a considerable extent on international financial support. The total budget seems to have decreased over the last few years, and amounted to €1.4 million in 2025.[10] Therefore, GREVIO points to the need to provide the NAEO with adequate financial resources to strengthen its capacity to co-ordinate and implement comprehensive policies for preventing and combating violence against women. Finally, GREVIO notes with regret that the NAEO continues to focus primarily on gender equality and domestic and sexual violence, and that its mandate has not been extended to all forms of violence against women

6. These include, but are not limited to, women from national and/or ethnic minorities, Roma women, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee women, women with disabilities, women without a residence permit, LBTI women, women from rural areas, women in prostitution and women with addiction issues.
7. Prime Ministerial Decision No. 219 of 16 April 2020 for the appointment of a State Secretary, and Emergency Ordinance No. 153/2024 for the placement under the authority of the Prime Minister of Romania.
8. The National Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men is composed of representatives from ministries, autonomous institutions, trade unions, employers' associations and NGOs.
9. The Interministerial Committee on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence is composed of representatives from the Ministries of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Internal Affairs, Education and Research., Health and Justice.
10. See: https://anes.gov.ro/informatiii-de-interes-public/buget/buget-din-toate-sursele-de-finantare/.

covered by the Istanbul Convention, which is important in order to ensure a holistic response to the phenomenon, as required by the Istanbul Convention.

16. As regards the strategic framework in place in Romania, the national strategy for promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and for preventing and combating domestic violence (the Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy) for 2018-2021 has been replaced by a new strategy covering the period 2022-2027, which GREVIO welcomes. Pillar 1 of the strategy identifies the stereotypes on the social roles of women and men as the primary cause of gender inequality and prioritises their deconstruction and eradication through education and training. It also sets as an objective the inclusion of a gender perspective in all policies and the inclusion of gender budgeting at all levels of public administration. Pillar 2 places the emphasis on the prevention of domestic violence through awareness raising and interdisciplinary workshops for professionals, and on the protection of victims through the development of an integrated system of support services and the improvement of data collection. As regards the prosecution of perpetrators, it foresees the strengthening of reporting procedures, police interventions and investigations in cases of domestic violence, as well as the use of electronic monitoring for offenders. Concerning multi-agency co-operation in the implementation of the strategy, in addition to the interinstitutional bodies that co-operate at the national level, there are commissions for equal opportunities between women and men established in all 42 counties and in the municipality of Bucharest.

17. While acknowledging the importance and relevance of all the measures foreseen, GREVIO regrets that aside from the strategy focusing on domestic violence there is no other strategic document in Romania covering other forms of violence against women as defined in the Istanbul Convention.[11] Moreover, while the strategy mentions vulnerable groups in several objectives, it does not specify any groups of women as being vulnerable to discrimination and violence, for example elderly women, Roma women, women with disabilities and women in rural areas.[12] The strategy makes only a few references to multiple discrimination, without clarifying whether experiencing multiple discrimination is considered as a factor that exacerbates women's vulnerability to violence.[13] GREVIO points to the pressing need to develop targeted policies and measures for Roma women, women living in rural areas, elderly women and women with disabilities, who are among the victims of violence and appear to face difficulties in accessing information, support services and justice. Furthermore, GREVIO underlines the importance of ensuring that relevant national strategies address the ways in which multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination increase women's exposure to and experiences of violence, particularly in the case of the above groups but also with regard to migrant women and LBTI women.

18. Another relevant document briefly discussed in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report and still in force is the national strategy for preventing and combating sexual violence (the Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY) for the period 2021-2030. The Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY sets out a comprehensive policy framework aimed at preventing sexual violence through education and awareness raising. The strategy acknowledges that the vast majority of victims are women and identifies several groups at higher risk of sexual violence, referring to migrants as requiring targeted preventive and awareness-raising measures.[14] Moreover, it aims to prevent sexual violence and reduce reoffending, improve the access to support services by establishing crisis centres for

11. The Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention recommended such measures to the Romanian government in its recommendations adopted on 6 December 2022, as part of the baseline evaluation procedure (Section A, point 4).
12. The definition of "vulnerable groups" used in the strategy is that provided by Law No. 292/2011 (Social Assistance Law) and it means "persons or families who are at risk of being unable to meet their daily subsistence needs due to illness, disability, poverty, addiction to drugs or alcohol or any other situations that result in economic or social vulnerability".
13. The references are limited to awareness raising on multiple discrimination in schools, the commissioning of a study on the integration of a sensitive approach to vulnerabilities and multiple discrimination in the designing of public policies, and the compilation of procedures and methodologies for professionals on applying such a sensitive approach in their work with victims of domestic violence.
14. The groups that are identified as being at higher risk of sexual violence are: women, in particular those in abusive relationships and those who are economically or socially dependent on their partners; children and young people, including those in institutional or alternative care; women and men with physical or mental disabilities, whether living in families or in residential institutions; persons deprived of liberty, including those in prison or detention; persons with drug or alcohol dependence; persons with a history of rape or other forms of sexual violence; persons involved in prostitution or trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation; homeless persons.

forensic and support services for women victims of rape and sexual violence, and enhance online safety to combat forms of online sexual violence. The strategy also lists a broad range of forms of sexual violence without, however, providing definitions of these forms nor measures to address them.[15]

19. Since GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, a number of legislative amendments to the Romanian Criminal Code have been adopted to address sexual violence. GREVIO welcomes the adoption of Law No. 171/2023, which criminalises the non-consensual dissemination or transmission of intimate images as a violation of private life (Article 226), as well as Law No. 424/2023, which enhances the protection of children by introducing distinct offences for rape of a minor (Article 218-1) and sexual assault of a minor (Article 219-1), and also raises the legal age of consent for sexual relations from 15 to 16 years.

20. The implementation of the two strategies is guided by action plans and monitored annually by the NAEO on the basis of indicators. However, the current indicators focus rather on activities and processes. In order to assess the progress achieved, it would be helpful to adopt indicators that focus on outcomes and to plan for independent and objective external evaluations.

21. When it comes to co-operation with women's rights organisations in policy making, NGOs are members of various working groups involved in legislative review processes.[16] Their participation is institutionalised within the National Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, while NGOs may be invited to participate in meetings of the Interministerial Committee on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence. Women's rights organisations and trade unions have contributed to both the drafting and implementation of the Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY. More recently, co-operation with four NGOs started within the framework of a working group to draw up a methodology for effective investigations in cases of domestic violence. This working group brings together prosecutors, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and members of four NGOs.

22. GREVIO notes the establishment in September 2025 of the joint special committee of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of Romania, entitled Romania without Domestic Violence. The committee is mandated to address the prevalence of domestic violence in the country and ensure coherence in the legislative framework on preventing and combating domestic and gender-based violence, as well as to strengthen the protection of victims and their children. The committee's active work led to the development and adoption of Law No. 53/2026 on Preventing and Combating Femicide and the Forms of Violence Preceding It (Law on Femicide), which GREVIO welcomes. The law, which came into force on 26 April 2026, introduces a definition of "femicide" as the intentional killing of a woman, as well as the death of a woman resulting from blows or injuries causing death, or from other intentional offences followed by the victim's death, regardless of whether the acts were committed by a family member or by another person. The law amends the Criminal Code to add specific aggravating circumstances and higher sanctions for the offences of aggravated murder, incitement or assisting suicide, assault or bodily injuries causing death, in particular when these offences were committed in a context of control or domination in intimate or family relationships or in the presence of a child. The law also defines as an "indirect femicide" the death of a women as a result of female genital mutilation or the suicide of a women as a result of intimate partner or family violence.

15. The forms of sexual violence included are rape, revenge pornography, sexual slavery, sexual harassment, forced exposure to pornography, human trafficking for the purpose of forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced virginity testing.
16. Information obtained during the evaluation visit, and state reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention submitted in the framework of the baseline evaluation procedure, p. 18.

23. **GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. ensure that the body responsible for the co-ordination of the implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women is provided with adequate and sustainable human and financial resources to accomplish its mandate;**
- **b. devise a comprehensive set of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, and consequently expand the mandate of the body responsible for their co-ordination and implementation;**
- **c. ensure that policy and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women fully reflect the needs of all women, including those exposed to intersectional forms of discrimination;**
- **d. pursue their efforts to strengthen multi-agency co-operation and to harmonise the implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women at national and local levels, including in rural areas.**

C. Financial resources (Article 8)

24. Article 8 of the Istanbul Convention aims to ensure the allocation of appropriate financial and human resources for activities carried out by public authorities and by relevant non-governmental and civil society organisations.[17]

25. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had observed that the Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy in force at that time and the Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY did not include cost estimations for their implementation. Instead, the budgetary needs were adjusted to fit the available resources, which limited the number of measures that could be implemented. GREVIO had also noted the significant contribution of international donors to funding of both the implementation of the strategies and the provision of support services for victims. Moreover, the state budget did not include a dedicated line for support to NGOs, whereas the existing licensing scheme to accredit NGOs as providers of support services for victims hindered their ability to apply for a licence and operate. GREVIO had also noted some initial efforts undertaken by the NAEO to introduce gender budgeting.[18]

26. Since the baseline evaluation report, steps have been taken to ensure financial resources for promoting gender equality and protecting women from violence. The current Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy is an important policy instrument enabling the Romanian authorities to access European Union funds and EEA Norway Grants with a view to promoting gender equality and combating domestic violence. Twelve specific projects amounting to over €55 million were implemented, focusing on the creation of centres for victims of violence, programmes for perpetrators, training of professionals and awareness-raising campaigns.

27. Moreover, GREVIO notes with interest that following the amendments introduced by Law No. 230/2022,[19] Romania established the National Mechanism for Supporting Crime Prevention in January 2023 as an instrument reinvesting seized and confiscated criminal proceeds into crime prevention, legal education and victim assistance. Several ministries receive allocations from the mechanism; the Ministry of Justice, in particular, channels it to the funding of vouchers for victims of criminal offences, including domestic and sexual violence, in line with the conditions set out in the

17. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 66.
18. A project on gender budgeting in public policies was implemented by the NAEO in partnership with civil society organisations Corona Iasi and Community Safety and Mediation Centre between June 2019 and February 2020.
19. Law No. 230/2022 amended Law No. 318/2015 on the establishment, organisation and operation of the National Agency for the Management of Seized Assets, and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

relevant legislation and methodology.[20] State support in the form of vouchers helps victims to cover their urgent needs and can amount to up to five national gross minimum wages (up to €4 000 in 2026). However, the practical accessibility of the vouchers seems to be limited by a complex allocation and redemption procedure.[21] Indeed, between 2024 and 2025, only nine victims received 35 vouchers amounting to less than €30 000, which shows that the mechanism has been used to a limited extent so far.

28. While acknowledging the efforts of the authorities to ensure financial resources for promoting gender equality and protecting women from violence, GREVIO notes with regret that the challenges it had identified in its baseline evaluation report persist. According to Article 2 of the decision approving the Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy, the objectives of the strategy shall be financed within the limits of the annual budgets of the responsible authorities (and other legally established sources). Currently, however, there is no dedicated budget line for the implementation of the strategy in the state budget. Furthermore, the annual budget planning depends on available resources rather than an assessment of the needs to ensure the strategy's effective implementation. Information provided by both authorities and civil society organisations reflects these concerns, pointing to a heavy reliance on international donors for the implementation of relevant policies.[22] Moreover, there has been no progress on gender budgeting.[23]

29. As regards funding of social services for women victims of violence, according to the amended Social Assistance Law,[24] social services may be funded from a wide range of sources, including the state, county and municipal budgets, donations and sponsorships, European Union funds, and other legally permitted sources. According to a public document, the expenditure for social services in Romania increased by 17.2% in 2024.[25] However, it remains impossible to distinguish the part of the resources allocated to services for women victims of violence. In practice, funding for social services is scarce and the provision of specialist support services for victims of violence against women by state authorities or NGOs depends on EU funds and other donors.[26] GREVIO notes with concern that the very limited state and local budgetary allocations seem to be based on an institutional perception that there are only a few victims of violence against women and that additional resources for support services are unnecessary.[27] Nevertheless, in Romania domestic violence and violence against women remain under-reported and invisible phenomena. The lack of adequate and sustainable resources for the implementation of national policies to prevent and combat the phenomena, including for the provision of specialist support services for victims, can therefore constitute a major obstacle to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

30. As for the funding of NGOs, GREVIO regrets that although pieces of legislation, including the amended Social Assistance Law,[28] place a clear responsibility on the state to fund all mandatory social services delivered by accredited and licensed providers, this has not been translated into regular funding of NGO-run support services for women victims of violence. As raised in the baseline evaluation report, NGOs continue to face complex administrative procedures and stringent criteria to obtain negligible and short-term allocations and remain therefore dependent on external donors.[29] For example, in 2024, only two NGOs that provide services for victims of domestic violence received a total of €82 000 from a total of €26.5 million dedicated to social services; while in 2025, only three NGOs received a total of €100 000 from a total budget of €35 million.[30] There are no other long-term

20. Law No. 211/2004 on certain measures to ensure the information, support and protection of victims of crime, as amended and supplemented by Law No. 272/2024; and Government Decision No. 541 approving the methodology of issuing, distributing and posting vouchers for victims of offences, for determining their amount and the criteria for selecting public and private entities enlisted in the award mechanism.
21. See Article 20 General support services.
22. Information obtained during the evaluation visit, and written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 41.
23. Written submission by the Community Safety and Mediation Centre, p. 10.
24. Law No. 100/2024 amends Law No. 292/2011 on Social Assistance.
25. See: www.mfinante.gov.ro/static/10/Mfp/buget/sitebuget/InvestorPresentationJanuary2025.pdf.
26. Written submission by the association UNIC, p. 4, and written submission by the Community Safety and Mediation Centre, p. 6.
27. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
28. Article 132 of Law No. 292/2011 on Social Assistance, amended by points 110 and 111 of Law No. 100/2024.
29. Written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 45.
30. Written submission by the Community Safety and Mediation Centre, p. 13.

and sustainable funding streams for NGOs providing specialist support services to women victims of violence in Romania.

31. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. allocate adequate, sufficient and sustainable financial resources for policies, programmes and measures aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women;**
- **b. introduce, in all relevant line ministries, departments and other state entities, separate budget and funding lines for policies and measures on violence against women and domestic violence based on the principle of gender budgeting;**
- **c. ensure accessible and sustainable funding for women's rights organisations providing specialist support services for victims of domestic violence and violence against women, through long-term grants and streamlined procurement procedures.**

D. Data collection (Article 11)

32. Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence requires evidence-based policy making. The collection of systematic and comparable data from all relevant administrative sources is crucial in this regard, as is information on the prevalence of all forms of violence against women.

33. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had found that Romania had not established an integrated system for the collection of data on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. Although data had been gathered by various institutions, including the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Office for Judicial Statistics, the National Agency for Equal Opportunities and the National Institute for Public Health, it had not been centralised, sufficiently disaggregated and harmonised according to unified criteria in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon, nor had it been made publicly available by all the relevant authorities.

1. Law-enforcement agencies and the justice sector

34. The General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police continues to collect monthly statistics on the number of complaints and the type of offences reported, the number of perpetrators and victims disaggregated per their age group (adults and minors), their sex, the relationship between them and their place of residence.[31] In addition, the inspectorate collects data from the counties and the Municipality of Bucharest on the number of emergency barring orders (provisional protection orders) and protection orders issued by police officers and courts, as well as the number of reported breaches of protection orders issued by both the police and courts It is unclear to GREVIO whether the inspectorate or any other institution collects data on the sanctions applied for breaches of either form of protection orders. Police statistical data are made available on an internal platform and can be shared with any other public authority upon request, in accordance with the legislation governing access to information.

35. At the prosecutorial level, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice continues to collect data on the number of cases prosecuted, classified according to the offences in the Criminal Code, the number of perpetrators and victims disaggregated by their age

31. The General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police collects data according to the definition of family members set out in the Domestic Violence Law, which is in line with the Istanbul Convention. According to the reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention from 3 December 2025, statistical indicators have been established to measure acts of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social, spiritual or cyber violence occurring within the family or domestic environment, or between current or former spouses, as well as between current or former partners, regardless of whether the aggressor lives or has lived with the victim.

and the relationship between them. However, data broken down by the sex of the perpetrator and the victim remain unavailable. As GREVIO's baseline evaluation report had pointed out, it is essential to close this gap in order to identify the number of cases of violence perpetrated by men against women and prosecuted by the Romanian authorities. Information is also collected on the number of cases that have been dismissed ("classified") and therefore not referred to the courts. The Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice publishes its statistical data annually.

