

**Group of Experts on Action against Violence
against Women and Domestic Violence
(GREVIO)**



**Report submitted by the Netherlands
pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1
of the Council of Europe Convention
on preventing and combating violence
against women and domestic violence
(1st thematic evaluation round)**

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Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the area of violence against women and domestic violence

1. Please provide information on any new policy development since the adoption of GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on your country to ensure comprehensive policies covering the areas of prevention, protection, and prosecution in relation to stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, thereby demonstrating further implementation of the convention. Please specify the measures taken particularly in relation to those forms of violence against women that have not been addressed in past policies, programmes and services encompassing the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention.

Since the baseline evaluation the Netherlands has continued its efforts to strengthen prevention, protection and prosecution in relation to violence against women and domestic violence. On a national levels several ministries¹ are working together with relevant partners such as law enforcement, countless societal organisations and health care services to address the issues through policy. With the risk of not being encompassing, important developments in policy of the last years are listed below. Former policies and programmes are further developed and new initiatives are deployed:

Strategic alliances

The Dutch government works on the primary prevention of gender-based violence with its gender equality policies. As part of the gender equality in policy the government supports [8 strategic alliances](#)² of civil society organisations focusing on gender equality the field of LGBTQ+ acceptance, work and financial independence, closed communities, safety, politics, youth, education and healthcare. Furthermore the government supports an alliance focusing on gender equality in the field of sports.

National Action Programme Sexual transgressive behaviour and Sexual violence ('Nationale Actieprogramma Aanpak SGOG SG')

In January 2023 the National Action Programme (NAP) was launched to strengthen protection and prevention against sexual transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. The overarching goal is to create a sustainable change in culture to prevent, recognize, detect and stopping sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence. Therefore it takes into account root causes such as harmful gender norms, dominant ideas about sexuality and unequal power relations. Because such a change in culture will not take place overnight, an important second objective is limiting damage for victims. The programme aims to address the needed changes through education, awareness raising, activating bystanders, research, discussing sexual transgressive behaviour, legislative and regulatory changes, providing support to victims and stopping (potential) offenders. Through five lines of actions four ministries are combining power: (1) Shared norms and values, (2) rules and regulations, (3) function of organisations in prevention, identification and prosecution, (4) recognizing and responding and (5) health care services. In March 2024 a [progress report](#) was published, covering the activities of the first years and further goals until the end of 2025.

An example of the programme is the Alliance Act4Respect: in February 2023, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science informed the Parliament that the Ministry’s cooperation with the Alliance Act4Respect had been renewed for another five years, based on their new application and theory of change, resulting in the new Alliance Act4Respect Unlimited. Act4Respect is a collaboration between Rutgers, Atria, COC Netherlands and the Ministry working together with young people and professionals to promote equal relationships and prevent gender-based violence, through four action paths:

1. Social Norm campaign aimed at youth

¹ Including the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

² Act4Respect, Bronnen van verandering, Gedeelde trots gedeeld geluk, Gezondheidszorg op maat, LGBT Heritage, Samen werkt het, Verandering van binnenuit en Werk en de toekomst

The Alliance 'Act4Respect' (by organisations Rutgers and Atria) has launched a [campaign](#) in 2019 aimed at youth, in which they address stereotypical ideas that often play a part in the emergence and continuation of gender related violence. In November 2020 they launched a follow-up focusing on the problem of victim blaming in cases of sexual, and other forms of, gender related violence. This campaign continued in 2021. Furthermore, material has been developed for professionals.

2. Increase expertise

Professionals in particular play an important role in developing and implementing gender-sensitive preventive interventions and in creating a socially safe environment. Act4Respect therefore offers them support, training, and relevant tools and tips. This enables professionals to better identify and prevent sexual violence, (ex)partner violence and cyber violence at an early stage. The desired end result is that professionals can apply gender-sensitive policy in practice, by selecting and implementing appropriate interventions.

3. Further developing effective interventions

Gender-sensitive interventions among (at-risk) young people can prevent victimization and perpetration, increase their resilience and strengthen violence prevention. All young people should receive good sex education that focuses on resilience and pays attention to gender and sexual diversity. However, some groups of young people are more vulnerable than others. These may include LGBTIQ+ young people, for example, or young people with practical training, or those with mild intellectual disabilities. By researching these at-risk groups and then creating targeted prevention, Act4Respect aims to increase impact. The overall aim is to develop existing interventions in a targeted way by making them more gender-sensitive.

4. Knowledge hub

The alliance is developing an interactive knowledge hub in co-creation with professionals. Here, we will share knowledge and experiences on sexual violence, (former) partner violence and cyber violence from research and practice. We do this through a digital HUB and by facilitating knowledge exchange at events and meetings.

As part of the National Action Programme on Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and Sexual Violence, the government appointed Mariëtte Hamer in April 2022 as [independent government commissioner](#) for addressing sexual transgressive behaviour and sexual violence for a period of three years. She provides solicited and unsolicited advice on the development and implementation of the national action plan. In addition she is responsible for driving the public debate and stimulating initiatives to achieve the required cultural change. She also builds coalitions between societal partners to tackle this problem. Hereby she will call attention to the structures and patterns in society that contribute to the occurrence of sexual transgressive behaviour, such as gender inequality, prejudices and a lack of diversity and inclusiveness. In the performance of these duties, the Commissioner works closely with the involved ministries, governmental agencies, supervisory bodies and social partners. At the same time, the Commissioner is in constant contact with relevant stakeholders in the field and can rely on a solid network among civil society organisations, victims and professionals.

Organisation of the support landscape for abuse and violence in dependency relationships

The Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport are working together with the Association of Dutch Municipalities to strengthen the accessibility of all the help, support and reporting possibilities in relation to violence in dependency relationships. There is an overlap signalled in the options for help, support and reporting points. Furthermore, there is need for more specific knowledge and expertise within the support system. The aim of the project is thus to diminish the fragmentation in possibilities within support, to create a better and more effective system. Within the bigger picture the approach is to use 'design sprints' with improvement initiatives for specific target groups and issues. The project started in 2023 and will run until the end of 2024.

Future outlook ('Toekomstscenario') and Violence does not belong anywhere ('Geweld hoort nergens thuis')

In 2018 the programme 'Violence does not belong anywhere' started to improve the collaboration with

and for families with unsafe circumstances. The programme ran until the end of 2021 and empowered the regional approach by strengthening the expertise of local teams³, enhancing the information position with monitoring (*'impactmonitor'*) and optimizing the use of the reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse. To further develop the family focused approach and follow up on needed collaborative effort after 'No place for violence' the programme 'Future outlook on children- and family protection' was initiated. The Ministry of Justice and Security, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Association of Dutch Municipalities combined efforts to work on an integrated, family-oriented system. From 2021 – 2023 the future outlook started off with pilots (*'proeftuinen'*) and designing an intergovernmental, multi-annual [programme](#). Until 2026 this programme is developing, testing and broadening the vision for the future. This vision covers two objectives for 2030: (1) an integral and people-oriented approach and (2) system changes.