36. Within the criminal justice sector, the Office for Judicial Statistics continues to collect data disaggregated according to the criteria of the ECRIS case-management system used by all the courts in Romania. These data are disaggregated by category of offence in line with the Romanian Criminal Code,[32] the status of the judicial proceedings, the sex and age group of convicted individuals (adults and minors), the decision taken by the courts and the sentence imposed. However, the data do not contain information on the specific type of offence inflicted, the victim or the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, making it impossible to identify cases of violence against women and convictions for such violence. Moreover, the penitentiary system collects data on convicted individuals who are detained in prison by type of crime committed, and the probation system collects data by type of sanction imposed and participation in programmes for perpetrators.[33]

37. GREVIO notes with interest the ongoing initiative to modernise the data collection system by introducing additional criteria, such as the type of offence inflicted, more characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, and the relationship between them. The modernisation of the system would enable the integration of statistical data from the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, the judiciary and the penitentiary and probation systems, and would allow for the tracking of criminal cases across the criminal justice system. In connection with this modernisation, GREVIO stresses the importance of incorporating data categories that reflect all types of relevant relationships of the perpetrator to the victim, including former partners, unmarried partners and partners without a shared household. Within the civil justice sector, data on court decisions on custody and visitation rights, resulting in restrictions or withdrawals of parental rights, do exist, but the reason why the parental rights have been restricted can only be found in the decision. Restrictions seem to be mostly ordered for violence against the child.

38. Following the adoption of the Law on Femicide, the police, judicial authorities and forensic medicine institutes will be required to collect and publish disaggregated data on cases of femicides and homicides committed in the context of domestic violence, according to a common methodology and harmonised criteria. GREVIO welcomes this important step towards greater data collection in the area of violence against women.

39. GREVIO notes that the National Institute of Statistics has been designated to collect and analyse judicial statistics in the framework of data collection carried out for the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The institute publishes periodic statistical analyses on gender equality, including the publication "Women and Men: Work and Life Partnership".

40. GREVIO notes that although some progress has been achieved since its baseline evaluation report, persistent gaps in the collection of administrative data continue to hinder the assessment of the extent and characteristics of violence against women in Romania. It underlines that comprehensive and harmonised data collection is essential for the development of evidence-based public policies to combat violence against women. Such data would also enable an assessment of whether the law-enforcement and criminal justice responses are adequate in terms of the efficiency of the investigations and sanctions and the protection of women victims of violence. In this context,

32. Of relevance to the topic of gender-based violence are the following articles in the Criminal Code: Special Part, Title I Offences against the person, Chapter I Offences against life (Articles 188-192), Chapter II Offences against bodily integrity or health (Articles 193-198), Chapter III Offences committed against a family member (Articles 199-200), Chapter VI Offences against personal freedom (Articles 205-208), Chapter VIII Offences against sexual freedom and integrity (Articles 218-223), and Article 77 Aggravating circumstances;
33. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.

GREVIO reiterates the importance of aligning the data-collection practices of law-enforcement agencies, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice and the justice sector, at a minimum, with the criteria set out in the Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention.[34]

2. Healthcare sector

41. As regards the healthcare sector, GREVIO's baseline evaluation report had noted that data were collected on women victims of domestic or sexual violence admitted to hospital and disaggregated by age. However, these data were not extended to women who sought healthcare without being hospitalised. GREVIO regrets that no progress has been made in that area. The statistics collected by the National Institute for Public Health continue to represent the number of hospitalised victims of domestic or sexual violence. These statistics show that there are around 400 patients per year across the whole country. In this context, GREVIO emphasises that the collection of data for all instances of contact made by women and girls in connection with experiences of gender-based violence would allow for patterns of help seeking to emerge, as well as information on the response provided by the healthcare system.

42. On a more positive note, GREVIO notes with interest the adoption of Order No. 1040/21/5505/2024 establishing a common working procedure for interinstitutional co-operation on collecting, reporting and monitoring statistical data on domestic violence. Institutions such as the NAEO, the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the Superior Council of Magistracy, the National Institute of Forensic Medicine "Mina Minovici", the Superior Council of Forensic Medicine and the National Institute for Public Health are involved with this interinstitutional co-operation. This procedure may be an opportunity to improve the coherence and comparability of data collected across these sectors. However, a key challenge would stem from the fact that these sectors do not apply a harmonised definition of domestic violence. GREVIO regrets that the common procedure will not extend to information on all of the forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

3. Social services

43. The General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection provide social services to both victims of violence and perpetrators. The data collection by the social system in Romania is governed by the Domestic Violence Law, and has not changed since GREVIO's baseline evaluation report. The general directorates continue to collect data on cases of all forms of domestic violence as defined by the Domestic Violence Law. The data are disaggregated by nationality, sex and age of the victims and perpetrators, and the relationship between them, as both can benefit from social services, as well as the type of intervention and services offered, and the type of legal and safety protection measures taken after risk factors have been assessed. The NAEO consolidates these data, including data collected through the national helpline. GREVIO notes that the data-collection efforts do not yet extend to other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

44. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. ensure that data collected by all relevant stakeholders, namely law-enforcement agencies, judicial authorities, healthcare providers and social services, are disaggregated on the basis of harmonised criteria, including as a minimum, the sex and age of both the victim and perpetrator, the type of violence inflicted and the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, as well as other factors deemed relevant;**

34. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 76.

b. expand the collection of data by public and private healthcare providers to include all instances of contact made by women seeking medical care for reasons related to experiences of gender-based violence;
c. expand the collection of data by all the above sectors to all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

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

A. Prevention

45. Chapter III of the Istanbul Convention contains a number of general and more specific obligations in the area of prevention. This section analyses progress made, since the baseline evaluation monitoring procedure towards the implementation of early preventive measures. It also covers progress made towards the implementation of the more specific preventive measures provided under this chapter in the areas of education, training of all relevant professionals, and perpetrator programmes. Ensuring the effective prevention of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence is an important step in rendering it unacceptable and reducing levels of perpetration.[35] In turn, effective prevention empowers women and girls to speak out about their experiences and seek support and protection.

1. General obligations (Article 12)

46. Article 12 sets out a number of general preventive measures which represent the overarching principles of the parties' duty to prevent violence against women. These include the requirement to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men, with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men. A positive contribution to achieving such change can be made by men and boys acting as role models and advocates for equality between women and men and mutual respect, including by speaking out against violence, engaging other men in ending violence against women, or actively taking on caring responsibilities. Moreover, flowing from the premise that violence against women is a cause as much as a consequence of gender inequality, Article 12 further requires that parties adopt specific measures to empower women in order to enable them to recognise and reject discrimination, unequal power relations and, ultimately, reduce women's vulnerability to violence and achieve greater gender equality.

47. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had welcomed the efforts of the Romanian authorities, in particular the NAEO, to raise awareness of domestic violence. The NAEO had implemented information campaigns to tackle harmful gender stereotypes, promote the national helpline and address the specific needs of Roma women. These campaigns had involved public and educational institutions, civil society and representatives of the private sector and media. GREVIO had also noted, however, that, beyond domestic violence, other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention were addressed only marginally. In addition, it had identified a strong need to diversify awareness-raising campaigns, including to reach and address the needs of women and girls facing intersectional discrimination, and to implement such activities on a regular basis.

48. The current Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy and the Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY contain specific objectives for the primary prevention of violence through educational, awareness-raising and training activities. The strategies also promote the incorporation of age- and culture-sensitive approaches in such activities.[36] Since the baseline evaluation report, in order to implement the specific objectives of the strategies, the NAEO has continued to promote equal opportunities and mutual respect between women and men, inform students, teachers, the general public and professionals about harmful gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination

35. The importance of this endeavour has been reiterated and strengthened through the Dublin Declaration on the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, adopted in Dublin, Ireland, on 30 September 2022, by 38 member states of the Council of Europe.
36. Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy, pillar 1, objective 1.1; pillar 2, objectives 3 and 5; Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY, objectives 1, 2 and 3.

and explain the dynamics of violence occurring in intimate relationships or the workplace.[37] Every year, the NAEO carries out activities to mark International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In addition, its representatives participate in radio and television broadcasts, engage with other public institutions and the private sector, and display posters across the country with the aim of disseminating persuasive anti-discrimination and anti-violence messages. In 2025, the NAEO transmitted materials on domestic violence and available support services for victims to more than 3 000 central and local authorities, including ministries, the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, county councils, prefectures and municipalities. According to the authorities, these initiatives resulted in an increase in calls to the national telephone helpline.

49. While acknowledging all the initiatives undertaken, GREVIO notes that the focus has remained on domestic violence and that other forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention have not been addressed. GREVIO stresses the need for such initiatives to also target forms of violence such as sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, violence committed in the name of the so-called honour and the digital dimension of violence. Furthermore, although one campaign addressed discrimination against Roma women and girls, discrimination affecting other vulnerable groups such as elderly women and women with disabilities has not been addressed.[38] According to civil society organisations, violence against elderly women and women living in rural areas remains under-reported and invisible to public institutions, reinforcing the gaps identified.

50. GREVIO thus notes with grave concern the findings of several prevalence studies on violence against women in respect of Romania. According to the 2025 Gender Equality Index, 42% of women in Romania have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, a rate significantly above the EU average of 31%.[39] Recent studies conducted in Romania suggest that patriarchal norms are widespread and tolerated in Romanian society, particularly in rural areas and among individuals with a lower level of education or socio-economic status.[40] While physical violence appears to be widely censured, a significant section of the population remains tolerant of patriarchal control over women and holds beliefs that normalise non-physical forms of violence.[41] These findings point to a pressing need to pursue and reinforce the implementation of primary prevention measures across the country.

51. GREVIO further notes that it does not appear that any regular, formal or systematic evaluation is done in respect of the existing awareness-raising measures to allow for their adjustment and the identification of any undesirable or adverse effects. It considers it important to assess the impact of all primary prevention measures and awareness-raising initiatives in order to determine whether they have contributed to changes in public perceptions of gender roles and to the effective prevention of violence, beyond their quantitative outreach. As regards the funding of primary prevention measures, it remains unclear to what extent sustainable resources are available.

52. Another area of concern is the influence of media reporting on public perceptions of gender-based violence. An analysis of Romanian online media coverage of 184 cases of gender-based killings of women by their intimate partners highlighted a lack of interest among journalists in describing the correlation between incidents of domestic violence and femicides.[42] According to women's rights organisations, media headlines continue to portray gender-based

37. Among more than 10 campaigns conducted, there has been a campaign called "When I understand, I can choose", dismantling gender stereotypes, and another campaign called "Stories that inspire", sharing testimonies of women who survived domestic violence, as well as a campaign called "Same dreams, same chances", providing information on multiple discrimination and protection measures in cases involving domestic violence. The recent campaigns "Activism Starts in School" and "Love Does Not Mean Violence" aimed to increase understanding of the various forms of domestic violence, and to promote safe and respectful relationships.
38. Written submission by the association ANAIS, pp. 55-56, and written submission by the association UNIC, p. 9.
39. Gender Equality Index, EIGE, available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2025/domain/violence/RO.
40. Barometer of Gender-Based Violence, "Violence against women in Romania: representations, perceptions" (2022), survey conducted by the FILIA Centre, available at: https://centrulfilia.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Barometer-of-Gender-Based-Violence-2022-Romania-1.pdf.
41. Rughiniș C. et al. (2024), "Tolerating violence against women: attitude evolution and typology in Romania", *Sociologie Românească*, available at: www.revistasociologieromaneasca.ro/sr/article/view/1811?utm.
42. Balica E. (2021), "Intimate partner femicide in Romania: an analysis of the online media news", pp. 305-318. Available at: https://pmpjournal.org/index.php/pmp/article/view/292.

killings of women as “crimes of passion” or acts driven by “jealousy”, which contributes to the normalisation of violence and victim-blaming language.[43]

53. **While acknowledging the prevention efforts made by the Romanian authorities, GREVIO strongly encourages them to:**

- **a. pursue their primary prevention efforts to eradicate harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal beliefs that persist in Romanian society by implementing regular preventive measures and by anchoring them in long-term primary prevention efforts. Guidance on measures and tools for preventing and combating sexism can be drawn from Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating sexism;**
- **b. extend awareness-raising activities to all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including in their digital dimension, as well as the heightened risk of gender-based violence of women and girls exposed to intersectional discrimination, for example Roma women, elderly women and women with disabilities;**
- **c. regularly carry out impact assessments of awareness-raising campaigns and primary prevention measures to guarantee their relevance and effectiveness;**
- **d. identify, through such impact assessments, any undesirable or adverse effects of the awareness-raising campaigns and adjust them accordingly.**

2. Education (Article 14)

54. The drafters of the convention recognised the important role which formal and informal educational settings play in addressing the root causes of violence against women and girls. Article 14 therefore requires the design of teaching material that promotes equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and the right to personal integrity and informs learners of the different forms of gender-based violence against women, adapted to the age and capacity of learners and where parties deem appropriate. The obligation to promote these principles extends to informal educational facilities as well as any sports, cultural and leisure facilities. In this context, GREVIO underlines the importance of informing parents on the content and objectives of related courses, the qualifications of the persons providing the courses; and to whom any questions can be directed.

55. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had acknowledged the initial efforts by the Romanian authorities to implement the obligations under Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention by incorporating them into the relevant national legislation and the education system, while also noting the existence of certain misrepresentations of the aims of Article 14 in the country.

56. Since the baseline evaluation report, there have been positive strategic and legislative developments that build on an existing legislative framework already emphasising the important role of the education sector in addressing gender inequality and violence.[44] The current Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy provides for the updating of school curricula at the secondary level to incorporate the principle of equality between women and men, designating experts in school inspectorates to work with students, parents and teachers, offering initial and in-service training for school staff, and implementing campaigns to address harmful gender stereotypes with students. The strategy also foresees the drawing up of guidance on introducing the concepts of domestic violence and violence against women into university curricula. In relation to sexual violence, the Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY contains an objective on the creation and implementation of compulsory educational content on preventing sexual violence, including in the digital sphere, at all

43. Written submission by the association UNIC, p. 9.
44. The 2002 Gender Equality Law entrusts the Ministry of Education and Research with issuing recommendations on the creation of tools to assess school textbooks and curricula and guidelines to eliminate negative gender stereotypes. The 2003 Domestic Violence Law complements this obligation by requiring the introduction into school programmes of activities on gender equality, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence and the right to personal integrity.

levels of education, and provides for the participation of parents in information sessions. In addition, Law No. 198/2023 on pre-university education establishes health education as a mandatory subject in schools. For lower-secondary grades, this covers elements related to reproductive health and freely given consent in sexual relations. For upper-secondary grades, it also addresses risks related to the exposure to pornography and prostitution. However, a very low number of the students participate, leaving uncertainty as to the mandatory or optional nature of this course.[45]

57. Moreover, a national plan to combat violence in school (2024-2027) has been adopted and requires school inspectorates to promote teaching of emotion management, health education, life skills and critical thinking. The plan proposes a procedure to be followed in situations of physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and online violence between students. To help schools to implement the activities and procedures foreseen in the plan, the Ministry of Education and Research provided financial support to schools amounting to €305 000 in 2025, €628 000 in 2024 and €275 000 in 2023.

58. As regards the implementation in practice of the above strategic and legislative frameworks, according to the authorities learning about gender equality and gender-based violence forms part of a broader transdisciplinary education framework, which is mandatory at all levels of education. At the primary level, this transdisciplinary education focuses on civic education and resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner. In lower-secondary education, it addresses stereotypes and prejudices that may affect girls. In upper secondary education, the curriculum includes in addition mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution and the right to personal integrity.

59. As regards teaching materials and textbooks, these are reviewed periodically for the primary and lower-secondary levels on the basis of a range of criteria, including to eliminate gender stereotypes. A similar review process is currently ongoing for upper-secondary education; the reviewed textbooks as well as teacher training are expected to further promote gender equality. According to civil society organisations, the content of school textbooks and materials used in Romania remains strongly influenced by gender stereotypes and prejudices, while alternative materials developed by women's rights organisations are overlooked as a result of resistance to their content.[46] Although some campaigns for students, parents and teachers have been implemented, the teaching of the subjects under Article 14 of the convention is inconsistently provided and dependent on ad hoc initiatives, often implemented through partnerships with women's rights organisations.[47] In addition, a report from 2023 highlights worrying conclusions, stating that the implementation of the existing legislative requirements in practice is weak due to a lack of political commitment, expertise within educational institutions and budgetary allocations.[48]

60. As was already observed at the time of the baseline evaluation, sexuality education remains controversial in Romania. Although according to the authorities there are some courses addressing the risks for children related to online grooming and exploitation, GREVIO recalls that in a context marked by rising pornography consumption and increasing instances of harmful sexual behaviour among children, it is essential to intensify efforts to prevent and counter the risks of sexual violence by providing clear information to students, teachers and parents on the content and objectives of sexual education.[49] It draws attention to the Council of Europe's guidance note on safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornography.[50]

45. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
46. Written submission from the association ANAIS, pp. 66 and 68.
47. Written submission from the association ANAIS, p. 62, and written submission by the association UNIC, p. 11.
48. Mihai T. (2023), "Gender equality in education, monitoring report on public policies on gender equality and gender-based violence in the Romanian education system", available at: https://ongen.ro/2023/11/11/egalitatea-de-gen-in-educatie-raport-de-monitorizare/.
49. GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report on Austria, paragraphs 5 and 6, and GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on the United Kingdom, paragraph 123.
50. Council of Europe Steering Committee on the Rights of the Child, Thematic guidance note on safeguarding children from the risks of accessing online pornographic content. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/cdenf-2024-20-final-guidance-note-on-safeguarding-children-from-the-ri/1680b4bc32. See also Committee of Experts on the Prevention of Violence, Study on sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children: nature, causes, consequences and responses, p. 33. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/enf-vae-2024-05-e-harmful-sexual-behaviour-/1680b219c7.

61. With regard to prevention of violence in the digital sphere, GREVIO notes that the Strategy for the Digitisation of Education in Romania (2021-2027) refers to social equity and digital literacy; however, it does not contain specific measures to prevent and address forms of digital violence that may affect students and in particular girls. Information provided by civil society indicates that there has been an increase in manifestations of digital violence such as non-consensual sharing of intimate images and cyberstalking. However, the education system has not yet adapted all its curricula to help pupils to recognise and respond to such violence.[51] According to the authorities, the digital dimension of violence and the prevention of cyberbullying have been integrated into the curriculum for lower secondary education and addressed in nationwide school-based campaigns. In addition, these topics have also been included in all pre-university curricula and implemented in educational institutions in co-operation with the police.

62. Finally, in relation to the education of Roma girls, which is an essential factor in empowering them and protecting them from violence, studies show that Roma girls face discrimination in access to education,[52] as well as high rates of early school dropout linked to early relationships or marriage, early motherhood and a lack of family support for schooling.[53]

63. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure in practice:**

- **a. the teaching of all subjects covered by Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, notably the principles of equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and the right to personal integrity; this should also include information on the digital dimension of violence and the concept of freely given consent, including in sexual relations, and the harmful effects of violent pornography;**
- **b. the provision of information to parents and teachers on the aims and importance of education on these subjects, which are to make children aware of violence against women and girls, prevent such violence and protect them from possible harm;**
- **c. a review of teaching curricula and the materials used at all levels of education with a view to removing negative stereotypes of women and girls and fostering equality.**

3. Training of professionals (Article 15)

64. Building society's trust by delivering support, protection and justice to women and girls with experiences of gender-based violence requires well-trained professionals across a wide spectrum of fields. The standard set by the Istanbul Convention in its Article 15 is that of systematic initial and in-service training of all those who deal with victims or perpetrators of all acts of violence. The training that is required must cover the prevention and detection of such violence, equality between women and men, the needs and rights of victims and the prevention of secondary victimisation.

65. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had welcomed the provisions in the relevant national strategies that provided for training of different categories of professionals on how to intervene in cases of domestic violence and sexual violence. GREVIO had, however, noted that the training did not address other forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. It had further observed that while initial training for police officers, judges and prosecutors on domestic and sexual violence was mandatory and effective, in-service training was neither mandatory nor systematically organised. These shortcomings contributed to questionable judicial practices such as victim-blaming attitudes, a limited understanding of victims' vulnerability and instances of secondary victimisation.

51. Written submission provided by the association ANAIS, p. 70.
52. Council of Europe (2022), "Research on the barriers to Roma women's access to justice in four countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania", p. 19. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/research-on-the-barriers-of-roma-women-s-access-to-justice-in-four-cou/1680a7cd27.
53. "Promoting the integration of Roma women" (2021), pp. 4-5. Available at: www.clnr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PROMA_National-Report.pdf.

During the baseline evaluation procedure, GREVIO had not received information on the training of healthcare and social workers, and asylum officials.

66. The current Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy prioritises the strengthening of the institutional response to domestic violence through training. The gender equality pillar emphasises the importance of in-service training for professionals on gender equality aspects, while the domestic violence pillar identifies in-service training on protection measures and on victim- and child-friendly procedures for police officers, prosecutors, judges and lawyers as a priority. Despite these positive elements in the strategy, GREVIO regrets that since the baseline evaluation report neither the strategy nor the legislation have firmly embedded mandatory in-service training on domestic violence or other forms of violence against women for relevant professional groups. According to the authorities, new amendments to the Domestic Violence Law would include some mandatory in-service training for professionals dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

67. As regards the training of police officers, in-service training sessions and methodologies have continued to expand and include various topics, including human rights and non-discrimination, risk assessment and management in cases of domestic and sexual violence, hate-motivated crimes, communicating with victims, witnesses and perpetrators and hearing children. However, GREVIO was alerted of uneven levels of training and engagement across the six police schools in Romania, which risk perpetuating victim-blaming attitudes and undermining the level of protection afforded to women.[54] Moreover, given the widespread nature of domestic violence and the likelihood that any police officer may encounter victims, GREVIO points to the importance of sustaining efforts to ensure that all police officers receive adequate training and apply a victim-centred response in cases of domestic violence.

68. GREVIO welcomes the efforts made by the National Institute of Magistracy to offer a comprehensive range of in-service training programmes, many of which touch on aspects of relevance to the Istanbul Convention, mainly in the area of domestic violence. The institute organised a wide range of in-service training in the form of interdisciplinary sessions focusing on juvenile justice, hearing of children, child protection, parental authority, the dynamics of domestic violence, prevention of secondary victimisation, enforcement of protection orders, administration of evidence in criminal cases, and sanctions for domestic violence. These sessions are also attended by judges selected and appointed from among experienced legal professionals. GREVIO notes that the Council of Europe's HELP course (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) on violence against women and domestic violence has been integrated into the institute's catalogue of continuous training programmes.[55] The authorities have furthermore approved an in-service training programme that explicitly identifies combating domestic violence as a priority area, although no information was provided on its implementation.[56] It remains unclear whether the gendered dynamics of domestic violence are considered in the programme and training sessions. Recognising the increasing number of judges who attend voluntary training, GREVIO points to the need to ensure a coherent and comprehensive knowledge base in relation to violence against women and domestic violence among all judges. It welcomes the obligation placed on judges to attend training once every three years – an element that forms part of their professional evaluation. GREVO notes, however, the wide discretion afforded to individual judges as to what training to follow, which means that there is no requirement to attend specific training courses.

69. In a more alarming development, GREVIO notes with grave concern that the concept of parental alienation (often called "estrangement" in legal practice) has been incorporated into

54. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
55. See: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/help-online-course.
56. In Decision No. 224/2024, the National Institute of Magistracy approved the Continuous Training Programme for 2025, which explicitly identifies the combating of domestic violence as a priority area. The programme aims to: strengthen the understanding of judges and prosecutors of the phenomenon and dynamics of domestic violence; clarify the types of intervention and the respective roles of professionals in the justice sector; enhance case management centred on victim protection; enhance evidence management and sentencing; reinforce an interdisciplinary approach and co-operation with law-enforcement bodies and social services.

Romanian legislation and the training of judges and prosecutors.[57] According to the authorities, the training of the judiciary approaches the concept from a psychological perspective, emphasising its complexity and the need for caution in its application. In addition, the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, has been disseminated to family judges. However, GREVIO recalls that when the gendered dynamics of domestic violence and the patterns of post-separation control over mothers and children are not taken into account in training, there is a high risk that the notion of parental alienation and similar notions will be used to discredit women's legitimate reports of domestic violence during separation or divorce proceedings, as well as to undermine children's well-founded reluctance to maintain contact with the abusive parent. This is aggravated in contexts such as in Romania where such concepts are legally enacted.[58] As GREVIO has had the opportunity to note, the so-called parental alienation syndrome has been denounced by the scientific community as a scientifically unfounded concept that shifts the attention away from the alleged abuse and instead attributes responsibility to the supposedly "alienating" behaviour of a woman towards her child.[59]

70. While GREVIO underscores its full respect for the independence and autonomy of the judiciary, it notes at the same time the unique and essential role the judiciary plays in applying the principles of the Istanbul Convention. It is of paramount importance that, when adjudicating cases pertaining to violence against women, judicial decisions are informed and based on specialist knowledge. This requires expertise on very complex phenomena, such as the "freeze, flop and befriend" reactions of victims of rape and the long-term consequences of the exposure of children to domestic violence. Such training needs cannot be sufficiently addressed by optional courses, but require mandatory and in-depth training of judges on relevant issues to ensure that they can respond to women victims of violence and their children in a manner that instils their trust in the judiciary and provides an adequate sense of justice. This is of acute relevance not only in the context of criminal proceedings but also in relation to family law cases, where judicial decisions on custody and visitation should offer consideration for the safety concerns of women and children and duly consider reports of domestic violence.

71. Finally, GREVIO notes that training efforts do not extend to other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, such as stalking, harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced sterilisation, forced abortion, and violence committed in the name of the so-called "honour".

72. As regards the training of social workers, in the light of the information available, it is unclear whether initial and in-service training for social workers has been made mandatory since the baseline evaluation report. The National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption and the NAEO organised in-service training sessions for500 social workers and community nurses on signs of domestic violence, perpetrators' anger management and interinstitutional case management and co-operation. However, these initiatives seem to reach only a small fraction of social workers in Romania. In addition, the information available does not indicate whether the training sessions address the gendered dynamics of domestic violence, patterns of control over women or the specific needs of Roma women.

73. When it comes to the training of healthcare professionals, the topic of gender-based violence against women remains absent from the initial training for students in medicine, but it is addressed in postgraduate training for forensic and emergency doctors. Sessions are provided on the identification of signs of violence, empathetic and non-judgmental communication, non-fatal strangulation, the provision of immediate care to women and their children, and referral to support services; however, in-service training for healthcare professionals is not mandatory nor systematic. Local protocols for interinstitutional co-operation are in place (for example, with the police and with

57. Law No. 123/2024 amends Law No. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child. See the assessment under Article 31.
58. See Article 31, Custody, visitation rights and safety.
59. See the statement of December 2017 by the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) warning that the concepts of "parental alienation syndrome" and "parental alienation" should not be used in any psychotherapeutic practice. This statement by the EAP, which is made up of 128 psychotherapy organisations from 41 European countries, serves as a guideline for psychotherapists across Europe.

specialist support services), as are protocols for clinical assessment and documentation of physical and psychological violence, although these are adapted locally by each institution. While acknowledging the efforts made to train healthcare professionals, GREVIO notes that doctors are often familiar with the family context and personal circumstances of their patients and are therefore in a key position to detect signs of violence and provide frontline care to women and girls. As noted in international studies, women experiencing intimate partner violence tend to seek healthcare more frequently than women who have not experienced it and identify healthcare providers as the professionals they would most trust with disclosure of abuse.[60] GREVIO notes that there is a pressing need to introduce mandatory initial and in-service training for healthcare professionals on violence against women, including on domestic violence, sexual violence and rape, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion, unwanted pregnancy following rape and forced sterilisation.

74. On the training of teachers, all training programmes accredited by the Ministry of Education and Research are voluntary and cover topics such as preventing bullying, peaceful conflict resolution, inclusive education, health education and human and children's rights. However, they do not contain information on gender equality, domestic violence and violence against women. Measures originally intended to train teachers on sexuality education have yet to be implemented.[61] Gaps are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where teachers work in under-resourced and often overcrowded schools and lack knowledge and pedagogical tools to prevent or to respond to harmful stereotypes and manifestations of violence. In such contexts, teachers may even apply inappropriate disciplinary measures normalising violence.[62]

75. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. introduce mandatory and systematic initial and in-service training for law-enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors, healthcare professionals, social workers and teachers;**
- **b. support such training with clear protocols and guidelines aimed at identifying, providing support to and further referring victims to specialist support services;**
- **c. address all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including in its digital dimensions, as well as stereotypes and perceptions related to violence against women;**
- **d. focus training on the safety and protection concerns of mothers victims of domestic violence and their children and therefore refrain from using concepts such as "alienating", "hostile", "estranging" or similar;**
- **e. regularly evaluate the impact of all professional training initiatives.**

4. Preventive intervention and treatment programmes (Article 16)

76. Perpetrator programmes are important elements of an integrated and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating violence against women. Under Article 16 of the convention, parties are required to set up or support programmes that prevent perpetrators of domestic violence and of sexual violence from re-offending and support them in adopting non-violent behavioural strategies. Making the safety of, the support for, and the human rights of, victims a primary concern, these programmes are key elements in ensuring women's safety from known perpetrators. The convention requires their close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims.

a. Programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence

77. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had found that Romania lacked a coherent and comprehensive framework for preventive intervention and treatment programmes for perpetrators of

60. Tarzia L. et al. (2020), "Women's experiences and expectations after disclosure of intimate partner abuse to a healthcare provider: a qualitative meta-synthesis", *BMJ Open*, and Feder G. S. et al. (2006), "Women exposed to intimate partner violence: expectations and experiences when they encounter health care professionals: a meta-analysis of qualitative studies".
61. Written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 67.
62. Written submission by the association UNIC, p. 11.

domestic violence. It had taken note of the establishment, in 2022, of a few counselling centres for perpetrators, set up in co-operation with local General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection. Moreover, while acknowledging the existence of programmes implemented in the penitentiary and probation systems for convicted perpetrators of crimes against family members, GREVIO had noted that these programmes worked as social assistance programmes, focusing predominantly on anger management and addiction issues, without sufficiently addressing the gendered power relations that underpin domestic violence or encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility for their acts. Perpetrators had either been required to participate by the courts or advised to do so by probation counsellors, only when participation had been deemed necessary. GREVIO had further underlined the absence of specific measures to assess the impact of these programmes on perpetrators' behaviour towards women.

78. Since the baseline evaluation, some progress has been achieved in providing programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence, although substantive shortcomings persist. GREVIO notes positively that the current Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Strategy includes an objective on the expansion of partnerships and access to psychological counselling for perpetrators of domestic violence. There are currently 15 small-scale counselling centres, managed by local General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection, which continue to provide to perpetrators, as appropriate, psychological counselling to change violent behaviour with a focus on anger management, medical treatment for different types of addictions, legal counselling and housing facilities. A total of 238 perpetrators participated in psychological counselling between 2022 and 2024, the vast majority of whom participated following a court order (usually following a decision to grant a protection order to another person). Co-operation agreements have been concluded between local social services, police units, probation services and courts with the aim of improving perpetrator referral pathways. GREVIO notes that despite these efforts, counselling centres are not available across the country and that the existing ones do not propose programmes aimed at dismantling gender stereotypes, addressing power-based relations or encouraging perpetrators' accountability and behavioural change. In addition, civil society organisations have raised concerns regarding the qualification of the staff employed by the centres and their scarce financial resources.

79. In the prison system, there are a number of programmes for detained perpetrators, including the programme "Stop violence!" which aims to raise awareness of aggressive behaviours and risk factors contributing to domestic violence. The programme consists of 12 to 24 sessions delivered by trained professionals to groups of approximately 10 participants. Figures provided by the authorities indicate a moderate increase in participation between 2020 and 2024.[63] Concerning the probation system, the interventions continue to rely on general approaches, such as anger management and handling high-risk situations. While the programmes in both the penitentiary and probation systems may address some individual risk factors, they do not specifically focus on the dynamics of domestic violence and power-based relations or on encouraging perpetrators to assume responsibility, despite the number of individuals sentenced for family violence (1 069 in 2024).

80. Courts and probation services do not seem to be proactive in informing and referring perpetrators to programmes. When ordered by a court, the participation in a programme is mandatory for convicted persons in probation. In this respect, research suggests that court-mandated participation, backed up by "swift and certain" sanctions for non-attendance or dropouts, works better because programme completers are less likely to reoffend.[64] Information on completion rates, reoffending or feedback from victims to monitor behavioural changes in perpetrators is not available. A positive fact that GREVIO welcomes is that the participation in a programme does not influence the duration of the sanction.

81. As regards voluntary participation of individuals who may be at risk of committing or repeating domestic violence, participation in counselling programmes remains very limited. GREVIO regrets

63. State report submitted by Romania: 28 groups were registered in 2020 and 36 groups in 2024.
64. Council of Europe (2014), "Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention, a collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence", p. 12. Available at: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/studies.

that there are no public information campaigns or police encouragement for voluntary participation, so many perpetrators remain unaware of the counselling services available.

82. On the subject of co-operation between perpetrator programmes and specialist victim support services, GREVIO notes that victims are often not informed of their perpetrator's participation in a programme.

83. Finally, with regard to the quality of perpetrator programmes, those provided in counselling centres benefit from minimum quality standards and self-evaluation forms introduced in 2019.[65] There are no similar standards for the programmes provided in prison settings. In addition, despite references to internal monitoring procedures, there are no mechanisms in place to assess the impact of all programmes on perpetrators' behaviour towards women. In this regard, GREVIO draws the attention of the Romanian authorities to the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and a set of European standards for perpetrator programmes, which are entirely in line with the Istanbul Convention and could serve as a reference on the subject.[66] It further points to the need to continue along this path and to develop standards and criteria for programme evaluation on the basis of existing best practices so that the authorities can obtain assurance that these programmes actually serve their preventive purpose.[67]

b. Programmes for perpetrators of sexual violence

84. Treatment programmes for perpetrators of sexual violence exist both inside and outside of prison settings. The programme Passport to Freedom continues to be implemented in the penitentiary system, as was the case during the baseline evaluation. The programme aims to promote self-management, specifically the management of sexual impulses, and encourages taking responsibility through a combination of psychological and educational components delivered in individual or group sessions. The authorities however indicated that only approximately half of the participants have completed the programme, which raises questions regarding its overall impact. Furthermore, counselling centres managed by the local General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection also provide support to interested and referred individuals outside prison settings.