Plan of action on prevention of femicide (*'Plan van aanpak Stop femicide'*)

In the spring of 2024 the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, together with the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, has been working on a plan of action to prevent fatal violence against women by (ex-)partner or family. The plan highlights the importance of recognizing, registering, documenting and researching early warnings and patterns of unsafety in the path towards femicide. The plan is a collaboration between civil society organisations, knowledge institutes, individuals that have been directly affected and/or personal experience and municipalities. Current efforts will be strengthened by focusing on primary prevention, identification, training of professionals, intervention and support services and insights into knowledge and prevalence.

Harmful Practices action plan and further follow up on harmful practices (*'Actieagenda en verder vervolg van schadelijke praktijken'*)

In order to prevent, identify and combat harmful practices, the Harmful Practices action plan was launched in February 2020 by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice and Security, being an elaboration of the programme "Violence has no place at Home". With the action plan, a strong impulse was given to prevention, (early) detection and repression of harmful practices and support of victims. It focused on combating female genital mutilation (FGM), honour-related violence, forced marriage and abandonment. In order to do so, the programme included, among other things, several targeted actions to raise awareness in communities and professionalization within relevant sectors such as healthcare, education and security. Important actions contributing to reaching communities were the use of cultural mediators in migrant organisations and the national information campaign 'Right to No (see question 44 and 56d)', which has shown to be very successful in reaching young people. Due to their success, these actions are continued, as well as the effort to invest in competence development of professionals, e.g. through an e-learning. In order to reach communities, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is supporting seven societal organisations (such as the Federation of Somali Organisations in the Netherlands) in experimenting and innovating methods to approach the target audience, in collaboration with Movisie, a knowledge centre. Furthermore, the efforts to support the National Centre for Forced Marriage and Abandonment (LKHA) have been structurally embedded. At the moment the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is working on a plan to support municipalities in their approach to harmful practices (the parliament has been informed). To conclude, although the action plan ended at the end of 2022, it has formed a solid base for the current and future strategy of preventing and combating harmful practices, as the societal task to end these forms of violence remains.

Development agenda Safety First (*'Veiligheid Voorop!'*)

Since 2018, Safe Home (*'Veilig Thuis'*), the police, Public Prosecution Office, the Council for Child Protection and the three probation organisations are collaboratively rising up for early prevention of domestic violence and child abuse.

Among the activities of the coalition is the publication of thematic knowledge collection for stalking. The collection consists of practical information for professionals (with tools and reference material) to strengthen cooperation and improve workflows.

³ Local teams are active within a municipality and consist of professionals that make sure the residents are able to get voluntary support. The local teams focus on whether support is needed, and which support is needed if so (they can provide support themselves or connect other professionals).

Measures for the digital dimension of domestic violence and violence against women

As part of the policy and measures to prevent and combat domestic violence, more attention is provided to the digital dimension. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is coordinating the measures taken to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women online. These measures are based on research of 2023, commissioned to outline what is happening in the Netherlands regarding the digital dimension and what is needed to properly implement this recommendation of GREVIO in Dutch practice. Together with the Ministry of Justice and Security, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Association of Dutch Municipalities, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is working on improving the protection and prevention of online violence via new measures as well as strengthening existing policy. A part of these measures are related to the implementation of the Digital Service Act, the national action programme sexual transgressive behaviour and sexual violence and the updated law for sexual crimes. These measures are taken in line with the general recommendation No 1. on the digital dimension of domestic violence and violence against women of GREVIO.

In addition, the Dutch municipalities are also responsible for policy development on domestic violence and violence against women (Youth Act and the Social Support Act of 2015). Parts of the Dutch government have been decentralized on 1 January 2015. To fund the approach, the central government makes resources available annually through a decentralization budget and a general budget. As a result, municipalities are free to choose the way they fulfil their obligations. This system makes it possible to develop policies that are aligned with the local needs and options available in the region. This is one of the principles of the decentralized system in the Netherlands.

In the coming years, the Netherlands is committed to developing a more integrated, coherent and structured approach to online discrimination, racism and hate speech, including online hate against women. This approach will be based on support for victims, enforcement and legislation, prevention and awareness, better registration and research. These pillars are currently being developed into concrete actions by a working group, consisting of the Ministries of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Education, Culture and Science, Justice and Security, Social Affairs and Employment and Health, Welfare and Sport. Our aim is a co-creation with relevant parties, so together we can make sure our approach is as practical, efficient and effective as possible.

Safe Cities

To ensure the safety of women and girls in public spaces, the number of municipalities that participate in the programme 'Safe Cities' expanded to 20 cities across the country. The programme focuses on strengthening women's and girl's safety in public spaces when going out.

Dutch Penal Code

The current legislation with regard to sexual offences is being revised fundamentally in the Dutch Penal Code. The new law is going into effect on July 1, 2024. Important revisions are:

- More forms of sexual offences will be punishable. Therefore, victims will be able to report sexual offences in more cases. Some example are:
 1. Having sexual contact with someone without consent. One is punishable if one knows or should have known that the other person does not want the sexual contact. It is no longer necessary to prove that there was coercion, violence or threat;
 2. Sexual harassment in public, both off- and online;
 3. Adults sending sexually explicit messages to children under the age of 16 and under specific circumstances also under the age of 18 (sex chatting).
- The maximum penalties for a number of sexual offences are increased. For example, when it comes to sexual abuse of children.

SAMEN

The Dutch government also co-finances project SAMEN which aims to combat sexual and gender-based violence in migrant communities. The SAMEN project offers psychosocial support, training, opportunities to exchange knowledge, referrals and preventive measures. The services are provided to adults belonging to vulnerable groups, such as women, young adults and people from the LGBTQI+ community.

Action plan Together against human trafficking ('Actieplan Samen tegen Mensenhandel')

Coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Security, the Ministries of Justice and Security, Health, Welfare and Sport, Education, Culture and Science, Foreign Affairs and Social Affairs and Employment work together with many field organisations to prevent and combat human trafficking. Through six action lines, new actions will take place to prevent and combat human trafficking. Together with field organisations the ministries combine efforts to work on prevention, awareness, care and shelter for victims, cooperation, data sharing and protection of minor victims. This plan is focusing on all forms of human trafficking, including sexual exploitation.

Caribbean Netherlands

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport continued to work together with the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba in setting up a full-fledged and sustainable approach to domestic violence and child abuse in the Caribbean Netherlands (CN), according to the administrative agreements that were made to this end for 2021- 2024. Meaningful steps have been taken towards ratifying the Istanbul Convention for CN.

Both Saba and St. Eustatius worked on establishing a permanent shelter for victims of domestic violence. With the help of a Dutch organisation work processes are now in place for both the shelter and the advising and reporting centre for domestic violence and child abuse on both islands. All three islands are currently working on the implementation of a registration system for domestic violence cases. This will contribute to the availability of data on domestic violence in CN.

Each of the public entities continued to work on prevention by means of providing information and organizing educational events, targeting both women and men.

The legislation on social support and the approach to domestic violence and child abuse BES is at a final stage. The intended entry into force date was enlarged and is now set on 1 January 2025. This decree establishes the definitions of domestic violence, the domestic circle and child abuse for CN, defines the structure, duties and the authority of the Advice and Reporting Centre for Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, and includes an obligation for various organisations to establish a protection code domestic violence and child abuse.