85. **Recalling the findings in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. develop programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence based on common minimum standards, focusing on explaining the dynamics of domestic violence, achieving behavioural change and taking full responsibility for their acts. These programmes should work in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims to ensure their safety;**
- **b. expand the perpetrator programmes for both domestic and sexual violence, particularly in regions where such programmes are not yet available;**
- **c. ensure that staff administering such programmes receive adequate training, incorporating a gendered understanding of domestic violence and the need to deconstruct harmful gender stereotypes;**
- **d. use all available means to ensure that perpetrator programmes are widely attended, including by disseminating information;**
- **e. develop standards for programme evaluation, based on existing best practices, and ensure that independent evaluations are periodically carried out to assess whether the preventive aims of the programmes are effectively achieved.**

65. The minimum quality standards have been introduced by the Order of the Minister of Labour and Social Justice No. 28/2019; see Annex 6, available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/210533 (in Romanian).
66. See: www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/european-standards-for-perpetrator-programmes.
67. The IMPACT project of the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence has developed guidelines for assessment and evaluation of perpetrator programmes: www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/what-we-do/research/project-impact.

B. Protection and support

86. Chapter IV of the Istanbul Convention requires a multifaceted, professional and victim-oriented support structure for any woman or girl who has experienced any of the forms of violence covered by the convention. General and specialist support services that are victim-oriented, accessible to all and adequate in numbers greatly facilitate recovery by offering support, protection and assistance to overcome the multiple consequences of such violence. As such, they play a key role in offering a comprehensive and adequate response to the different forms of violence covered by the convention.

1. General obligations (Article 18)

87. Article 18 of the Istanbul Convention sets out a number of general principles to be respected in the provision of both general and specialist protective and supportive services for women victims of violence. One of these principles is the need for services to act in a concerted and co-ordinated manner, with the involvement of all the agencies concerned. More specifically, Article 18, paragraph 2, of the convention requires parties to put in place appropriate co-ordination mechanisms that can ensure effective co-operation among, *inter alia*, the judiciary, public prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, local and regional authorities, NGOs and other relevant entities and organisations. In this regard, women's rights NGOs and specialist women's support services play an important role in guaranteeing that the rights of victims are safeguarded in multi-agency co-operation. Other general principles established under this Article include the need for measures of protection and support to be based on a gendered understanding of violence against women, and to focus on women's safety and human rights, taking into account the relationship between victims, perpetrators, children and their wider environment, and addressing their needs holistically. Specialist support services must aim at the empowerment and economic independence of women victims of violence and avoid their secondary victimisation. This provision equally stresses the importance of ensuring that access to services is not subject to the victim's willingness to press charges or testify against the perpetrator.

88. As noted in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, the Domestic Violence Law establishes a framework for multi-agency and multisectoral co-operation, and several structures have been created to this end, including intersectoral county teams with an advisory role and mobile teams for emergency interventions.[68] The baseline report had highlighted that the multiplication of new structures resulted in unclear and sometimes overlapping roles, while no institutionalised overarching mechanism existed to ensure co-ordination and co-operation among governmental and non-governmental agencies and service providers. In addition, the framework focused on victims of domestic violence, with no comparable services for victims of other forms of violence against women.

89. The situation in Romania regarding multi-agency and multisectoral co-operation remains the same as described in the baseline evaluation report. Multidisciplinary mobile teams established under the authority of the General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection continue to conduct emergency interventions in domestic violence situations (verifying alerts, carrying out initial risk assessments and referring victims to emergency medical care, the police, or social or legal services). Under an international project implemented in the period 2022-2024, the NAEO devised several guidance materials aimed at increasing the capacity of the mobile teams for emergency interventions. It also launched a barometer on the phenomenon of domestic violence. Notwithstanding these positive developments, multi-agency co-operation in the provision of support services to women victims of violence continues to be weak and insufficiently structured across the country. While relevant authorities in some counties have concluded co-operation protocols, in other counties co-ordination and referrals still rely on informal contacts between professionals, as

68. Law No. 217/2003 provides for the creation of intersectoral teams in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence, with an advisory role, which operate at the level of counties and sectors of Bucharest municipality and of mobile teams, which operate at the level of all public social assistance services, with the role of verifying cases reported, conducting initial risk assessment and taking measures to overcoming the risks.

was the case at the time of the baseline evaluation.[69] Although informal communication may allow for rapid responses in individual cases, GREVIO considers that it cannot substitute a formalised institutional co-ordination framework at the level of the counties and the municipality of Bucharest that enables a comprehensive understanding of the situation of victims and their children, as well as consistent support and protection throughout their pathway out of violence. Civil society organisations have further drawn GREVIO's attention to continuing deficiencies that impede the efficient provision of protection and support measures. Victims are required to navigate multiple institutions in order to obtain assistance and recount their experiences of violence. They are not systematically involved in the drawing up of their own safety plans.[70] GREVIO notes with concern that such practices place victims in difficult and potentially retraumatising situations, undermining the victim-centred nature of protection and support measures and increasing the risk to their safety and that of their children. Finally, existing multi-agency co-operation still does not extend to other forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

90. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to step up their efforts to:**

- **a. improve multi-agency co-operation among all relevant stakeholders and structures established across the country, based on formal and standardised protocols and clear procedures, which include a gendered understanding of violence against women and detail the measures to be taken;**
- **b. take the necessary measures to ensure that such co-operation and protocols exist for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.**

2. General support services (Article 20)

91. General support services, such as social services, health services as well as housing or employment services must be equipped to offer support and protection to women victims of gender-based violence of all ages and backgrounds. Article 20 of the Istanbul Convention requires state parties to ensure that these services are adequately resourced and that the staff is adequately trained on the different forms of violence against women, and able to respond to victims in a supportive manner, in particular those that women and girls turn to first (i.e. health and social services).[71] Their interventions are often decisive for victims' onward journey towards a life free from violence and thus a core element of a trust-based system of protection and support.

a. Social services

92. In Romania, social services and social benefits are granted without discrimination to all individuals in vulnerable situations, regardless of their background, through the General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection at the county level and the Public Social Assistance Services at the local level.[72] The Domestic Violence Law guarantees social assistance services, economic support and vocational counselling for victims of domestic violence and assigns clear responsibilities to central and local authorities. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had noted however that limited information was available regarding the practical implementation of this framework, in particular as concerns the accessibility and efficiency of social services and economic support measures. It had also pointed to insufficient financial resources allocated to social services and to low awareness of available services among victims and some authorities, who did not systematically implement referral procedures.

93. The Romanian authorities have taken steps to strengthen financial support and social services for victims of crime. Victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual violence are entitled to several forms of state financial support by virtue of their status as victims of crime. As noted earlier in this report, the Ministry of Justice provides vouchers, worth up to five national gross minimum wages (approximately €4 000 in 2026), as an advance payment of compensation, to cover the urgent

69. Written submission by the association UNIC, p. 16.
70. Written submission by the Community Safety and Mediation Centre, p. 14.
71. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 127.
72. Law No. 292/2011 on Social Assistance.

needs of victims (food, accommodation, transport, medication and hygiene products). The vouchers are granted by decision of a county tribunal, distributed through accredited public and private entities and must be used within 90 days. Between 2024 and 2025, only nine victims benefited from this mechanism. The very low number of beneficiaries seems to be due to the complex allocation procedure, which requires filing out a request demonstrating and estimating the victim's urgent needs.[73] The mechanism is not easily accessible to victims, who require practical support and the involvement of accredited entities throughout the process.[74] Moreover, victims can only use the vouchers with a limited number of affiliated providers, while unspent amounts must be returned, which reduces the practical impact of this support. Therefore, GREVIO notes that the current voucher system does not meet the immediate needs of the victims as intended.

94. As to social legislation, Law No. 114/2023 amending the Domestic Violence Law and the State Allowance for Children Law allows a parent who is a victim of domestic violence to receive the state allowance for her/his child, provided that a protection order is issued by a court and parental rights are in place. In addition, the National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2022-2027 recognises victims of domestic violence and homeless women as vulnerable groups and foresees measures to improve their access to emergency and temporary housing, as well as to social services. The National Strategy for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority 2022-2027 devotes particular attention to housing and the improvement of living conditions in Roma communities, yet the measures envisaged do not provide for specific actions addressing the housing needs of Roma women, including those exposed to domestic violence.

95. With reference to concerns expressed in its baseline evaluation report, in particular as regards the accessibility and effectiveness of social services, GREVIO notes that, in 2022, minimum standards for the management of domestic violence cases by social services were adopted, and apply to the assessment of the victims' needs, the development of individual intervention plans and multidisciplinary coordination of the interventions.[75] However, GREVIO was alerted by civil society organisations that social services remain under-resourced and that training of social workers on gender-based violence, victim support and referrals to specialist services is weak. Therefore, their interventions are often limited to administrative assistance or referrals to women's rights organisations. Moreover, access to existing social benefits remains administratively complex; housing opportunities do not prioritise victims of domestic violence and are particularly limited in rural areas. On a positive note, according to the authorities, vocational guidance and training and labour-market integration measures are available to victims of domestic violence in all counties.

96. On the whole, GREVIO notes that the existing support measures continue to focus on victims of domestic violence and sexual violence, without any comparable services for victims of other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

97. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. allocate sufficient human and financial resources to social services to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively when responding to cases involving violence against women and their children;**
- **b. take the necessary measures to improve in practice the access of women victims of violence to long-term financial assistance, social housing and support to find employment in order to gain economic independence.**

b. Healthcare services

98. Protocols and procedures are in place within the healthcare system in Romania for the management of cases of physical and psychological violence. They contain guidance on

73. Evaluation report on Romania, Forth evaluation round by GRETA (2025), p. 35.
74. Written submission by the Community Safety and Mediation Centre, p.12.
75. Order No. 20840/2022 of the Minister of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities approving the Minimum Mandatory Standards on the application of case management within social services for victims of domestic violence.

the documentation of signs of violence, clinical assessment, information to be given to victims and other public institutions, and referrals to specialist support services. Each healthcare facility may adopt and adapt its own internal protocol and procedure.[76] However, it is unclear to what extent these protocols address co-operation between healthcare services and specialist support services or whether they cover forms of violence against women beyond physical and psychological violence.

99. The current legislation stipulates that emergency medical services are provided free of charge to all women who are victims of violence, regardless of their insurance status, nationality or migration status. As a positive example, the Emergency University Hospital in Bucharest provides medical care and, where necessary, immediate psychological support to all victims of physical violence who seek assistance. In cases involving victims under 18 who have been subjected to sexual violence, they are typically referred to specialist paediatric services.

100. With regard to access to healthcare in municipalities, the National Healthcare Strategy for the period 2023-2030 foresees the creation of integrated community-level services that address health through medical, educational and social assistance, with particular attention on vulnerable and at-risk groups, including children, older persons, persons with disabilities and the Roma population.[77] According to the authorities, these centres exist in communities of at least 700 inhabitants and operate under the responsibility of the social services. They employ medical nurses and work in co-operation with family doctors and Roma health mediators. Asylum seekers undergo vulnerability screening and are referred to tailored support services where necessary.

101. Despite the measures described above, very few women victims of violence seek medical help.[78] Access is limited by the restriction of free healthcare to emergency situations, while the very little training of healthcare professionals in responding to violence against women leaves many victims without meaningful support. Information provided by civil society organisations indicates that migrant women, Roma women and LBTI women in particular encounter discriminatory attitudes, prejudices and a lack of cultural sensitivity among medical professionals, which deters them from approaching healthcare services.[79] Informal payments appear to be a pre-condition for Roma women to receive adequate healthcare, resulting in the exclusion of those who cannot make such payments.[80]

102. When victims access the emergency healthcare system, medical professionals notify the police. Failure to comply with this obligation is punishable under the Criminal Code.[81] As a result women who have initially disclosed violence perpetrated by their partners subsequently retract their statement, attributing their injuries to accidental causes. Such attitudes illustrate women's fear and even mistrust where notification to the police may lead to unwanted institutional intervention. GREVIO recalls that a victim-centred approach requires that women and girls who are victims of violence receive medical care and psychological support as a priority, and that they are enabled to decide whether and when to report the violence to the police once they feel ready to do so. In line with GREVIO's findings in its evaluation reports, where the authorities establish a reporting obligation for professionals, it is important to strike a balance between the victims' protection needs, including those of their children, and respect for confidentiality and victims' autonomy. The authorities should circumscribe this obligation to cases where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a serious

76. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
77. Ninth periodic report submitted by Romania on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2024), p. 40.
78. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
79. Written submission by the association ANAIS, pp.103-105.
80. See: https://europe.ippf.org/stories/roma-women-romania-face-old-and-new-threats-abortion-care-access and https://ongen.ro/2025/07/10/intre-dreptate-si-realitate-accesul-la-sanatatea-reproductiva-in-romania-cercetare/.
81. The Criminal Code (Article 267) imposes sanctions on civil servants who fail to notify the judicial bodies of any offence of which they become aware by virtue of their profession. Medical doctors employed in a hospital unit of the public health system may be qualified as civil servants, according to the High Court of Cassation and Justice (Decision No. 26 of 3 December 2014). In addition, the Code of Criminal Procedure (Article 291) requires officials occupying management positions within a public administration or within other public authorities, public institutions or other legal persons under public law to immediately report any offence for which the criminal action is initiated *ex officio*, and to take measures to preserve any relevant evidence.

act of violence covered by the scope of the convention has been committed and that further serious acts are to be expected. In such cases, reporting may be made contingent on certain appropriate conditions, such as the consent of the victim, with the exception of some specific cases, such as where the victim is a minor or is unable to protect her or himself because of disabilities.[82]

103. Last, GREVIO emphasises that the collection and preservation of medical evidence, as well as the victim's free and timely access to medical documentation, including medical certificates and forensic reports documenting their injuries, are of central importance to enabling victims to make informed decisions about seeking justice and support. With a view to empowering victims, such documentation should be made available directly to them irrespective of their willingness to report to the authorities.

104. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that women who are victims of violence have access to adequately resourced and trained healthcare services, in particular by:**

- **a. implementing standardised healthcare pathways to ensure a gender-sensitive, trauma-informed and non-judgmental approach to assisting victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, and facilitating referrals to appropriate specialist support services;**
- **b. ensuring that healthcare services for victims of violence are accessible to all women, including Roma women, migrant women, including those with irregular migration status, and other women who may face significant barriers to seeking help.**

3. Specialist support services (Article 22)

105. Specialist support services ensure the complex task of empowering victims through optimal support and assistance catered to their specific needs and are an equally important cornerstone of a trust-based system of protection and support. Much of this is best ensured by women's organisations and by support services provided, for example, by local authorities with specialist and experienced staff with in-depth knowledge of gender-based violence against women. They need to be able to address the different types of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and to provide support to all groups of victims, including hard-to-reach groups.

106. As noted in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, the Domestic Violence Law guarantees access to specialist support to women who are victims, tailored to their needs. The law sets out different types of services based on residential and non-residential models.[83] These services typically include domestic violence shelters, psychological and legal counselling, and social assistance. All service providers must comply with the minimum quality standards introduced in 2019, which create a unified mandatory framework for licensing and running services for women victims of domestic violence and their children.[84] The standards are guided by several principles: access to services should be non-discriminatory and free of charge; services should be gender-sensitive; and professionals should work together to ensure that women victims of domestic violence receive adequate support.

82. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraphs 146 and 148. See GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on Albania, paragraph 98; Austria, paragraph 100; and Portugal, paragraph 97; and its baseline evaluation reports on Estonia, paragraph 141; Cyprus, paragraph 161; Norway, paragraph 148; and the United Kingdom, paragraph 260.
83. Residential services include emergency reception centres providing immediate accommodation and essential services such as healthcare, psychological and legal counselling (maximum 60 days); recovery centres providing the above service as well as vocational counselling to empower women (maximum 180 days); and protected houses ensuring long-term integrated assistance aimed at social reintegration (maximum 12 months). Non-residential services comprise day centres offering information and psychological and legal counselling.
84. The minimum quality standards were introduced by the Order of the Minister of Labour and Social Justice No. 28/2019; they relate to access to services, initial assessment and individualised intervention plans, staffing and management, sanitary and hygienic conditions, food provision, rights of the beneficiaries and ethical principles. The standards are available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/210533 (in Romanian).

107. Since the baseline evaluation report, the Romanian authorities have taken steps to expand the availability of long-term shelters and specialist services for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence across the country, which GREVIO welcomes. They have established a network of 42 shelters for victims of domestic violence across the country (one in each county) and 10 regional intervention centres for victims of sexual violence set up in co-operation with hospital emergency services. These facilities are intended to provide free-of-charge medical care and psychological and legal counselling following a one-stop-shop approach.

108. However, GREVIO notes with grave concern that access to domestic violence shelters is conditional on victims submitting an identity document, a declaration and supporting documentation testifying their victim status or proving the violence.[85] These are some of the reasons why social workers involved in recent research emphasised the need for more emergency reception centres, as women cannot be taken directly to shelters before undergoing a socio-medical assessment.[86] GREVIO points to the fact that documentation requirements are particularly difficult to fulfil in situations characterised by violence, fear and urgency, and create barriers that undermine the immediacy and victim-centred nature of available protection measures. Such requirements are not in line with Article 18, paragraph 4, of the Istanbul Convention, which stipulates that the provision of services shall not depend on the victim's willingness to testify to the violence or to press charges against the perpetrator. GREVIO notes that the criteria for accessing domestic violence shelters will be reviewed in accordance with new draft provisions, which will remove the requirement to present a protection order or file a criminal complaint, and the requirement to present an identity document or prove domicile in the area where the shelter operates.

109. Moreover, the overall number of residential and non-residential specialist services for victims of domestic violence has slightly decreased. While 152 services were available in 2022, there were 144 in 2025.[87] This decline appears to be driven by budgetary constraints leading to discontinuation of services. Moreover, when awarded, annual budget increases merely compensate for inflation, rather than enabling the expansion of services across the country.[88] Most specialist services are managed by public authorities and rely on a combination of state budget allocations, donations, international funding and support from religious organisations. This highlights the fragmented nature of their funding, which could jeopardise the continuity of services.

110. Some additional challenges appear to limit the access to and efficiency of specialist support services. Social workers lack training on gender-based violence and a victim-centred approach, which can lead to victim-blaming attitudes, particularly when women return to the perpetrator. Moreover, victims living in rural or isolated areas face barriers to accessing shelters and adequate support as the services remain concentrated in cities/county administrative centres – a challenge already pointed out in the baseline evaluation report.[89] This gap has also been identified in research concluding that the most vulnerable communities remain poorly covered by public social services, and the only solution for victims of domestic violence is to turn to the non-governmental sector.[90]

111. Indeed, NGOs play an essential role in providing specialist support to victims of violence. Victims place trust in their long-standing expertise and victim-centred approach as well as their presence in rural areas. To provide specialist services and counselling to victims, NGOs, as all other service providers, must be accredited and licensed. GREVIO regrets that the accreditation and licensing processes are widely perceived as being burdensome and not accompanied by any form of subsequent public financial support. Obtaining a licence requires NGOs to meet the minimum

85. Government Decision No. 559 of 19 May 2021 on the approval of the Integrated National Programme for the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence and the Framework Methodology on the organisation and functioning of the innovative integrated national network of protected housing for victims of domestic violence, available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/242821?utm, Article 6 of Appendix 1 and Article 6 of Appendix 2 (in Romanian).
86. Research study "Barometer in the field of gender-based violence" (2024), p. 120. Available at: https://anes.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Barometru.pdf (in Romanian).
87. The latest data can be found in the WAVE Country Report, "The status and value of women's specialist services in tackling gender-based violence against women" (2025). Available at: https://wave-network.org/wave-country-report-2025/.
88. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
89. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
90. Research study "Barometer in the field of gender-based violence" (2024), p. 78.

quality standards (employ qualified staff and a co-ordinator and have secure suitable premises), with all associated costs borne entirely by the organisations themselves. Moreover, a recent order from 2025 places an obligation on accredited social services providers, including NGOs, to conclude a contract with their beneficiaries and register it with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity.[91] In that respect, civil society organisations alerted GREVIO to the fact that the personal data of their beneficiaries will be revealed. On this point, GREVIO points out that reporting obligations imposed on civil society organisations acting as accredited but independent service providers may raise concerns about the victim-centred nature of their support and may discourage women from seeking help, in particular if they fear that their situation will be brought to the attention of public institutions, which potentially may have consequences for themselves or for their children (for example, loss of custody of their children).

112. When it comes to children exposed to domestic violence, the Domestic Violence Law places children on an equal footing with direct victims of violence, requiring social and child-protection services to provide them with support. Children may be sheltered with their mothers until the age of 14 and can receive psychological counselling. However, according to civil society organisations, children living at home can access specialist support only with the consent of both parents, giving the abuser the possibility to refuse.[92] GREVIO reiterates that exposure of a child to physical or psychological violence within their family and to abuse between parents engenders fear, causes severe trauma and adversely affects their health and development.[93] It is thus of crucial importance to ensure children's access to age-appropriate psychological counselling and therapy as soon as they come to the attention of the authorities.

113. GREVIO further notes with concern that an intersectional perspective remains weak in the delivery of specialist support services for victims of violence. Although services are available to all women without discrimination, there are no specific measures designed to address the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, such as Roma women, women with disabilities, migrant women or LBTI victims. Migrant women in particular reside in overcrowded reception centres and lack access to professional interpreters and culturally sensitive support. Trans and queer victims are generally marginalised and excluded from support.[94]

114. As regards sexual violence against girls, GREVIO notes with interest the establishment of the first Barnahus-type centre in Bucharest by the Save the Children organisation, in partnership with the General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection of District 6. The centre provides multidisciplinary and child-friendly immediate and long-term support to children exposed to domestic violence and child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. GREVIO underlines the importance of ensuring the sustainability of this centre and expanding such specialist services to other parts of the country.

115. Last, GREVIO regrets that specialist support services in Romania continue to be focused on domestic violence and sexual violence, with no comparable support available for victims of other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. This gap limits the convention's full implementation and leaves many victims without access to the specialist support and trauma care they require.

91. Order No. 1.126/2025 approving the framework model for social services contracts, the information provided by social service providers to the public social assistance service, the procedure for establishing the necessary budget and the indicators for monitoring social services provided as social assistance measures, available in Romanian at: https://legislatie.just.ro/public/DetaliiDocument/298260.
92. Written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 115.
93. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 143.
94. Written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 111.

116. **Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to ensure the provision of adequate specialist support services for women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular by:**

- **a. increasing the number of available specialist support services, provided by trained professionals, throughout the country;**
- **b. ensuring that shelters are accessible to all women victims of violence and their children, including those facing intersectional discrimination, and reviewing the current accessibility criteria so that access is not subject to the provision of evidence of violence or any other constraining requirements.**

4. Support for victims of sexual violence (Article 25)

117. Under Article 25 of the convention, parties are required to provide a set of holistic services to victims of sexual violence, including immediate medical care and trauma support, combined with forensic examinations, as well as short- and long-term psychological counselling and therapy to ensure the victim's recovery. Such services should be provided by trained and specialised staff in an appropriate manner to respond to the victims' needs, preferably within rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres established in sufficient number through the country to ensure their easy access. The recommendation is to set up one of the above-mentioned centres per every 200 000 inhabitants.[95]

118. The Sexual Violence Strategy SYNERGY acknowledges the need for comprehensive and gender-sensitive healthcare services to address the physical and psychological consequences of sexual violence on the victims. The strategy aims to improve the accessibility, quality and co-ordination of support services for victims of sexual violence through the establishment of crisis centres or integrated support services (*centre de criză/servicii integrate de sprijin pentru situațiile de violență sexuală*), the improvement of access to psychological support and information, and the funding of non-governmental organisations providing specialist services.

119. Since GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, which had welcomed the establishment of the first multidisciplinary centre for victims of sexual violence within the Bucharest University Emergency Hospital, the Romanian authorities have established a total of 10 such centres within emergency hospitals at county level.[96] According to the authorities, these centres serve as intervention centres accessible at any time and providing initial care that is free of charge, except for the forensic documentation, which is still subject to a fee. Victims of rape receive their initial medical care and initial psychological support before they are referred to specialist services for preventing sexually transmitted diseases, as well as to social services for information on their rights and long-term counselling.

120. While GREVIO welcomes the efforts to expand services for women victims of sexual violence across Romania, it notes that some challenges persist. The common methodology for the provision of multidisciplinary support still awaits approval by the Ministry of Health. Women victims of rape in Romania seem to lack awareness of the existence of these centres and they are rarely referred to when they present themselves to other services.[97] A recent study identified persistent structural and cultural challenges affecting the efficiency of the centres; the study found that access was low due to insufficient geographical coverage and a lack of trained professionals in trauma-informed care. Women who attended the centres found the service delivery fragmented and overwhelming, lacking a victim-centred approach.[98] Moreover, the reporting obligation imposed on medical professionals discussed earlier in this report appears to discourage victims of sexual violence and rape from seeking medical support and forensic examinations, although it is legally possible for the

95. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 142.
96. The intervention centres operate in the following cities: Bucharest, Craiova, Constanta, Slobozia, Sibiu, Timisoara, Satu Mare, Bacau and Piatra Neamt.
97. Written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 119.
98. "Improving access to healthcare and justice for sexual violence survivors" (2025), Sexual Violence Intervention Centres in Romania, pp. 18-19. Available at: www.eeagender.org/the-synergy-network/news/new-report-improving-access-to-healthcare-and-justice-for-sexual-violence-survivors--sexual-violence-intervention-centres-in-romania/.

victim to request a forensic certificate without a prior report to police. Indeed, according to the state report, the number of users of the new sexual violence intervention centres was 25 in 2025, down from 71 in 2024.

121. Furthermore, not all centres are adequately resourced; for example, many centres lack on-site forensic doctors and rape kits, which means that, in practice, forensic examinations are carried out through agreements with other forensic medical institutions. A persistent practice that GREVIO regrets is the forensic documentation fee. Victims are still required to pay a fee when they present themselves directly to forensic services, whereas it is waived when they are referred or accompanied by the police. Given that forensic certificates serve multiple purposes, including providing evidence in criminal proceedings and supporting applications for protection orders or access to protected accommodation, GREVIO underscores the importance of ensuring that such certificates are easily accessible and free of charge for victims of sexual violence, but also of domestic violence, irrespective of their willingness to report to the authorities.

122. In view of the above, GREVIO notes with grave concern that this situation does not ensure the comprehensive, trauma-informed and victim-centred approach underpinning Article 25 of the Istanbul Convention. GREVIO observes that according to Article 25 the purpose of the sexual violence referral centres for victims is to ensure the provision of easily accessible and one-stop-shop support services for victims of rape and sexual violence that cater for their various needs, including the gathering of forensic evidence, in a victim-centred and empowering manner. Moreover, these services should be aimed not only at providing emergency support, but also at ensuring the comprehensive recovery of victims, therefore allowing for mid- and long-term support. Where this is not the case across the current intervention centres, GREVIO points to the importance of ensuring access to longer-term trauma-informed support, including through co-operation agreements with entities that offer such services.

123. **Recalling the findings issued in the baseline evaluation report, and while welcoming the establishment of the crisis centres/integrated support services (*centre de criză/servicii integrate de sprijin pentru situațiile de violență sexuală*) in Romania, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:**

- **a. ensure that there is sufficiently widespread information on and an adequate geographical distribution across the country of one-stop-shop facilities for women victims of sexual violence, providing comprehensive support, including victim-centred and trauma-informed, free-of-charge medical care and forensic examinations;**
- **b. identify and remove barriers to the victims' access in practice to such services irrespective of their willingness to report the offence to the authorities;**
- **c. link the services provided by these centres with existing specialist support services with the aim of providing immediate and long-term psychological counselling by qualified professionals who provide long-term, victim-sensitive and trauma-informed support.**

C. Substantive law

124. Chapter V of the Istanbul Convention covers a range of provisions related to substantive law, in the area of both civil and criminal law, which aim to create the necessary legislative framework to prevent women and girls' further victimisation and to ensure robust intervention and prosecution by law-enforcement agencies. This section focuses on progress made with respect to selected provisions of the convention in the area of substantive law, notably Article 31 on custody, visitation rights and safety and Article 48 on the prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing in cases of violence against women.

1. Custody, visitation rights and safety (Article 31)

125. Custody and visitation decisions in relation to families with a history of abuse require a careful balancing of the different interests at stake. Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention seeks to ensure that incidents of violence covered by the convention, in particular domestic violence, are taken into account in decisions on custody and visitation rights, to ensure that the exercise of these rights does not harm the rights and safety of the victim or children. This provision contributes directly to their trust in the authorities because it offers essential protection from post-separation abuse.[99]

126. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had taken note of the legal framework in Romania, which is still in force, requiring that decisions on custody and visitation be guided by the child's best interests and safety and that a documented history of violence by one parent against the other or the child be taken into account and may lead to the limitation or withdrawal of parental rights.[100] Notwithstanding this framework, GREVIO had noted shortcomings in its application, such as violence not being consistently considered in practice, particularly where it was directed against the mother, unless direct violence against the child was established. As a result, shared custody was frequently granted even in cases involving domestic violence and exclusive custody remained extremely difficult to obtain. GREVIO had further noted a lack of understanding among judges and other professionals of the harmful effects of children's exposure to domestic violence, as well as the widespread use of the concept of parental alienation to explain children's reluctance to maintain contact with a violent parent.

127. GREVIO notes that these shortcomings in the application of the legal framework identified in the baseline evaluation report persist. Despite violence by one parent against the other constituting a relevant criterion in determining custody, residence and visitation rights, and potentially justifying the limitation or withdrawal of parental rights, this legal framework is not systematically applied in practice. According to concerns raised by civil society organisations and legal experts, courts seem to continue to prioritise shared custody and to require evidence of direct harm to the child in order to limit or withdraw parental rights, while incidents of violence against the mother are frequently overlooked.[101] This approach reflects a continued limited understanding of the profoundly negative impact of domestic violence on children and results in an underestimation of the risks associated with maintaining contact with an abusive parent. As a consequence, the safety of women and children is not consistently ensured in custody and visitation decisions, as required by Article 31 of the convention.

128. As regards the use of the concept of parental alienation, GREVIO notes with grave concern a recent legislative development. Already at the time of the baseline evaluation, children's fear or reluctance to maintain contact with a violent parent was frequently attributed to manipulation by the mother, in line with the recognition of "parental alienation syndrome" by the College of Psychologists of Romania in 2016. Since then, this trend has been further reinforced by the introduction of the concept of parental alienation into Romanian legislation by Law No. 123/2024, which defines it as a form of psychological violence against the child, where a parent intentionally provokes or maintains hostility from the child towards the other parent and empowers courts and child-protection services to act on this basis.[102]

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99. It is noteworthy that in the case of *Bîzdîga v. the Republic of Moldova* (Application No. 15646/18, 17 October 2023), the European Court of Human Rights held that in proceedings concerning the custody and visitation rights regarding children in a domestic violence context, the primary focus must be on the best interests of the child, and an assessment of any risks of violence or other forms of ill-treatment therefore has to form an integral part of such proceedings. For this reason, it found that an alleged history of domestic violence was a relevant and even mandatory factor to be weighed in the assessment of domestic authorities when deciding on contact rights (§ 62). In the recent case of *Luca v. the Republic of Moldova* (Application No. 55351/17, 17 October 2023), the Court found a violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights on account of the failure of the Moldovan authorities to take into account incidents of domestic violence in the determination of child contact rights.

100. Article 398 of the Civil Code permits courts, for "serious reasons" and in the best interests of the child, to entrust parental authority exclusively to one parent. This possibility is further specified in Article 36 of Law No. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, which explicitly lists violence of one parent against the child or against the other parent as a ground for limiting or withdrawing parental authority and for determining the child's place of residence.

101. Information obtained during the evaluation visit and written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 131.

102. Law No. 123/2024 amends Law No. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child.

129. This development has been criticised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for its lack of clarity and its potential for misuse in custody disputes, with a negative impact on the well-being of children and the assessment of their best interests. The committee has called for the repeal of the provisions of Law No. 123/2024 related to "*înstăinare parentală*" (parental alienation) and for a comprehensive, child rights-based review of any future legal reforms affecting custody and contact arrangements.[103] In response, the Romanian authorities have initiated parliamentary discussions to amend the Domestic Violence Law and the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child, with a view to introducing new provisions on parental rights concerning children exposed to domestic violence. These discussions also envisage redefining, but not repealing, the concept of "parental alienation" by replacing it with the notion of "parental estrangement".[104] GREVIO emphasises that the use of such concepts – irrespective of the terminology employed - risks discrediting women's legitimate reports of domestic violence and undermining children's well-founded reluctance to maintain contact with an abusive parent, thereby obscuring the history of violence and the risks of post-separation abuse.

130. Children exposed to domestic violence by one parent against the other may express reluctance to engage in visits, or maintain contact, with the abusive parent as a result of the harm experienced and the persistent fear it has caused. The legal enactment of the concept of parental alienation, defined as provoking hostility from the child towards the other parent, opens the door to abusive litigation strategies whereby perpetrators accuse victims of alienating the child, thereby creating additional opportunities to control, manipulate and intimidate. Such litigation may expose women to sanctions, including high fines or criminal proceedings, for not complying with visitation arrangements, or the loss of parental rights. This development exacerbates the existing failure to adequately take domestic violence into account in custody and visitation decisions and raises serious concerns for the safety of women and children. GREVIO therefore emphasises that legislation in the area of parental rights should be grounded in a sound understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and its highly detrimental impact on children, ensuring that such concepts are not used to undermine the safety of victims and their children.[105]

131. GREVIO further points to the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, who has extensively addressed the use of parental alienation as a highly gendered concept frequently invoked against mothers and associated with serious risks for the safety of both the mother and the child.[106] Her findings underline that, in the absence of adequate judicial training and a proper understanding of domestic violence and its adverse effects, custody may be granted to perpetrators despite evidence of a history of abuse. A number of the concrete measures proposed are equally applicable to the Romanian context. Among these, judges and court experts should focus on the concrete facts and specific circumstances of each case rather than on contested psychological concepts and ensure that children are effectively heard.