The implementation of the protection code ('*beschermingscode*') is currently in progress. Support is organised for the organisations that will be obliged to establish a protection code domestic violence and child abuse. Information will be made available for both professionals and citizens. And on each island attention officers for domestic violence will receive training on the new legislation.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport commissioned a research into the attitude of residents of CN regarding parenting children and in particular the use of violence in childrearing or in family and partner relationships. The study is intended as a baseline assessment that can be used as a starting point for evaluating the effectiveness of new policies in the upcoming years. The results are expected in June 2024.

On behalf of the Minister for Legal Protection, a temporary restraining order work process in the Caribbean Netherlands is currently being designed together with the public bodies and organisations involved. The necessity and feasibility of a legal regulation for the temporary restraining order in the Caribbean Netherlands is being investigated. The advisory report is expected around the summer of 2024. On this basis, decision-making will be made about starting a legislative process for the temporary restraining order, in conjunction with other implementing legislation for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention for the Caribbean Netherlands.

The Ministries of Justice and Security, Health, Welfare and Sport, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Social Affairs and Employment also finance the Care and Safety House Bonaire, the Safety Network on Saba and the Multidisciplinary Consultation (MDO) on Sint Eustatius. These consultation tables form an important part of the multidisciplinary approach to domestic violence and child abuse in the Caribbean Netherlands, for which coordination between the healthcare and criminal justice chains is crucial.

2. Where relevant, please provide information on any measures taken to ensure the alignment of any definitions of domestic violence and of violence against women in national legislation or policy documents with those set out under Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and provide the relevant applicable provisions in English or French.

The definitions as used in Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention have been fully adopted and aligned with national legislation and policy documents.

3. Please provide information on how your authorities ensure that policies on violence against women and domestic violence put women's rights and their empowerment at the centre and on any measure taken to enhance the intersectionality of such policies, in line with Articles 4 paragraph 3 of the convention.

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is the coordinating Ministry of gender equality and women's rights. The Ministry coordinates women's rights and female empowerment is put at the centre of developing new policies by gender mainstreaming all government policies and stimulating other government departments to take the effect of their policies on gender equality into account. As of January 24 2019, a step was taken by including the Quality requirement "Effects on gender equality" in the Integrated Assessment Framework for Policy and Regulation. In 2023 this gender test is included in the Policy Compass, the new national governmental instrument for the development of policies. The gender test examines how the policy or legislation and regulations contributes to reducing existing inequality between women and men in all their diversity or how it is ensured that the current degree of equality between women and men does not decrease. The Policy Compass should be used by all ministries. For every new policy or program, the Dutch government needs to ensure that gender equality and women's rights are incorporated.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is also involved with the prevention and protection of domestic violence and violence against women. The Ministry stimulates putting women's right at the centre of developing new policies and programs related to violence against women and domestic violence. The Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport and Justice and Security developed several policies and plan of actions with involvement of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science stimulating (the attention for) gender sensitivity and women's rights. Examples are the Plan of action on prevention of femicide and the National Action Programme Sexual transgressive behaviour and Sexual violence.

To explore how intersectional thinking and working can be strengthened among government officials in the field of emancipation, discrimination and racism approach, a pilot was developed and implemented. This pilot should further assist policy officials in incorporating intersectionality into policy development. We are currently exploring how intersectional thinking and working can be better embedded within the policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (and gender equality) on the basis of the action framework provided by the pilot and to further guide policy staff in this. For instance, the Emancipation Monitor and LGBTIQ+ Monitor explicitly pay attention to women and LGBTIQ+ people with and without disabilities. The government is also aiming to map several background characteristics for the monitor on representation in the media, so that attention is paid to the intersections of grounds for discrimination.

4. Please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country concerning the allocation of appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources for the implementation of integrated policies, measures and programmes to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

The allocation of resources is divided over Ministries, resulting in available financial and human resources in several teams and departments. The responsibility of prevention, protection and prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence is shared by several Ministries. These Ministries have teams (managers and policy officers) available for integrated policies, measures and programmes focused on youth and adults. The total amount of policy advisors (FTE) is estimated around 50. The different Ministries and departments within these Ministries have their own budget. Additionally, municipalities are advised to tailor the policies to their own specific local context (see question 1). The national government works together with the Association of Dutch Municipalities and also facilitates their approach by adding to their funds with financial support.

5. Please provide information on any development concerning the provision of appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources for women's rights organisations that provide specialist support services to victims, including those supporting migrant women and girls.

In order to ensure women's rights organisations are appropriately and sustainably financed, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science supports eight alliances for a duration of five years. The idea of these more long-term alliances aims to finance groups of organisations for longer periods of time to ensure a more sustainable, consistent flow of financial support. This financial support is provided through the Subsidy regulation on Gender and LGBTI-equality 2022-2027 (*'Subsidieregeling Gender- en LHBTI-gelijkheid 2022-2027'*).

One example of an alliance that provides support to victims, including those supporting migrant women and girls is the alliance *VERANDERING VAN BINNENUIT* ('Change from within'). This alliance consists of Movisie, IOT and LKP. It aims to enact change within closed-off communities about e.g. gender related sexual violence and/or sexual diversity on the basis of dialogue.

6. Please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country on the introduction of data collection categories such as type of violence, sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between the two and where it took place, for administrative data of relevance to the field of violence against women and domestic violence emanating from law enforcement agencies, the justice sector, social services and the public health care sector.

Prevalence monitor domestic violence and sexual transgressive behaviour

The monitor is a population-based survey on the Dutch population of 16 years and beyond, conducted by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and Scientific Research and Data Centre (WODC). This monitor contains data about the (1- and 5-) year prevalence of victimization, supplemented with data on perpetrators, consequences of violence, and contacts of victims as a result of their experiences. The first survey was conducted in 2020. The second survey was published in the beginning of 2023, with data collected in March and April 2022, covering the year prevalence from March/April 2021 till March/April 2022. The new monitor will be published at the end of 2024. Forms of violence covered:

- domestic verbal aggression,
- domestic violence (physical violence, coercive control, ex-partner stalking, domestic sexual transgressive behaviour)
- sexual transgressive behaviour (online sexual intimidation, offline sexual intimidation, physical sexual violence).

This monitor maps, among other things, the following characteristics: victim's gender, victim's sexual preference, victim's personal characteristics, structural victimization, experiences of the victim in childhood, relationship to the perpetrator, the consequences for the victim, the extent to which the victim interacts with others/ agencies about the violence. The data is based on a recurring digital survey every two years among 100.000 respondents (the response rate in 2022 was about 24.000 respondents). The survey does not cover reported incidents of domestic violence and sexually transgressive behaviour, but rather people's self-reported experiences.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport commissioned Regioplan to conduct further analysis with the data from the prevalence monitor. The specific focus of the research is the role of gender in domestic violence, sexual violence and murder. The [research](#) was published in 2022.

Impact monitor domestic violence and child abuse

The monitor displays information from various sources and studies combined to provide a comprehensive picture of the approach to domestic violence and child abuse: [Impactmonitor aanpak huiselijk geweld en kindermishandeling 2021](#). This monitor is published annually, since 2020. In this monitor the statistical data collection by law-enforcement agencies and the judicial office is shown, with sources and indicators such as:

- The prevalence monitor of domestic violence and sexual misconduct
- The policy information of Safe Home (Veilig Thuis, the advice and reporting centre for domestic violence and child abuse, including information about requests for advice, reports, services deployed and referrals to assistance)
- The Public Prosecution Service (inflow and measures),
- The Child Protection Council (protection investigations)
- Judiciary (criminal settlements and civil youth protection measures)
- Administrative temporary restraining orders
- Results of periodic research into the safety and well-being of the adults and children reported to Safe Home.

Where possible, the data is broken down into age, gender and religion.

Victim Monitor

The monitor (CBS, since 2021), based on information about incidents registered with the police, including those relating to sexual offences, (attempted) murder or manslaughter, assault, threats and human trafficking, broken down by gender, among other things.

Safe Home dashboard

A [dashboard](#) has been developed with policy information based on registration data of Safe Home. This dashboard provides an overview of data since 2019 regarding child abuse and domestic violence, based on the functionalities of the Safe Home organisations (providing advice to civilians and professionals, the collection of reports, investigations, referrals to other organisations etc.). The dashboard not only provides insight into the developments over time on the national as well as regional level, but also offers the possibility to compare regions with each other. The purpose of the dashboard is to provide accessible quantitative information that can be used in conversations within regions, between regions and between regional and national parties. The dashboard thus contributes to a data-driven learning and improvement cycle. The information on the dashboard is based on the Safe Home Policy Information, based on the registration data of Safe Home organisations collected and processed by Statistics Netherlands. SN publishes this policy information every six months.

Sexual Violence Against Children Victims Monitor of the National Rapporteur

The National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children reports on the nature and scope of human trafficking (also encompassing sexual exploitation) and sexual violence against children in the Netherlands. Once every two years, the NRM sets up a report on the perpetrators of human trafficking. Once every year, there is a report on victims of human trafficking. The monitor of the National Rapporteur is an important study. This monitor is about the nature and size of the groups of victims, about the protection and help these children victims received and about relevant developments in the approach to combat sexual violence against children. The monitor contributes to policy making and evaluation. The National Rapporteur's latest monitor was published in fall 2022 and covers the period 2017-2021.

Public Monitor for Sexually Transgressive Behaviour

Since 2023 I&O Research has published the [Public Monitor for Sexually Transgressive Behaviour](#) ('*Publieksmonitor Seksueel Grensoverschrijdend Gedrag*'). The survey includes data on the knowledge of, experiences with (as victim or perpetrator) and attitudes towards sexually transgressive behaviour. Some of the data is disaggregated by sex. The purpose of this survey is to monitor the effects of the National Action Programme (see question 1) on Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and Sexual Violence.

LGBT(IQ+) monitor

The former LGBT monitor will be developed into an LGBTIQ+ monitor as of 2024 by Panteia, Movisie and I&O Research. In addition to data on (sexual) violence disaggregated for lesbian and bi+ women, as of 2024 additional disaggregations are expected for transgender and asexual women as well as non-binary and intersex people. Where possible, data will also be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and disability.

Prevalence study on harmful practices

In order to gain a better insight into the prevalence and underlying social norms of harmful practices, research is started in August 2023 by Pharos, a knowledge centre in the field of female genital mutilation and other harmful practices. The research is supported by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. This data collection of female genital mutilation (FGM), honour-related violence, forced marriage, abandonment and marital captivity will contribute to a better understanding and more effective interventions to prevent and combat harmful practices. The results are expected at the end of 2025.

Public Prosecutor

The Public Prosecutor's Office ('*Openbaar Ministerie*') is registering female victimization with cases with violence since January 2024. This includes murder and manslaughter. At the police and probation offices there are no new developments on data collection since 2018.

In addition, there are monitors that report on violence against women and domestic violence that have existed for some time:

- Murder and manslaughter figures (CBS), based on qualitative information from court reports and coroner's reports. These figures include information about the number of cases of murder and manslaughter, the gender and age of the victim, the relationship to the suspect/perpetrator, the method of commission and the region.
- The Security Monitor (CBS), biennial population survey into quality of life, perception of safety and crime victimization among people in the Netherlands aged 15 and older. The figures from this monitor contain information about violent crimes, including (online) threats and intimidation, assault and sexual crimes, broken down by gender of the victim and region, among other things.
- Policy information Safe Home (CBS), based on registration data from Safe at Home, with information on, among other things, the number of requests for advice, reports, safety assessments, services (investigations, safety conditions, monitoring), follow-up processes and transfers, forms of violence and personal characteristics.

To identify trends there is the multiannual study of Verwey-Jonker, commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and ZonMw⁴. This longitudinal research has been conducted since 2009 and shows insights into the well-being of families a year after a report at Safe Home. The latest report was published in September 2023 and concluded that more families have the positive outcome of no more violence within a year after reporting. At the same time the study shows the complexity of sustainably stopping violence within families, with violence still continuing in relations and families after reporting. The study furthermore distinguishes several family profiles. The results of the reports are valuable for national policies, local/ regional approaches and highlight chances for improvement in specific regions. At the moment the fourth research is being prepared. Based on the data of the multiannual study, Verwey-Jonker will also analyse intimate terror.

⁴ Dutch organisation focused on knowledge innovation and science to tackle societal challenges. Important commissioners for the organisation are ministries (such as Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice and Security) and the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NOW).

- Emancipation Monitor (CBS), bi annual monitor with data on themes related to women's emancipation, contains, among other things, data on violence against women (including abuse, stalking and sexual misconduct, murder and manslaughter), the location of the violence and the relationship of the victim versus the perpetrator.

7. Where relevant, please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country to enable disaggregated data collection:

a. on the number of emergency barring and protection orders and the number of breaches and the resulting sanctions; b. on the number of times custody decisions have resulted in the restriction and withdrawal of parental rights because of violence perpetrated by one parent against the other.

Statistics Netherlands publishes figures every six months on the approach to domestic violence and child abuse, including the number of requested and imposed temporary restraining orders, in the impact monitor on tackling domestic violence and child abuse (see question 6). Based on this CBS data, it is known for the following regions in the Netherlands how often a temporary restraining order has been requested, where possible broken down into imposed and non-imposed temporary restraining orders. There have been no new developments in data collection of the protection orders, as well as custody decisions since 2018.

At a quantitative level, Victim Support Netherlands registers how often employees advise on or support the implementation of protective measures. This includes distinguishing between advising on/supporting protection in the investigation and prosecution phase, during the trial, and in the enforcement phase, as well as making written requests for protective measures. Protective measures encompass contact and location bans, temporary restraining orders, but also reserving a separate victim room in court, for example. Victim Support Netherlands does not quantitatively register whether these protective measures are actually imposed/granted, whether there is a breach, and if so, what the resulting sanction is. However, the information from the latter sentence can be retrieved at the case level.

Additionally, since mid-2023, Victim Support Netherlands has been separately registering domestic violence as a distinct offense. This allows for quantitative tracking of how often employees provide information on or support the implementation of protective measures in cases of domestic violence.

8. Please provide information on measures taken to allow cases of violence against women and domestic violence to be tracked from reporting to conviction, at all stages of the law-enforcement and judicial proceedings.