132. **Recalling the findings of its baseline evaluation report, and in light of the persistent shortcomings identified and worrisome developments, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure the safety of mothers and their children in the determination of custody and visitation rights, in particular by:**

- **a. removing from legislation any concepts of parental alienation and similar notions that risk portraying women victims of domestic violence as alienating, hostile or unco-operative, and ensure that the use of such concepts in/by courts is prohibited;**

103. United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (July 2025), Concluding observations on the combined six and seventh periodic reports of Romania*, paragraph 20 (e), CRC/C/ROU/CO/6-7.
104. Information provided after the evaluation visit.
105. See Article 15 Training of professionals.
106. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences (13 April 2023). Available at: www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5336-custody-violence-against-women-and-violence-against-children.

b. ensuring that all relevant professionals, including members of the judiciary, prosecutors, social and child-protection workers and psychologists, have a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence, post-separation abuse and the very harmful impact of witnessing domestic violence on children's health and development, as well as the risks to safety associated with continued contact with a violent parent;
c. ensuring that family courts systematically screen for and actively consider a history of violence in their decisions on custody and visitation rights.

2. Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing (Article 48)

133. Article 48, paragraph 1, of the Istanbul Convention requires parties to prohibit the mandatory participation in any alternative dispute resolution processes, including mediation and conciliation, in relation to cases of all forms of violence against women covered by the convention. This provision stems from the principle that violence against women is a manifestation of unequal power relations and that victims of such violence can never enter the alternative dispute resolution processes on an equal footing with the perpetrator. To avoid the re-privatisation of such violence and to enable the victim to seek justice, it is the responsibility of the state to provide access to adversarial court proceedings on the basis of robust criminal and civil law provisions.

134. As noted in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, mediation in Romania is regulated by Law No. 192/2006, which is still in force and stipulates that mediation may take place in both civil and criminal proceedings, only on a voluntary basis and with the free and informed consent of the parties involved. The law expressly prohibits any form of pressure exerted on a party to engage in mediation. It also requires that parties be informed of their procedural rights, including the right to be assisted or represented by a lawyer or another person of their choice.

135. In civil proceedings concerning custody and visitation rights or divorce, courts are required to encourage amicable settlements and inform parties about the possibility of mediation.[107] Should the parties choose to engage in it, the legislation foresees some safeguards, including screening for a history of abuse or violence between the parties and ensuring that any agreement does not endanger the child's well-being and development. Where signs of abuse or violence emerge, mediators are required to notify the competent authorities and to consider terminating the process of mediation.

136. As regards the practical implementation of the legislation, GREVIO notes despite the growing number of trained on domestic violence judges, family judges still may treat domestic violence as an interpersonal conflict, which may result in inappropriate referrals to mediation.[108] As for mediators, there is still no requirement to undergo mandatory training on domestic violence and its gendered nature. Their level of understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and the context of power and control is thus unclear. In addition, it is unclear whether screening for a history of violence is ensured. It is therefore essential that certain safeguards be put in place for all professionals involved to ensure that mediation is carried out only with the full, free and informed consent of the victim.

137. In criminal proceedings, there are two types of voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes, referred to as "reconciliation" in the Romanian Criminal Code and "mediation" in Law No. 192/2006. "Reconciliation" may be applied to offences of violence for which the criminal proceedings have been initiated *ex officio*, only where the law expressly provides for it.[109] "Reconciliation" as understood by the Romanian Criminal Code involves reaching an agreement between the injured party and the perpetrator to terminate the criminal prosecution or trial and agree on conditions (for example, payment of compensation for damages). Since amendments to the Criminal Code introduced by Law No. 233/2020, the possibility of reconciliation and the removal of the criminal liability in the case of offences of battery and other violence committed against a family

107. Article 21 of the Code of Civil Procedure.
108. Information obtained during the evaluation visit. See also the written submission by the association UNIC, p.24.
109. Article 159, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code.

member (Article 193), and bodily injury by negligence when committed against a family member (Article 196), have been repealed.[110]

138. Mediation, on the other hand, is admissible for offences that require a prior complaint by the victim. In Romania, most of the cases falling within the remit of the Istanbul Convention require a prior complaint. The Criminal Code allows mediation for battery and other acts of violence, bodily injury by negligence committed by a family member, sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking. Courts are required to inform the parties of the possibility of mediation, its potential benefits and its legal implications. If the parties engage in mediation, safeguards apply, such as that the victim and perpetrator should not meet face to face in cases of domestic violence unless they give their express consent, and that victims may withdraw from the process at any time. Since the entry into force of the Law on Femicide, which removed the requirement for a prior complaint to initiate criminal proceedings in cases of rape, mediation in such cases can no longer produce legal effects.

139. As regards the practical implementation of the legislation, civil society organisations have alerted GREVIO to the fact that many women victims of violence are not truly aware of their right to refuse mediation. For some, mediation may appear to be their only option, and they may experience pressure when deciding whether to engage in the process or to pursue criminal proceedings. With regard to these concerns, GREVIO underscores how, in the absence of specialised training, mediators might not be capable of identifying when a victim is being pressured or coerced into accepting an offer of mediation, nor of appraising the power imbalance and her economic, psychological and social subordination, which may lead her to accept such processes. GREVIO points to the importance of providing specialist knowledge on all forms of violence against women, its dynamics and its impact on victims.

140. **GREVIO encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that in family law proceedings mediation is proposed only after effective screening for incidents of domestic violence, and that such incidents are taken into account when determining whether mediation is appropriate.**

141. **GREVIO further encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that women victims of violence are proactively informed of the voluntary nature of mediation in both civil and criminal proceedings, emphasising that declining to participate will not result in any negative legal consequences and referring cases to mediation only after an effective verification that the consent of the victim is freely given and the victim is fully informed, including on the right to withdraw from the process at any time.**

D. Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

142. Full accountability for all acts of violence against women requires an adequate response from law-enforcement agencies and the criminal justice sector. Chapter VI of the Istanbul Convention establishes a set of measures to ensure criminal investigations, prosecutions and convictions in a manner that validates women's and girls' experiences of violence, that avoids their secondary victimisation and that offers protection throughout the different stages of proceedings. The provisions covered in this section are fundamental to the delivery of protection and justice for all women and girls at risk of or who have experienced gender-based violence.

1. General obligations (Article 49) and Immediate response, prevention and protection (Article 50)

143. 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.

110. The final sentence of Article 159, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code has been repealed, meaning that the possibility of reconciliation is no longer expressly provided for. The amended paragraph now reads: "In the case of offences under Articles 193 and 196 committed against a family member, criminal proceedings may also be initiated *ex officio*."

Law enforcement or judicial 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.[111] 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.

a. Reporting to, immediate response and investigations by law-enforcement agencies

144. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had welcomed the adoption of a series of guidelines that standardise police interventions and outline co-operation procedures among institutions in cases of domestic violence against adults or children. It had also welcomed the increased number of women in the police forces, offering the possibility for women victims of violence to be interviewed by an officer of the same sex. However, GREVIO had highlighted serious shortcomings in the response of law-enforcement agencies to violence against women. There were no specific measures and procedures for interventions in cases of other types of violence. Discriminatory, patriarchal and victim-blaming attitudes among police officers led to under-reporting of violence and mistrust in authorities, depriving women victims of protection. Insufficient human resources and specialised training hindered prompt and effective investigations in life-threatening incidents.

145. GREVIO notes with satisfaction that the Romanian authorities have enhanced the institutional response to violence against women through the drawing up of guidelines clarifying and unifying some relevant procedures. The Ministry of Justice published a guide on reporting physical, psychological and sexual abuse and harassment incidents, which explains what acts constitute a criminal offence and provides practical information on lodging a complaint, the role of institutions, available protection measures, victims' rights in criminal proceedings and access to compensation.[112] Moreover, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice created a guide to investigating the offence of rape, which explains the impact of rape on both adult and child victims and sets out a methodology for investigating rape offences, preventing secondary victimisation and interviewing victims. The Prosecutor's Office recently issued two additional methodologies to guide police and prosecution investigations into domestic violence and offences committed against victims with disabilities.[113] The Romanian Police also introduced a new methodology for the management of domestic violence situations and the supervision of compliance with protection orders.[114] GREVIO underlines the importance of ensuring the wide dissemination of all these guidelines and of providing specialised training to all relevant professionals so that the methodologies they set out are effectively implemented in practice. Furthermore, following the criminalisation of the non-consensual sharing of images by Law No. 171/2023, it would be equally important to devise guidance and training to enhance the understanding of law-enforcement officers of online and technology-facilitated violence against women.

146. As regards the immediate response by law-enforcement officers, every intervention in cases of domestic violence is formally registered: the facts are detailed and the risks of a repeat offence are assessed using a standard form. A journalistic investigation collected figures from the General

111. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 255.
112. The guide is available at: www.just.ro/Ghid/Ghid_sesizare_violenta_sexuala.pdf (in Romanian).
113. Order No. 23/2026 of the Prosecutor General of the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice approving the Guidelines for the investigation of offences committed against victims with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, and Order No. 24/2026 approving the Methodology for the investigation of domestic violence offences.
114. Inspector General's Order No. 109/2025.

Inspectorate of the Romanian Police on police interventions in all counties between 2020 and 2023.[115] Police officers intervened in 319 381 cases of domestic violence during this period. In 2023, there were 108 831 interventions, which was a 20% increase compared to 2022 and a 63% increase compared to 2020. In another press article the inspectorate highlighted the number of police interventions in the first four months of 2025 – 40 030 cases of domestic violence, of which 19 984 took place in urban areas and 20 046 in rural areas.[116]

147. Furthermore, efforts have been made to improve victims' access to justice, including by simplifying reporting mechanisms and modernising the conduct of hearings. Victims can file complaints in writing and verbally at police stations and prosecutors' offices, but also by electronic communication, which is intended to reduce the practical barriers to reporting.[117] With regard to safety and the prevention of secondary victimisation during hearings, the authorities indicated that women victims are not heard in the same room as the perpetrator and that audiovisual recordings are made of the hearings. As to the possibility for women victims to be heard by female officers, the authorities indicated that given the increasing representation of women among police staff, specific interventions or interviews can be conducted by female officers. Finally, to address the language and accessibility barriers faced by vulnerable groups, police officers distribute information materials in the Romani language and collaborate with Roma cultural mediators to facilitate outreach within Roma communities.

148. Despite the positive steps undertaken to enhance the management of cases of violence against women and domestic violence, experts in the field alerted GREVIO to persistent shortcomings that affect the registration of complaints and the conduct of investigations. Women victims of violence appear to, at times, encounter harmful gender stereotypes, insensitivity and victim-blaming attitudes at their first point of contact with the police, or are exposed to questionable practices, including rephrasing of questions from the standardised risk-assessment form, disbelief or attempts to persuade them to reconcile with the perpetrator.[118] Roma women in particular face not only general barriers to reporting, such as living in rural areas and having limited access to information, but also profound ethnic and gender-based discrimination at the hands of the authorities, all of which further discourages them from seeking help.[119] Another group of women who face barriers to reporting and insensitive treatment by police officers are migrant women.[120] Addressing such attitudes and treatment is particularly important in order to encourage reporting of offences in view of the fact that most forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention are not prosecuted *ex officio* in Romania, but require a complaint by the victim for the initiation of criminal proceedings.

149. Gender-based killings, which claimed the lives of a significant number of Romanian women, more than 50 in 2025, have been widely reported in Romanian and international media.[121] The failure to provide a timely response in cases involving a known history of violence, as well as the inadequate consideration of victims' previous complaints, have fuelled national debates and renewed calls for legal reforms to strengthen the prevention and sanctioning of such crimes. One of the key factors for the weak institutional response appears to be the persistent inconsistency in understanding of police officers of the dynamics of domestic violence despite the training sessions provided.[122]

115. See the article at: www.europeandatajournalism.eu/cp_data_news/a-woman-is-killed-every-week-in-romania-how-the-state-fails-to-protect-victims/.
116. See the article at: www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/justitie/igpr-interventii-in-peste-40-000-de-cazuri-de-violenta-domestica-in-patru-luni-cate-ordine-de-protectie-au-fost-emise-3267625 (in Romanian).
117. Article 289, paragraph 5, of the Code of Criminal Procedure was introduced to modernise access to justice and enable electronic communication with judicial authorities, for example for victims who cannot reach a police station.
118. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
119. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
120. Written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 131. A civil society organisation reported that a refugee woman wanted to file a complaint against her violent husband, but the police failed to keep the victim separated from him when he showed up at the station and spoke with her. The police asked her to bring her own interpreter and cover the costs herself. The police took statements from both parties and pressured the victim's interpreter to serve the perpetrator as well.
121. See the article at: https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/social/52-de-femicide-in-romania-in-2025-cauzele-pentru-care-sistemul-de-protectie-a-victimelor-esueaza-in-a-preveni-tragediile.html (in Romanian).
122. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.

150. Furthermore, existing guidelines focus exclusively on domestic violence and sexual violence, highlighting a gap in the guidance provided to law-enforcement officers on adopting a gender-sensitive and trauma-informed approach to other forms of violence against women, such as early or forced marriage, female genital mutilation and violence committed in the name of so-called honour.[123]

151. In this respect, GREVIO emphasises the importance of providing police officers with more training opportunities in the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual violence and rape, as well as the specific characteristics of all the other forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. Progressively extending the skills and knowledge on all forms of violence to a growing number of police officers would enable the provision of an adequate response to victims and enhance their protection and consequently their trust in the justice system.

152. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to intensify their efforts to:

- **a. enhance awareness of violence against women and the specificities and dynamics of domestic violence among law-enforcement authorities with a view to eradicating harmful stereotypes and attitudes towards victims, and ensuring greater adherence to standard investigative procedures set out in existing tools;**
- **b. devise guidelines and standard reporting and investigative procedures for other forms of violence against women beyond domestic violence and sexual violence, including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence related to so-called honour and digital manifestations of violence against women.**

b. Effective investigation and prosecution

153. The arrangements for ensuring effective investigations into and prosecutions of cases of violence against women and domestic violence, as described in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, remain in place and have been further supplemented. According to the Romanian legal system, investigations into sexual violence and domestic violence are carried out by the police under the supervision of the prosecution; the decision to initiate and pursue criminal proceedings depends on the evidence collected by the police. The police may collect evidence in various forms, including images, audiovisual recordings, electronic messages and witness statements. Criminal investigations into cases of violence benefit from priority treatment in both hearing and processing. Investigations should be completed within six months, with a possibility of extending them up to one year in complex cases.

154. GREVIO welcomes the recent amendments to Article 158 of the Criminal Code. Law No. 116/2025 amended paragraph 4 to strengthen the continuity of criminal proceedings for offences that require a prior complaint. Under the amended provision, withdrawal of a complaint by a victim has legal effect only if accepted by the prosecutor. This reform helps to prevent the discontinuation of proceedings in cases where victims may be pressured or intimidated to withdraw their complaint. Furthermore, Law No. 232/2025 introduces a new paragraph 5, according to which in cases of physical violence such as slapping or bodily injury by negligence committed against a family member, the victim's withdrawal of the criminal complaint shall have no effect.

155. GREVIO notes with interest some positive developments at the prosecutorial level. The Integrated Hearing Management Information System (SMIA), which standardises the use of audiovisual recordings of hearings, became fully operational in prosecutorial services in 2024 and is expected to reduce repeated questioning and procedural delays. Another development is the guide on investigating the offence of rape, drawn up by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, which explains the impact of rape on adult and child victims and provides methodological guidance for conducting investigations and interviews in a gender-sensitive manner.

123. The Romanian Criminal Code does not recognise forced or early marriage, female genital mutilation and violence committed in the name of so-called honour as criminal offences.

156. As previously noted by GREVIO, the data collected at the prosecutorial level – classified by type of offence but not disaggregated by the sex of the victim or perpetrator – prevent the identification of cases of violence against women perpetrated by men and do not allow for an adequate assessment of the prosecution rates.

157. **With a view to ensuring effective criminal investigations and prosecutions in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, and to enhancing the trust of victims in the criminal justice system, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure the effective implementation in practice of all relevant legislation and existing guidelines applicable to the investigation and prosecution of such cases.**

c. Conviction rates

158. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had highlighted shortcomings in the co-ordination and comparability of judicial data, making it difficult to track cases throughout the criminal justice system and to assess conviction, attrition and recidivism rates. It had therefore stressed the urgent need to establish a system for collecting and analysing judicial data, supported by assessments of case law and of the handling of criminal cases by law-enforcement agencies, prosecutorial services and courts.