The provision of data by the police is based in the Police Data Decree ([Besluit Politiegegevens](#)) (regards the use of data in general and not specifically for violence against women or domestic violence). The decree states the legislation in regard to processing data of the police by police officials. Article 4.1 and 4.2 include the transmission of data to other parties. Several parties that provide help to victims are listed, such as Victim Support, CoMensha, the Probation Office, the college of Mayors and Alderman (in relation to their responsibility in youth health care), COA, and NIFP. Within Article 3.1 the transmission with the Public Prosecutor's Office is stated.

There is possibility to register female victimization in cases with violence at the Public Prosecutor (see question 6) (to add to the tracking from reporting to conviction from the Public Prosecutor onwards).

The use and transmission of data by Safe Home is based in the Governmental Decree of the Social Support Law 2015. There is a structural transmission towards Statistics Netherlands (Article 4.2.12 on transmission towards the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and Justice and Security for policy information).

The Data Processing Omnibus bill I by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is currently being discussed in the House of Representatives, and also regards these parties. This bill provides, among other things, for the clarification of the basis for providing personal data (including the citizen service number) by Safe Home organisations to Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Safe Home organisations provide registration data to CBS so that CBS can publish the Safe at Home policy information. The processing of personal data by CBS takes place in the context of the CBS Act and the CBS policy information cannot be traced back to individual persons. Based on research within the secure CBS environment, in the long term, if the Ministry Omnibus bill has been adopted and if Safe at Home organisations can provide citizen service numbers to CBS, the flow in the chain can be mapped of people who are experiencing domestic violence and who have been reported to Safe at Home (and/or to the police) and for whom care, assistance or interventions have subsequently been provided in a voluntary, civil, administrative or criminal law framework.

Furthermore, the bill will sharpen the function description of Safe Home (in the Social Support Law of 2015). The changes reflect the important role Safe Home in collaboration with partners. The last couple of years showed that sharing information between partners from Safe Home does not happen simultaneously. Safe Home would report to the police and the Council for Child Protection, who would direct the information towards further partners such as the Public Prosecutor's Office. Through an earlier, better and collaborative efforts on collaboration of the partners, the approach will have a greater chance at durable recovery of the safety. The ability to share information earlier in the collaboration with partners (Public Prosecutor's Office, probation office, Victim Support Netherlands) will further limit the chances of escalating violence after a report by combining and matching interventions from judicial and (medical) support services. This will strengthen the effectivity of the domestic violence and child abuse approach. To maintain privacy for those involved, the bill also goes into the role of necessity, proportionality and subsidiarity.

Part II: Information on the implementation of selected provisions in priority areas in the field of prevention, protection and prosecution

<p>9. Please provide information on any primary prevention measures aiming to change mentalities and attitudes in relation to violence against women and to reduce women’s exposure to gender-based violence by</p>
<p>a. addressing harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices, customs and traditions based on the idea of the inferiority of women;</p>
<p>The Dutch government stands for equal rights, opportunities and freedom for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual characteristics, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, skin colour, socio-economic status, religion, cultural identity, migration history, etc. It is a task for the government to combat social inequality through concrete support and removing barriers, but also through the cultural change that this requires in our society with a broader social debate. Through answering on other questions (such as question 1 Act4Respect, question 9c, question 10c) this report provides several examples on how the government addresses harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices, customs and traditions based on the idea of the inferiority of women.</p>
<p>b. addressing the heightened exposure to gender-based violence by women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination;</p>
<p>One example is the alliance Young Equal (<i>JONG GELIJK</i>), financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. This alliance, consisting of the organisations Rutgers, National Youth Council, Colored Qollective, Femmes for Freedom and working together with young people living in the countryside (<i>Plattelandsjongeren</i>), is established to influence and expand rigid gender norms in the areas of sexuality and relationships. The alliance brings together people with multiple identities, such as BIPOC LGBTIAQ+ youth, young refugees, bicultural young women and young people living in the countryside. More examples are provided in question 1 (project SAMEN), question 5 (Change from within) and question 3 (pilot financial self-reliance).</p> <p>In addition, Federation of Somali Organisations (FSAN) and other societal organisations in the Netherlands focus on the intersectionality of women and girls with a migration background. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is committed to preventing harmful practices among women and girls in a variety of ways, including subsidizing activities carried out by the FSAN. Activities provide information, advice and support to migrant communities through trained migrant ambassadors. The ambassadors are people who come from the community itself and educate their community about the dangers of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, abandonment and honour-related violence. By making these forms of violence a topic of discussion for example in living-room discussions, they help to change beliefs and values.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is also highlighting the importance of intersectional discrimination in relation to LGBTIQ+ and domestic violence. The Ministry commissioned Significant and Verwey-Jonker (research institutions) to research the relation between sexual orientation, gender identity and domestic violence. The report focuses on (1) risk factors and perpetrator profiles for bi+, trans and intersexual victims, (2) effective and inclusive support for these victims and (3) effective prevention for these target groups. The research was published in 2022 and consisted of several recommendations.</p> <p>The Action Plan LHBTIQ+ Safety 2019-2022 of the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has been evaluated and the public report is expected in the summer of 2024. The action plan aimed to improve the acceptance of LGBTIQ+ people, increase awareness and promote education. It also aimed to increase social safety in general on the local, regional and national level. At the end of the programme in 2022 the actions did not stop, they continued.</p>

c. encouraging all members of society, including men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence against women covered by the scope of the Istanbul Convention, and promoting the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of life, notably their participation in politics at all levels and in the labour market.

The encouragement to contribute to prevention and promote empowerment of women and girls in all areas in life is an encompassing topic through Dutch policy and measures. The role of boys and men is furthermore an important part in Dutch policies. There is a broad range of initiatives, programmes, policies and measures to recognize the importance of empowerment.

- One example is the expansion of birth leave arrangements for parents in the past few years. In 2019, partners (i.e. fathers) gained the right to one working week of paid leave after the birth of their child ('birth leave'). In July of 2020 partners gained the right to five additional weeks of partially paid birth leave (benefit of 70 percent of their wage). From August of 2022 all parents were entitled to nine weeks of partially paid parental leave (benefit of 70 percent of their wage). Two of the main objectives of these leave arrangements are to enable partners to divide care responsibilities equally and to keep up labour market participation long term and, through this, foster financial independence, especially for women.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment work together to reduce the disadvantages of women who are at a distance from the labour market, with and without social assistance benefits. This mainly concerns women with a migration background and women with a practical education. This requires tailor-made solutions that can best be provided by the municipalities and the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), because they are closest to the women. They are able to focus on the women's interests and take their circumstances and ability to act into account. The government supports them with various programmes, projects and research. An example is the study of citizens' perceptions of the theme of gender equality on the labour market. By means of a broad social dialogue, which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment started in September 2023, researchers and civil servants take part in various conversations and discussions, with citizens, employers and employees. The objective of the study is to develop a citizen's perspective on theme and formulate solutions for individuals, employers and government to foster gender equality.
- The government also takes measures to remedy the gender pay gap. Various measures, such as the previously mentioned ones, contribute to reducing the pay gap. To further contribute to this, the Netherlands works on a swift implementation of the EU directive regarding pay transparency. Other measures to promote the empowerment of women and girls on the labour market are the prevention of pregnancy discrimination and the promotion of women in senior and leadership positions.
- The Minister of Education, Culture and Science finances the alliance '*Politica*', which is a partnership between NGO's aimed at improving the position and representation of women in Dutch politics. The alliance recently conducted research into online hate against female politicians. Online hate makes women more likely to drop out or withdraw from the public arena. Women of colour receive the most hate. The alliance helps women to deal with the online hate and remove barriers to become politically active, for instance by raising awareness and by involving men in fighting gender stereotypes and gender biases.
- Since 2023 Emancipator is a main partner organisation. Emancipator works on the emancipation of men, which includes changing gender norms and rolls around masculinity in order to contribute to gender equality. Through the Emancipator project titled 'men as part of the solution' the role of boys and men in gender equality is highlighted. The project addresses men's own

biases towards gender issues, gender stereotypes and sexist behavioural patterns. It empowers men to speak up against harmful behaviour in their own environment, which can be at work or elsewhere in their lives. Through trainings at schools, universities, corporations and organisations, awareness of the responsibilities of men in achieving gender equality is enhanced.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science collaborates with three other Ministries in the Count on Skills programme ('*Tel mee met Taal*'). The programme helps to improve basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic and digital skills) for adult citizens. Through this programme, municipalities receive 85,5 million euros annually to fund courses and training in basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic and digital skills) in libraries and community centres, and via employers. Courses on female empowerment are integral part of this programme.

10. Please provide a few examples of promising teaching or prevention programmes, materials, or initiatives for use in formal education (from pre-school to higher education) that:

a. educate children and youth about equality between women and men, the right to personal integrity, mutual respect and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, including the notion of freely given consent;

In 2023 the Dutch government introduced legislation for a mandatory protocol that requires professionals in health care, education, child care, social support, youth care and the criminal justice system to follow five steps in order to respond effectively when there are signs of domestic violence or child abuse. Members of the school board are responsible to implement the mandatory protocol in the school and to promote its purpose and use.

Also, citizenship education is a mandatory part of the curriculum of primary and secondary and vocational education. For primary and secondary education, the Dutch government has formulated requirements for citizenship education that relate to so-called 'basic values of the democratic constitutional state' (freedom, equality and solidarity), to the democratic constitutional state itself, to diversity, to a safe school environment, etc. This year there will be a bill to arrange something similar for secondary vocational education with the aim of further strengthening citizenship education. Through their citizenship assignment, schools are charged with the task to integrate these requirements in their curriculum in a way they see fit and is suited for their student population. Examples could be teaching modules that stimulate open conversations about socially sensitive topics or teaching modules that help students to better understand and respect each other through among other things, stories about certain differences, such as differences in religion or sexual orientation. There is a digital platform where schools from all the aforementioned education sectors can find inspiration to further develop their curriculum.

Primary and special schools in the Netherlands are obliged to give attention to comprehensive sexual education, and are free to choose how they give attention to the topic. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport supports schools to give enough attention to this subject in different ways. For example through funding the organisation of a yearly project week for primary education and through funding for schools to buy teaching packages. Rutgers (expertise centre for sexuality in the Netherlands) and the GGD (Municipal Health Departments) are the implementing partners. Teaching packages can be submitted to an independent committee to be evaluated on their quality. A few "well-substantiated" examples are "*Kriebels in je Buik*", "*Wonderlijk Gemaakt*" or "*Veiligwijs*", or specifically about relational/sexual violence "*Girls Talk*" or "*Can you fix it*".

There are also promising examples for the student population. GELIJKSPEL (*EqualPlay*) was founded in 2019 and is led by three young woman who are on a mission to change the sexual culture among students. There is urgency for attention to the topics sexual transgressive behaviour among students. Research by Amnesty (2021) shows that over 1 in 10 female students have experienced sexual penetration during their college years without consent. Students are at a vulnerable age. Studies show that young people aged 16-24 most often experience transgressive behaviour, especially women (Dutch Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The goal of GELIJKSPEL is to change the harmful culture that allows room for sexual transgressive behaviour among students at their studies, at clubs and at parties/while going out. So that students during their study time have desirable and equal sexual interactions with each other. In 2024 and 2025 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will fund GELIJKSPEL for 1 million euro for the following 4 activities:

1. Give 300 workshops based on their own developed and tested intervention to at least 30.000 students in higher education.
2. Organise 20 meetings for at least 120 boards of student associations (e.g. sororities, fraternities, student sports clubs and study associations) to create awareness about (the impact of) sexual transgressive behaviour and to stimulate the exchange of best practices on how to tackle this issue.
3. Organise a full scale intervention programme for 30 student associations to help them to set up the necessary culture and policy structure to prevent and if needed sanction sexual transgressive behaviour.
4. Run a pilot project to translate the workshop from the context of higher education institutions to vocational training institutions (*'middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, MBO'*).

b. address some or all the forms of gender-based violence against women and girls covered by the Istanbul Convention;

See question 10a. Different forms of violence against women and girls are subject to the mandatory protocol, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

c. promote the inclusion of digital literacy and online safety in formal curricula as foreseen under GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women;

At the moment the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is working on digital literacy and citizenship in primary and secondary education through [key objectives](#). One of these objectives specifically sheds light on Safety and Privacy. This includes proper use of inappropriate content, inappropriate behaviour and safety risks in the online world. These key objectives are in the trial phase, which consists of consulting the educational field and optimizing the key objectives into definitive goals. The plan is to finish this phase in the beginning of 2025, afterwards the Ministry will start the legislative process. In the end this will result in the national implementation of the key objectives.

Several Ministries work together in a programme 'Tel mee met Taal' that aims to improve the basic skills of adults such as digital literacy (see question 9c). The programme supports courses in library's, community centres and together with employers. The gender equality directorate of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is involved with this programme to increase the empowerment of women.

The Media Literacy Network consists of more than a thousand organisations that are committed to media literacy. These include libraries, cultural institutions, media coaches, teaching material developers, educational publishers, research institutes, IT companies, media producers and platforms, educational institutions and healthcare and welfare organisations. With the network as an organisational form, important media literacy themes can be tackled easier, faster and more creatively. The strength of the network lies in sharing knowledge and collaboration. The network organises campaigns, theme weeks

(e.g. [#hierniet - Stop kwetsend gedrag online - Week van de Mediawijsheid: #hierniet](#)), meetings and many other activities.

Moreover the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissioned Regioplan to conduct a research about the implementation of the GREVIO General Recommendation No.1. This research gives an insight of the status of the implementation and the researchers summarize recommendations of the national government to strengthen the measures to prevent and combat the digital dimension of gender based and domestic violence. Part of these recommendations refer to the digital skills of youth and education programmes. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science collaborates with Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on the follow-up of the recommendations.

d. ensure that teaching material used in school does not convey negative gender stereotypes of women and men of all ages;

The alliance Becoming who you are (*'Worden wie je bent'*) is a partnership between VHTO (centre of expertise for gender diversity in beta, technique and IT), the School and Safety Foundation (*'SSV'*) and Movisie supported by Emancipator. The alliance was launched in 2023 and is financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The alliance is committed to *"an education sector in which all students feel free to be themselves and become who they want to become in a (socially) safe environment that breaks down gender stereotypes that can influence students' choices."* The alliance activities are aimed at schools in primary, secondary and vocational education and the activities are organised in two coherent activity strands.