159. GREVIO regrets that there has been no progress on ensuring unified judicial data on the different offences within the remit of the Istanbul Convention broken down by the sex of both the victim and the perpetrator as well as their relationship. Although the state report submitted in the framework of the thematic evaluation procedure provides some statistics on final convictions for domestic violence per year, these data do not allow for any assessment of the criminal justice response to violence against women.[124]

160. **Recalling its findings in the baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to implement measures aimed at permitting the tracking of cases across the criminal justice sector and at identifying and assessing conviction rates, the root causes of attrition and the dissuasiveness of sanctions imposed on perpetrators for offences of violence against women and domestic violence.**

2. Risk assessment and risk management (Article 51)

161. Many perpetrators of domestic violence, rape, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage and other forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention threaten their victims with serious violence, including death, and have subjected their victims to serious violence in the past, including non-fatal strangulation. The growing digital dimension to such violence further exacerbates women's and girls' sense of fear. Article 51 thus places concern for their safety at the heart of any intervention in such cases by requiring the establishment of a multi-agency network of professionals to protect high-risk victims without aggravating the harm experienced. It sets out the obligation to ensure that all relevant authorities, not just law-enforcement authorities, effectively assess and devise a plan to manage the safety risks a victim faces, on a case-by-case basis, according to standardised procedures and in co-operation with each other.

162. GREVIO's baseline evaluation report had welcomed the obligation for law-enforcement agencies and social services to conduct risk assessments and to refer victims of domestic violence to specialist support services, as embedded in the Domestic Violence Law and relevant regulatory measures. GREVIO had also noted the absence of a practice among prosecutors of conducting individual risk assessments, relying instead on those carried out by the police when confirming emergency barring orders (provisional protection orders). It had also raised concerns about the exclusive focus placed on domestic violence, with no attention given to other forms of violence against women.

124. State report submitted by Romania, p. 111.

163. The overall framework for risk assessment in cases of domestic violence has not changed. In practice, police officers responding to calls involving domestic violence continue to conduct on-site risk assessments using a standardised questionnaire comprising 21 questions, with scoring to classify risk levels and determine the need to issue a provisional protection order.[125] The questionnaire covers a broad range of relevant factors, including the form of violence (physical, psychological, economic, other) and its frequency, the vulnerability of the victim (age, disability, mental and health conditions, other), the presence of children, the context in which the violence occurred (substance abuse, escalation during separation proceedings, possession of firearms) and the behaviour of the perpetrator (criminal history, threats, other).[126] While GREVIO welcomes the comprehensiveness of these factors, it points to the importance of including non-fatal strangulation as it is a major indicator of the risk of escalation into more serious or even fatal violence.

164. Despite the systematic use of the risk-assessment questionnaire by police officers, GREVIO notes with concern that there have been instances of officers reformulating the questions, conducting the assessment in the presence of the perpetrator or even encouraging victims to reconcile with him.[127] Such practices discourage victims from disclosing information and may lead to the normalisation of violence. They also undermine the reliability of risk assessments and the victims' trust in the authorities as well as their access to protection and justice. GREVIO recalls that because of the harmful effects of intimate partner violence on women and their children, risk assessments should be conducted in conditions that ensure their safety. It points to the importance of raising awareness among relevant professionals of women's right to live a life free from domestic abuse and the requirement to implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention with regard to all women and girls without discrimination. Moreover, risk assessments should be made available for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, beyond domestic violence.

165. The procedure for managing identified risks has equally remained unchanged since the baseline evaluation report. When a high risk of repeat violence is identified, police officers issue emergency barring orders and transmit the risk assessment to prosecutors for confirmation of the orders. Where the legal conditions for an emergency barring order are not met, police officers must inform the victims of their right to seek a court protection order and provide the relevant application form. Where separation of the victim and perpetrator is needed, police officers are required to involve local mobile teams (social services) to help the victim access shelter and support services. On this point, GREVIO notes with concern that the number of interventions by the mobile teams seems to have decreased as a result of understaffing and limited availability across the country.[128]

166. Where children are exposed to domestic violence, police officers notify the local General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection. With regard to social services in particular, GREVIO notes that risk assessments are used to identify the protection needs of victims and their children and to devise intervention plans.[129] The outcomes of these assessments inform the decisions regarding the type of support to be provided, particularly in cases of domestic violence.

167. Until December 2025, judicial authorities did not conduct their own risk assessments and instead relied on those carried out by the police when taking decisions on protection orders. GREVIO welcomes the legislative amendment introduced by Law No. 232/2025 to the Domestic Violence Law, which now requires courts to carry out their own assessment of the risk of reoffending if the perpetrator is not registered with or has not been assessed by the criminal justice system or the probation services (Article 49, paragraph 2, of the amended law).

168. While there is no standardised system for dynamic risk assessment in order to evaluate changes in the level of danger, internal instructions adopted in August 2025 require police officers to verify with both the victim and the perpetrator whether the risks have escalated, diminished or

125. Joint Order No. 146/2578/2018 of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Labour and Social Justice on the management of domestic violence cases by police officers.
126. The risk factors are established in Article 37, paragraph 3, of the Domestic Violence Law.
127. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
128. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
129. Order No. 20.840/2022 of the Minister of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities approving the minimum mandatory standards on the application of case management in social services for victims of domestic violence.

ceased, in particular when they monitor compliance with protection orders. GREVIO welcomes this development and stresses that its effectiveness will depend on adequate training and regular and consistent implementation across the country.

169. GREVIO was alerted to the fact that risk assessments are conducted exclusively for the purpose of issuing emergency barring orders under civil law. Such assessments are not conducted in criminal proceedings, which prevents the criminal justice system from anticipating potential lethal outcomes in cases involving patterns of violence. In this context, GREVIO considers it important to set up a system of retrospective analysis of all cases of gender-related killings, attempted killings and suicides of women. Such an analysis should aim to identify any possible failure of protection by institutions, prevent such killings in the future and hold to account the perpetrator and the institutions who came into contact with the victims. Indeed, GREVIO has underlined the importance of including in such systematic reviews gender-based violence-related suicides and forced suicides of women and girls as they also represent a lethal end point for those who are on the receiving end of acts of violence against women.[130]

170. In this respect, GREVIO notes with interest the steps taken by the Romanian authorities. The Directorate of Public Order has decided to review all cases of homicide, including killings of women, that have occurred since 2022. The aim is to identify the circumstances in which the crimes were committed and to highlight any shortcomings in police interventions. In 2024, the analysis was extended to attempted murders.[131] In March 2026, the Romanian Parliament adopted the Law on Femicide which amends the Criminal Code to recognise the killing of a woman as an aggravating circumstance in homicide motivated by her gender.[132]

171. When it comes to the integration of risk assessment into multi-agency co-operation among all relevant stakeholders, GREVIO regrets that this is not a standard practice because of the weak co-operation structures at local level.[133] Despite the existence of some local protocols, co-operation between the police, judicial authorities, social services, health services and specialist women's support organisations remains sporadic and informal. On this point, GREVIO recalls that effective risk assessment and management require input from all relevant stakeholders, which could be centralised by an authority so that co-ordinated intervention plans or long-term protection measures can be devised.

172. **GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that:**

- **a. risk assessments and risk management are systematically conducted in line with standardised forms and regularly repeated so as to take account of any changes in the level of risk;**
- **b. comprehensive training and guidance are provided to police officers and all other relevant stakeholders on risk assessment, the evolving nature of risks, risk management and referrals to relevant support services;**
- **c. the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including healthcare services and specialist NGOs, in risk assessment and risk management is facilitated so as to ensure an effective multi-agency approach to the human rights and safety of the victims of violence and their children;**
- **d. risk-assessment forms and mechanisms are devised for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, beyond domestic violence, and include non-fatal strangulation among the factors to be taken into account;**

130. See the 5th General Report on GREVIO's Activities, October 2024, paragraph 74: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/grevio-annual-reports.
131. Reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention, submitted in the framework of the baseline evaluation procedure, p. 29.
132. See: https://agerpres.ro/english/2026/01/26/romania-without-domestic-violence-committee-grants-favourable-report-on-draft-law-combatting-femicid--1521998.
133. Written submissions by the association ANAIS, p. 136, and the association UNIC, p. 25.

e. all gender-based killings of women are systematically analysed in the framework of a system such as a domestic homicide review mechanism, with the aim of identifying possible shortcomings in institutional responses to violence against women and enhancing the prevention of such offences.

3. Emergency barring orders (Article 52)

173. Under Article 52 of the Convention, in situations of immediate danger, the authorities are granted the power to issue an emergency barring order, ordering the perpetrator to leave the residence of the victim or person at risk for a specific period of time, and to prohibit the perpetrator from entering the residence or contacting the victim or person at risk. Emergency barring orders are tools intended to prevent a crime and to put safety first.[134] They should therefore be time-bound and incident-based, with the possibility of renewal in the case of continued danger. Longer-term protection should, however, be granted by a court by means of a protection order, upon application by the victim. An emergency barring order should in principle extend to children in need of protection and should have immediate effect.

174. In its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO had welcomed the introduction of emergency barring orders (provisional protection orders) and the empowerment of the police force to issue such orders in Romania, following an amendment to the Domestic Violence Law in 2018. This amendment had been considered as an important step towards ensuring the immediate safety of victims of domestic violence, in line with the requirements of Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention. GREVIO had also welcomed the guidance provided to the police and prosecution on conducting structured risk assessments and implementing emergency barring orders, as well as the deployment of electronic monitoring of domestic violence perpetrators, which started in March 2022.[135] GREVIO therefore had found the situation to be in compliance with Article 52.

175. According to the Domestic Violence Law, police officers have the power to evict the perpetrator of domestic violence from the family home and order him to refrain from contacting the victim and their children in situations where there is an imminent risk to the victim's life, physical integrity or freedom. The existence of an imminent risk for the victim is established based on an on-site assessment of the evidence and of the risk of repetition. If the requirements for an emergency barring order are not met, police officers inform the victim that she has the possibility to file an application for a protection order with a civil court.

176. Emergency barring orders take immediate effect, but must be submitted within 24 hours of their issuance to a prosecutor for confirmation. The prosecutor then decides within a further 24 hours whether to maintain them. Such measures can be issued for up to five days (120 hours). Police officers monitor compliance with emergency barring orders and notify the prosecution services of any breaches. They may make unannounced visits to the victim's residence, contact the victim and the perpetrator by telephone and request information from neighbours. A breach of an emergency barring order constitutes a criminal offence that is punishable by imprisonment ranging from six months to five years.

177. A legislative amendment to the Domestic Violence Law was recently made through the adoption of Law No. 232/2025 in December 2025.[136] The amendment relating to emergency barring orders expressly clarifies that once confirmed by the prosecutor, their legal effect remains in force until the civil court rules on the application for a longer-term protection order (if such an application has been submitted), instead of enquiring about renewals every five days until the civil court grants a protection order (Article 34, paragraph 7, of the amended Domestic Violence Law).

134. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Denmark, paragraph 207, and on Malta, paragraph 218.
135. Joint Order No. 146/2578/2018 of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Labour and Social Justice on the management of domestic violence cases by police officers, and Law No. 146/2021 regarding electronic surveillance within judicial and executional criminal proceedings.
136. Law No. 232/2025 amending and supplementing Law No. 217/2003 on preventing and combating domestic violence, as well as supplementing Article 158 of the Criminal Code: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/305267 (in Romanian).

178. According to the available data on provisional protection orders issued by police officers, there was a 66% increase in 2024 (13 274 orders) compared to 2019 (7 986 orders). In the first 10 months of 2025, the police issued 12 187 provisional protection orders. Of these, 4 610 were followed by protection orders issued by civil courts. At the same time, there were 814 breaches of provisional protection orders, although it is unclear what sanctions such breaches have led to.

4. Restraining or protection orders (Article 53)

179. Restraining and protection orders are conceived to prolong the protection afforded to the victim and her children by emergency barring orders and may be considered complementary to the protection offered by emergency barring orders. Under Article 53 of the Istanbul Convention, victims of all forms of violence against women should be able to obtain a protection order available for immediate protection without undue financial or administrative burden placed on the victim and irrespective of whether or not they choose to set in motion any other legal proceedings.

180. As noted in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, protection orders in Romania in cases of domestic violence are regulated by the Domestic Violence Law and can be issued for any family member as defined in the law. The Domestic Violence Law was amended in December 2025 to remove the possibility for victims of domestic violence to waive protection orders initiated by prosecutors, local authorities or social services (repeal of Article 43) and to increase by half the sanction given to the perpetrator for breaching a protection order (amended law, Article 47, paragraph 3).

181. Despite these developments, GREVIO notes with concern that children are not systematically included in protection orders, particularly in cases where they have been exposed but not directly subjected to domestic violence.[137] In such situations the vulnerability of both the child and the mother is exacerbated, and their safety is hampered as the perpetrator still has opportunities to maintain contact with the child and to exercise control over the mother through visitation arrangements. GREVIO further notes with concern that when children are included, protection measures tend to be of shorter duration for them, reflecting a judicial practice that prioritises the maintaining of parental contact with the father over the safety needs of the mother and the child.

182. In 2024, the Romanian authorities adopted Law No. 26/2024, which broadened the access to protection orders to all persons whose life, physical or psychological integrity, or freedom is at risk of violence, beyond domestic violence and regardless of whether the perpetrator is a family member.[138] GREVIO commends the adoption of this law, which establishes a general type of emergency barring order and protection order available to victims of physical violence, sexual violence, threats, stalking, online harassment, non-consensual publication of intimate content, unlawful access to private communications or data, intimidation in judicial proceedings, and any other acts of physical or psychological violence that endanger a person's life, physical or psychological integrity, or freedom. To guide the application of the new law by police officers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs produced a methodology on the management of cases of these forms of violence.[139] Building on the provisions applicable to domestic violence, Law No. 26/2024 authorises police officers to issue provisional measures upon a written request from a victim or their representative, in the presence of an imminent risk to the victim's life, physical integrity or freedom. The law also introduces the possibility to request court protection orders through an accelerated procedure requiring judges to decide within 72 hours of the submission of an application. Court protection orders are enforceable immediately, giving the police five hours to communicate them to the victims.

183. Protection measures may be valid for up to 12 months. Their renewal is possible if the legal conditions are still met. These measures may consist in the eviction of the perpetrator from the residence, the obligation to maintain a minimum distance from the victim, a prohibition on entering certain places and contacting the victim by any means, an obligation to hand over to the police any

137. Information obtained during the evaluation visit, and written submission by the association ANAIS, p. 139.
138. Law No. 26/2024 on the protection order. Available at: https://legislatie.just.ro/public/DetaliiDocument/279559.
139. Order No. 138/2024 of the Minister of Internal Affairs.

firearms and the obligation to wear an electronic monitoring device. Breaching protection measures constitutes a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment ranging from six months to five years.

184. While these developments constitute an important expansion of the system of protection orders to persons exposed to several forms of violence and any other acts of physical or psychological violence that endanger their life, physical or psychological integrity, or freedom, it is too early to assess whether all forms of violence in the Istanbul Convention - such as forced marriage, violence in the name of the so-called “honour” and female genital mutilation - will be considered by the judiciary. .

185. With regard to the enforcement of protection orders and the application of judicial supervision measures, GREVIO notes that, following the introduction of electronic monitoring in March 2022,[140] operational procedures have been established for its use and for the processing of breach alerts, and an additional 3 342 police officers posts have been created.[141] While electronic monitoring is a measure deployed nationwide since October 2024, GREVIO notes with concern that significant practical challenges to its implementation remain. These range from technical difficulties with the devices worn by perpetrators, including instances of deficient signal transmission or removal of the bracelet, to the reluctance among a significant number of victims to carry a device that signals breaches of protection orders.[142] A survey is currently under way to identify the reasons for these refusals, one of which seems to be victims’ reluctance to be monitored by the police. Civil society organisations and experts in the field have alerted GREVIO to the fact that although electronic devices have been progressively distributed to police stations across the country, their number is insufficient.[143] Moreover, the police are reactive, relying on alerts rather than engaging in proactive monitoring of the compliance with protection orders. There have been instances where the perpetrator’s movements were not monitored even when alerts were triggered.[144] Uncertainty also persists regarding the effective application of sanctions for breaches of protection orders. In this context, and in light of the increasing number of killings of women in Romania, GREVIO points to a pressing need to expand the use of electronic monitoring devices, verifying that perpetrators effectively wear them and actively informing the victims of their preventive purpose. To strengthen the deterrent effect of this measure, it would be equally important to apply existing procedures more consistently, for example by contacting both the victim and the perpetrator and by deploying police officers to the victim’s neighbourhood to obtain assurance that the victim is safe.

186. According to the available data on protection orders, in the first 10 months of 2025, courts granted 12 663 protection orders, which include decisions on individual applications, and 4 610 orders as follow-up measures to emergency barring orders. A total of 5 065 breaches of protection orders were recorded. No information on the number and types of sanctions issued for these breaches was available. The police imposed an electronic monitoring device on 3 011 perpetrators, while courts ordered it for 1 501 perpetrators. Victims refused to carry an electronic device in 10 373 cases.

187. **While acknowledging the progress made in the legal framework regarding protection orders, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure:**

- **a. that protection orders are available for victims of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention;**
- **b. the effective enforcement and active monitoring of protection orders, including through a wider use of electronic monitoring devices, and the imposition of effective sanctions for any breaches.**

140. Law No. 146/2021 regarding electronic surveillance within judicial and executional criminal proceedings.
141. State report submitted by Romania, p. 58.
142. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.
143. Information provided by the authorities indicates that the total number of electronic monitoring kits acquired is currently 13 316. An additional 601 kits are expected to be acquired soon.
144. Information obtained during the evaluation visit.