1. is mainly aimed at schools and educational professionals within the school. Examples of activities include inspiration workshops, in-depth programmes and Gender Scans.
2. is focused on knowledge development, monitoring and knowledge sharing, with the alliance focusing on actors around the school (e.g. school boards, intermediary organisations and policy makers). Examples of activities include expert meetings, learning conversations and developing a community of practice.

The intended results of the alliance after five years are (1) increased awareness among a group of precursors of primary, secondary and vocational schools about the importance of a gender transformative approach, (2) practical tools and insights about effectively embedding a gender transformative approach in education and (3) putting gender transformative work on the policy agenda of the government, educational boards and other stakeholders.

e. offer tailored interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence and empowering all girls, including those at risk of intersectional discrimination.

See the above mentioned examples of primary prevention.

11. Please fill in the table and list the professionals (in the area of healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism and support services) which have received initial training on violence against women. Please place each category of professional in a separate line.

In the Netherlands the training of professionals and promotion of expertise is convened at the organisations and services themselves. The national government does not have an encompassing view of the initial and additional trainings, but does stimulate the development of professionals (e.g. see question 1 on harmful practices). The tables below are an indication of the training possibilities with examples.

Table 1. Initial training (education or professional training)

Professionals	Do they benefit from initial training on violence against women and domestic violence?	Is this training mandatory?	Are training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols?	Who funds the training?	Please describe the content and the duration of the training
Sexual Assault Centres case managers	The training focuses on sexual violence	No	Yes	Municipality of Utrecht for the training and participation of specific case managers partly through the municipality they work for	The Sexual Assault Centres (SACs) ensure high-quality performance of the tasks of its professionals through regular training. In 2023, all case managers have received monthly training based on needs identified by the national coordinator of the SACs. Topics included sleep of child victims of abuse, secondary traumatization of professionals and the online watchful waiting intervention.
Safe Home employees	Unknown	No	Partly (by triage instrument)	Unknown	Within the field, after basic training further training is provided on various forms of violence, such as stalking, coercive control, femicide, harmful practices, honour-related violence, etc. The National Network Safe Home is committed to this basic training, but each specific Safe Home can choose the elements of the training. Possible elements are: vision on safety and the role of Safe Home,

					<p>violence in dependency relationships (including child abuse, elderly abuse and partner violence), the methods of Safe Home, legal framework, conversations with adults/ children, specific kinds of violence, complex divorce, stalking, harmful practices and more.</p>
Police	Unknown	Yes (basic training) and when applicable the Safety First Training	Yes	The organisation	<p>Police employees in the care and safety sector within the basic units have been or will be trained in the coming years through the Safety First 'Veiligheid Voorop': Domestic Violence training. Participation in the training is based on necessity. The training has been provided several times a year since 2021. The training includes input from partners (such as Safe at Home, Public Prosecution Office, etc.) and domestic violence experience experts. In collaboration with regional Safe at Home organisations, training is conducted on multidisciplinary cooperation.</p> <p>E-learning modules have been developed for all other operational colleagues, as well as for colleagues in the emergency call centres and regional service centres. They can also access practical and up-to-date information on (the approach to) domestic violence via a web app and information pages on the intranet.</p> <p>Students undergoing training to become police officers receive the necessary knowledge about domestic violence to enable them to enter the organisation competently.</p>
Probation officers	Unknown	Yes (when using SSA)	Yes	The organisation	<p>There is a course on sexual offenses, which consists of a sequence;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. let's talk about sex 2. training on working with sex offenders 3. SSA 4. SSA booster <p>The probation officers use the Static, Stable, and Acute (SSA) tool to assess the risk of reoffending in someone who has committed or is suspected of committing a sexual offense.</p> <p>Regarding the Static and Stable components, it is suitable for offenders of sexual offenses where an identifiable victim is present. There are some contraindications such as being female and being of advanced age.</p>

					The SSA is a mandatory tool for those offenders where it is effective; to administer it, one must be trained. Training on working with sex offenders prior to SSA is mandatory. Let's talk about sex is recommended as the first training.
Public prosecutors and secretaries and judges	Yes	No	Yes, by both internal policies as (inter)national frameworks and protocols	SSR (Study Centre for Justice) (pays for the development, materials, location and teachers) and the specific prosecutors office/ court (pays for a participation fee)	During the two day course there is training on the judicial framework for domestic violence cases, the dynamics in partner relationships, patterns in coercive control, consequences for those involved and possibilities for recovery, collaboration between partners, cultural aspects of domestic violence, interventions within criminal law, sentencing, interventions with care and support services to prevent recidivism.
Public prosecutors and secretaries	Yes	Unknown	Yes	SSR	During the two day course there is training on the impact of child abuse on the child: the judicial framework, assessment of a child abuse case, fact-finding (including collaboration with doctors), detection, family dynamics and loyalty of the children, contact with those involved during a case (especially the suspect), collaboration between partners, intervention and sentencing, the impact of handling a child abuse case of the professional.
Public prosecutors and secretaries	Yes	Yes, for everyone assessing sexual offences	Yes	SSR	During the two day course there is training on the judicial assessment, recidivism risks, risk assessment, diagnostics and treatment of sexual offenders, sexual development of humans, the contact with vulnerable witnesses, the consequences of the criminal trial for a victim, forensic medial research, toxicological research and DNA and biological traces research, assessment of declarations (with the scenario-analysis model highlighted) and criminal investigation.

Public prosecutors and secretaries	Yes	Yes, for everyone working on ZSM cases (“as quick as possible”, for frequent criminal offenses)	Yes	SSR	Within the ‘as quick as possible’ framework, there is a training (half a day) focused on domestic violence. During the educational activities several topics are discussed, such as recognition of domestic violence cases, insights into related aspects and guidance on handling the approach for domestic violence cases. The training furthermore stress the importance of collaboration with partners (such as Safe Home and the Council for Child Protection) and strengthens the awareness of domestic violence (which is very important, because domestic violence cases are complex and carry sensitivities and risks)
Public prosecutors and secretaries	Unknown	Yes, for everyone assessing sexual offenses	Unknown	Unknown	As of the first of July 2024, the new law of sexual offenses will be going into effect. The course will explain the changes in the legislation, such as breaking the pattern and criminalization of sexual intimidation.
Public prosecutors and secretaries and judges		No	Yes	Unknown	An one day course on child pornography including the legislation, criminal investigations, the dark web, TOR and the social networks, interventions, societal impact, the psychological background of the suspect and sentencing.
Public prosecutors and secretaries and judges	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	An one day course on human trafficking including a short history of European and (inter)national legislation (including specific bills on human trafficking), kinds of human trafficking, the approach, the numbers and facts.
Victim Support Netherlands	Unknown	Yes	Yes	The organisation	The e-learning module on Assessment and Protection is mandatory for all employees. We inform our employees about our responsibilities regarding this topic. This is linked to the European Victims' Directive that states that vulnerable victims are entitled to specialized support and legal protection. Victim Support Netherlands has a signalling and monitoring role. The victim's vulnerability and thus their protection needs can change. Recognizing the signs is crucial, and this may also include signs of domestic violence or other forms of violence against women. This is included in this module.