5. Measures of protection (Article 56)

188. Article 56 of the convention is a key provision in building trust at the level of judicial proceedings for women and their children who have experienced or who are witness to any of the forms of violence covered by the convention. It sets forth a non-exhaustive list of procedures designed to protect victims of violence from intimidation, retaliation and secondary victimisation at all stages of proceedings, during investigations and at trial. The drafters intended this list to be indicative, and parties may adopt additional protection measures that are more favourable than those provided in the convention. Moreover, intimidation and secondary victimisation can occur not only at the hands of perpetrators but also when investigations and judicial proceedings are not based on a gendered understanding of violence against women, which is why the practical application of measures of protection should be firmly anchored in such an understanding.

189. The legal framework in Romania guaranteeing rights and safeguards for victims of violence against women during legal proceedings comprises Law No. 211/2004 on measures to ensure the provision of information to, support for and protection of victims of crime, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, both of which have been amended and supplemented since their adoption.

190. As noted in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, Law No. 211/2004 establishes the right to receive information in an accessible language, from the first instance of contact with the authorities until the conclusion of the criminal proceedings, and the right to free psychological counselling and free legal assistance. It also establishes the right to be notified if the perpetrator is sentenced, released or escapes. The law has been amended by Law No. 272/2024 to ensure full anonymisation of victims' personal information and residence details and to restrict access to sensitive documents. These measures apply to both criminal and civil proceedings arising from the same offence. The protection of the identity of victims of domestic violence, which was not previously foreseen, is also explicitly included, which GREVIO welcomes. A confidential folder is used to store evidence and notifications; the victim's address and other identifying details remain concealed.

191. The Code of Criminal Procedure equally requires judicial authorities to inform victims of the time and place of the trial and of any final decision regarding prosecution, the outcome of the criminal proceedings (conviction or other judicial decision) and the state of the execution of the sentence. The code further envisages special measures for victims of crime, including victims of domestic violence, and their children, who are considered as vulnerable. These measures include the protection of the identity as well as a range of measures governing the way in which they are heard in order to avoid re-victimisation. These may involve conducting hearings in specifically adapted rooms, hearing the victim with the assistance of a psychologist, ensuring the conduct of all hearings by the same person, hearings by audiovisual means, including from the place where the victim is accommodated, the recording of the hearings and the closing of the hearings to the public and media. As regards legal aid in judicial proceedings, the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for free legal aid in criminal proceedings, while free legal aid is also available in civil proceedings under the Domestic Violence Law. The code has been amended by Law No. 217/2023 to grant the injured party the explicit right to be promptly informed (and not only at the first hearing) of the release or escape of a person who was in custody, under criminal investigation or serving a sentence. The authorities are also required to inform the victim of any protective measures adopted following such a release or escape.

192. While noting the range of rights and protection measures available to victims of violence against women in Romania, information obtained during GREVIO's evaluation visit points to persisting gaps and uneven implementation of these measures across the country, as already highlighted in the baseline evaluation report. For example, the legal requirement to ensure separate waiting and hearing rooms for victims and perpetrators does not appear to be consistently implemented, resulting in situations where victims give their testimony in close proximity to the perpetrator. Concerns also persist regarding the quality of free legal assistance provided by court- appointed lawyers due to the limited availability of specialist lawyers, as well as regarding the financial ceiling for such services, which is set at up to five minimum gross salaries per victim for the entirety of the criminal proceedings (approximately €4 300, with a possibility to renew the request under certain conditions for lengthy and complex trials). At the same time, free legal

assistance is mandatory and not subject to a financial ceiling for persons lacking legal capacity, victims of serious crimes and persons requesting the issuance of a protection order. Finally, while information provided by the authorities indicates that there are many rooms equipped for audiovisual hearing and recording of child victims or witnesses of crime, it is unclear whether similar facilities exit for adult victims.

193. **GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to systematically implement all available measures for the protection of victims of violence against women and domestic violence and their children in judicial proceedings, as envisaged in Romanian legislation. As a matter of priority, the separation of victims from perpetrators should be ensured in all waiting areas and hearing rooms in courts, for example by using adapted hearing rooms equipped for audiovisual hearings and recordings with a view to guaranteeing that victims can participate in proceedings without fear or risk of re-victimisation and in full respect for their safety and procedural rights.**

Appendix I
List of proposals and suggestions by GREVIO

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

B. Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies (Article 7)

1. GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to:

   a. ensure that the body responsible for the co-ordination of the implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women is provided with adequate and sustainable human and financial resources to accomplish its mandate;
   b. devise a comprehensive set of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, and consequently expand the mandate of the body responsible for their co-ordination and implementation;
   c. ensure that policy and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women fully reflect the needs of all women, including those exposed to intersectional forms of discrimination;
   d. pursue their efforts to strengthen multi-agency co-operation and to harmonise the implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women at national and local levels, including in rural areas. (paragraph 23)

C. Financial resources (Article 8)

2. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:

   a. allocate adequate, sufficient and sustainable financial resources for policies, programmes and measures aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women;
   b. introduce, in all relevant line ministries, departments and other state entities, separate budget and funding lines for policies and measures on violence against women and domestic violence based on the principle of gender budgeting;
   c. ensure accessible and sustainable funding for women's rights organisations providing specialist support services for victims of domestic violence and violence against women, through long-term grants and streamlined procurement procedures. (paragraph 31)

D. Data collection (Article 11)

3. Social services

3. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:

   a. ensure that data collected by all relevant stakeholders, namely law-enforcement agencies, judicial authorities, healthcare providers and social services, are disaggregated on the basis of harmonised criteria, including as a minimum, the sex and age of both the victim and perpetrator, the type of violence inflicted and the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, as well as other factors deemed relevant;
   b. expand the collection of data by public and private healthcare providers to include all instances of contact made by women seeking medical care for reasons related to experiences of gender-based violence;

c. expand the collection of data by all the above sectors to all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. (paragraph 44)

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)

4. While acknowledging the prevention efforts made by the Romanian authorities, GREVIO strongly encourages them to:

a. pursue their primary prevention efforts to eradicate harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal beliefs that persist in Romanian society by implementing regular preventive measures and by anchoring them in long-term primary prevention efforts. Guidance on measures and tools for preventing and combating sexism can be drawn from Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating sexism;
b. extend awareness-raising activities to all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including in their digital dimension, as well as the heightened risk of gender-based violence of women and girls exposed to intersectional discrimination, for example Roma women, elderly women and women with disabilities;
c. regularly carry out impact assessments of awareness-raising campaigns and primary prevention measures to guarantee their relevance and effectiveness;
d. identify, through such impact assessments, any undesirable or adverse effects of the awareness-raising campaigns and adjust them accordingly. (paragraph 53)

2. Education (Article 14)

5. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure in practice:

a. the teaching of all subjects covered by Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, notably the principles of equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and the right to personal integrity; this should also include information on the digital dimension of violence and the concept of freely given consent, including in sexual relations, and the harmful effects of violent pornography;
b. the provision of information to parents and teachers on the aims and importance of education on these subjects, which are to make children aware of violence against women and girls, prevent such violence and protect them from possible harm;
c. a review of teaching curricula and the materials used at all levels of education with a view to removing negative stereotypes of women and girls and fostering equality. (paragraph 63)

3. Training of professionals (Article 15)

6. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:

a. introduce mandatory and systematic initial and in-service training for law-enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors, healthcare professionals, social workers and teachers;
b. support such training with clear protocols and guidelines aimed at identifying, providing support to and further referring victims to specialist support services;
c. address all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including in its digital dimensions, as well as stereotypes and perceptions related to violence against women;

d. focus training on the safety and protection concerns of mothers victims of domestic violence and their children and therefore refrain from using concepts such as “alienating”, “hostile”, “estranging” or similar;
e. regularly evaluate the impact of all professional training initiatives. (paragraph 75)

4. Preventive intervention and treatment programmes (Article 16)

b. Programmes for perpetrators of sexual violence

7. Recalling the findings in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:

a. develop programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence based on common minimum standards, focusing on explaining the dynamics of domestic violence, achieving behavioural change and taking full responsibility for their acts. These programmes should work in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims to ensure their safety;
b. expand the perpetrator programmes for both domestic and sexual violence, particularly in regions where such programmes are not yet available;
c. ensure that staff administering such programmes receive adequate training, incorporating a gendered understanding of domestic violence and the need to deconstruct harmful gender stereotypes;
d. use all available means to ensure that perpetrator programmes are widely attended, including by disseminating information;
e. develop standards for programme evaluation, based on existing best practices, and ensure that independent evaluations are periodically carried out to assess whether the preventive aims of the programmes are effectively achieved. (paragraph 85)

B. Protection and support

1. General obligations (Article 18)

8. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to step up their efforts to:

a. improve multi-agency co-operation among all relevant stakeholders and structures established across the country, based on formal and standardised protocols and clear procedures, which include a gendered understanding of violence against women and detail the measures to be taken;
b. take the necessary measures to ensure that such co-operation and protocols exist for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. (paragraph 90)

2. General support services (Article 20)

a. Social services

9. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to:

a. allocate sufficient human and financial resources to social services to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively when responding to cases involving violence against women and their children;
b. take the necessary measures to improve in practice the access of women victims of violence to long-term financial assistance, social housing and support to find employment in order to gain economic independence. (paragraph 97)

b. Healthcare services

10. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that women who are victims of violence have access to adequately resourced and trained healthcare services, in particular by:

a. implementing standardised healthcare pathways to ensure a gender-sensitive, trauma-informed and non-judgmental approach to assisting victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, and facilitating referrals to appropriate specialist support services;
b. ensuring that healthcare services for victims of violence are accessible to all women, including Roma women, migrant women, including those with irregular migration status, and other women who may face significant barriers to seeking help. (paragraph 104)

3. Specialist support services (Article 22)

11. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to ensure the provision of adequate specialist support services for women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular by:

a. increasing the number of available specialist support services, provided by trained professionals, throughout the country;
b. ensuring that shelters are accessible to all women victims of violence and their children, including those facing intersectional discrimination, and reviewing the current accessibility criteria so that access is not subject to the provision of evidence of violence or any other constraining requirements. (paragraph 116)

4. Support for victims of sexual violence (Article 25)

12. Recalling the findings issued in the baseline evaluation report, and while welcoming the establishment of the crisis centres/integrated support services (centre de criză/servicii integrate de sprijin pentru situațiile de violență sexuală) in Romania, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to:

a. ensure that there is sufficiently widespread information on and an adequate geographical distribution across the country of one-stop-shop facilities for women victims of sexual violence, providing comprehensive support, including victim centred and trauma-informed, free-of-charge medical care and forensic examinations;
b. identify and remove barriers to the victims' access in practice to such services irrespective of their willingness to report the offence to the authorities;
c. link the services provided by these centres with existing specialist support services with the aim of providing immediate and long-term psychological counselling by qualified professionals who provide long-term, victim-sensitive and trauma-informed support. (paragraph 123)

C. Substantive law

1. Custody, visitation rights and safety (Article 31)

13. Recalling the findings of its baseline evaluation report, and in light of the persistent shortcomings identified and worrisome developments, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure the safety of mothers and their children in the determination of custody and visitation rights, in particular by:

a. removing from legislation any concepts of parental alienation and similar notions that risk portraying women victims of domestic violence as alienating, hostile or unco-operative, and ensure that the use of such concepts in/by courts is prohibited;

b. ensuring that all relevant professionals, including members of the judiciary, prosecutors, social and child-protection workers and psychologists, have a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence, post separation abuse and the very harmful impact of witnessing domestic violence on children's health and development, as well as the risks to safety associated with continued contact with a violent parent;
c. ensuring that family courts systematically screen for and actively consider a history of violence in their decisions on custody and visitation rights. (paragraph 132)

2. Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing (Article 48)

14. GREVIO encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that in family law proceedings mediation is proposed only after effective screening for incidents of domestic violence, and that such incidents are taken into account when determining whether mediation is appropriate. (paragraph 140)

15. GREVIO further encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that women victims of violence are proactively informed of the voluntary nature of mediation in both civil and criminal proceedings, emphasising that declining to participate will not result in any negative legal consequences and referring cases to mediation only after an effective verification that the consent of the victim is freely given and the victim is fully informed, including on the right to withdraw from the process at any time. (paragraph 141)

D. Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

1. General obligations (Article 49) and Immediate response, prevention and protection (Article 50)

a. Reporting to, immediate response and investigations by law-enforcement agencies

16. Recalling the findings issued in its baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to intensify their efforts to:

a. enhance awareness of violence against women and the specificities and dynamics of domestic violence among law-enforcement authorities with a view to eradicating harmful stereotypes and attitudes towards victims, and ensuring greater adherence to standard investigative procedures set out in existing tools;
b. devise guidelines and standard reporting and investigative procedures for other forms of violence against women beyond domestic violence and sexual violence, including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence related to so-called honour and digital manifestations of violence against women. (paragraph 152)

b. Effective investigation and prosecution

17. With a view to ensuring effective criminal investigations and prosecutions in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, and to enhancing the trust of victims in the criminal justice system, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure the effective implementation in practice of all relevant legislation and existing guidelines applicable to the investigation and prosecution of such cases. (paragraph 157)

c. Conviction rates

18. Recalling its findings in the baseline evaluation report, GREVIO urges the Romanian authorities to implement measures aimed at permitting the tracking of cases across the criminal justice sector and at identifying and assessing conviction rates, the root causes of attrition and the dissuasiveness of sanctions imposed on perpetrators for offences of violence against women and domestic violence. (paragraph 160)

2. Risk assessment and risk management (Article 51)

19. GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure that:

a. risk assessments and risk management are systematically conducted in line with standardised forms and regularly repeated so as to take account of any changes in the level of risk;
b. comprehensive training and guidance are provided to police officers and all other relevant stakeholders on risk assessment, the evolving nature of risks, risk management and referrals to relevant support services;
c. the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including healthcare services and specialist NGOs, in risk assessment and risk management is facilitated so as to ensure an effective multi-agency approach to the human rights and safety of the victims of violence and their children;
d. risk-assessment forms and mechanisms are devised for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, beyond domestic violence, and include non-fatal strangulation among the factors to be taken into account;
e. all gender-based killings of women are systematically analysed in the framework of a system such as a domestic homicide review mechanism, with the aim of identifying possible shortcomings in institutional responses to violence against women and enhancing the prevention of such offences. (paragraph 172)

4. Restraining or protection orders (Article 53)

20. While acknowledging the progress made in the legal framework regarding protection orders, GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to ensure:

a. that protection orders are available for victims of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention;
b. the effective enforcement and active monitoring of protection orders, including through a wider use of electronic monitoring devices, and the imposition of effective sanctions for any breaches. (paragraph 187)

5. Measures of protection (Article 56)

21. GREVIO strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to systematically implement all available measures for the protection of victims of violence against women and domestic violence and their children in judicial proceedings, as envisaged in Romanian legislation. As a matter of priority, the separation of victims from perpetrators should be ensured in all waiting areas and hearing rooms in courts, for example by using adapted hearing rooms equipped for audiovisual hearings and recordings with a view to guaranteeing that victims can participate in proceedings without fear or risk of re-victimisation and in full respect for their safety and procedural rights. (paragraph 193)

Appendix II
List of the national authorities, other public bodies, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations with which GREVIO held consultations

National authorities:

Prime Minister's Office
Parliamentary Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Education and Research
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity
Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice

Territorial authorities:

Bucharest
General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection
Public Social Assistance Service Bucharest

Râmnicu Sărat
General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection
Police Department

Public institutions:

Secretary of State of the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption
National Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
National Council for Combating Discrimination
National Roma Agency
National Institute of Statistics
National Institute for Public Health

Superior Council of Magistracy
National Institute of Magistracy
General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police
General Inspectorate for Immigration
National Forensic Institute

Deputy Ombudsperson of Romania

Association of Municipalities in Romania
Romanian College of Physicians
Romanian College of Psychologists

Non-governmental organisations:

Association ADEPT
Association ANAIS
Association E-Romnja
Association Midwives in Romania
Association Necuvinte
Association Plural
Association Pas Alternativ
Association Transcena
Association UNIC
Association Vulnerable Persons Help Initiative
Association Women for Community
Association Women and Families from Rural Areas
Centre FILIA
Creative and Innovation Business Incubation Centre Roznov-Neamt
Foundation Community Safety and Mediation Centre
National Democratic Institute
Romanian Society of Victimology

GREVIO, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, is an independent human rights monitoring body mandated to monitor the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) by the parties.

Following the comprehensive stocktaking exercise set out in its baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round identifies progress made in building trust among women and girls by delivering support, protection and justice for any of the forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. This report contains an analysis of developments in law and policy in respect of provisions of the convention relating to victim support and protection, criminal investigation and prosecution of acts of violence. It also covers developments in the determination of child custody and visitation rights in cases with a history of violence and wider preventive measures.

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