COA	Unknown	Yes for the liaison officers	Unknown	The organisation	<p>COA aims to have 'focus liaison officers for domestic violence and child abuse' at each reception facility. These COA employees have had training. They collect all signals people receive in the reception centre (colleagues, Trigion security guards, residents, volunteers, partners). When domestic violence or child abuse is suspected, they talk to the victims and organisations such as schools and the GP. If necessary, they make a report to Safe at Home. Safe at Home will then see what is necessary to restore safety and deploys assistance</p> <p>Since the enactment of the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Reporting Code Act on July 1, 2013, COA has trained over 230 designated professionals (liaison officers). Additionally, group training sessions on recognizing signs and the reporting code are provided to all employees at each location.</p> <p>Each location has 2 or more designated professionals for domestic violence and child abuse, depending on the size of the location. 0.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) is allocated per location for this purpose.</p> <p>Designated professionals have completed a certified 5-day training course covering domestic violence, child abuse, honour-related violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and abandonment, sexual violence, and elderly abuse.</p>

Please fill in the table and list the professionals (in the area of healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism and support services) which receive in-service training on violence against women. Please place each category of professional in a separate line.

Table 2. In-service training

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is this training mandatory?	Frequency	Training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols	Please describe the content and duration of the training
Healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, support services (organised by Augeo foundation)	Unknown	No	Once	Yes	1,5 hours. The e-learning was developed by professionals and representatives from various organisations involved in combating harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honour-based violence, forced marriage and abandonment. This e-learning is designed to enhance the capacity of professionals to address and prevent these practices effectively, ensuring that they can provide the necessary care and support to those affected.
Sexual Assault Centres case managers	120	No	At least monthly	Yes	There is also room (after initial training) for case managers to contribute anonymized case studies during online supervision moments. In addition, once a year national training day for case managers and a SAC conference take place intended for all disciplines working in the SAC. We are also regularly approached to facilitate training other organisations and we have an e-module for professionals for our website. Many local SACs also provide training and intervision themselves.
Police	Unknown	No	(Bi) annual	Yes	The police and their partners periodically organise a national professional day on collaboration in addressing domestic violence (once every 1 to 2 years). Occasionally, the police host a webinar on a domestic violence-related theme for professionals and students.
Public prosecutors and secretaries and judges: Current domestic violence affairs day	100 each year	No	Once a year	Yes	One day where legal- and behavioural actualities in relation to domestic violence are presented and discussed trough an multi-disciplinary approach.

Public prosecutors and secretaries and judges: Conference on femicide	300	No	Once (in 2024)	Yes	One day where several topics will be highlighted: violence in families and family profiles, intimate terror, victim advocacy, types of stalkers and the approach, intergenerational trauma, non-fatal strangulation and collaboration with partners.
Public prosecutors and secretaries and judges: Current affairs day for sexual offenses	80 each year	No	Once a year	Unknown	One day where legal and non-legal actualities in relation to sexual offenses are presented and discussed.
Public prosecutors and secretaries	Unknown	No	Different for each public prosecutors' office	Yes	Nationally there are college materials developed, that are being implemented by the coordinating domestic violence public prosecutors in order to stimulate education at local offices. This is specifically on the topics violence against women and femicide.
Victim Support Netherlands	Unknown	Yes	Various	Unknown	<p>The following training programmes have relevant connections to the theme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Sexual Offenses: This is an e-learning module that employees take once if they wish to support sexual offense victims. The e-learning serves as preparation for the classroom training on conducting interviews with sexual offense victims. 2. Conducting Interviews with Sexual Offense Victims: A two-day classroom training where employees are prepared to conduct interviews with sexual offense victims appropriately. One day focuses on the psychosocial aspect, and the other day focuses on the legal aspect. The latter also specifically addresses the implementation of the new Sexual Offenses Act, which will come into effect on July 1st. 3. Case Discussion on Sexual Offenses: Employees who support sexual offense victims are required to participate in case

					<p>discussions once a year. These discussions take place in groups with other colleagues who support sexual offense victims and are led by our knowledge institute.</p> <p>All three of the above are mandatory for those wishing to support sexual offense victims.</p> <p>Additionally, there is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Peer Support Worker Training: Victim Support Netherlands provides peer support in various forms and for various themes, including stalking and sexual violence victims. This training prepares an employee to facilitate peer support groups. This training is mandatory to perform the task and lasts a total of 3.5 days.2. Theme Day/Professional Development for Peer Support Workers: Those trained to facilitate peer support groups are required to participate in the specially organised theme day/professional development session for them twice a year to continue this role.3. Me and the Victim: This is an optional, in-depth training for employees who have gained at least 1 year of client contact experience with us (although experience shows that most people providing psychosocial support typically attend this training). It focuses on self-awareness and how your own character, frame of reference, strengths, and weaknesses influence your interactions with clients. What is already working well, and what can be improved? The afternoon session covers intercultural communication. Topics such as domestic violence, femicide, and honour-based
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					violence are discussed here.
Law enforcement (organised by National Expertise Centre for Honour-based Violence)	100	No	Annually	Yes	A presentation by the police in the context of international women's day. Theme: violence against women.
Criminal justice (organised by National Expertise Centre for Honour-based Violence)	24	Yes	Sporadically	Yes	A course about domestic violence for the SSR (the training institute for the Judiciary and the Public Prosecution Service).
Law enforcement (organised by National Expertise Centre for Honour-based Violence)	40	No	Sporadically	Yes	A presentation in the context of a trade day on honour-related violence and femicide.
Law enforcement (organised by National Expertise Centre for Honour-based Violence)	200	No	Sporadically	Yes	A presentation on the police academy on the role of the police in dealing with violence in dependency relationships.
Professionals working with the reporting code in health care, education and police (see question 19) (organised by Pharos)	Unknown	No	E-learning can be ordered year round	Yes, by the reporting code	A course on basic knowledge on harmful practices: how to recognize signals and the issues. The e-learning also delves into proceedings (what to do and what not to do) and practical tips to make one feel equipped.
Youth health care professionals (organised by Pharos)	Unknown	No	E-learning can be ordered year round	Unknown	The e-learning provides information on the topic female genital mutilation, with specific attention for: the role of youth health care in prevention and conversation techniques.
General practitioners, obstetricians, youth health care or Safe Home employees (organised by Pharos)	Unknown	No	E-learning can be ordered year round	Unknown	Additionally there are several e-learning for specific occupations on female genital mutilation. There are two main objectives: knowledge on health care complaints with the specific setting of the occupation and putting efforts into prevention.
Immigration and Naturalization Service	Nearly all employees	No	Unknown	Unknown	Training module on gender and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

12. Please specify if the expertise of women's rights organisations or specialist support services is integrated in the design and/or implementation of the training.

The Sexual Assault Centres develop its own training, together with experts from the disciplines covered by the training. Many of these training courses are designed and carried out by Iva Bicanic, head of the national Psychotrauma Centre and clinical psychologist. The SACs therefore have a lot of in-house expertise.

At Safe Home the basic training includes expertise on specific kinds of violence, the specialist support services are not embedded into the training.

13. Please provide information on measures taken to increase the number of available preventive intervention and treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence both for voluntary and mandatory attendance.

Since 2018, the government has invested in improving early cooperation between Safe Home, the Public Prosecution Service, the Police, the Child Protection Board and the Probation Service, at both a national and regional level. This collaboration works according to the Safety First approach (see question 1), whereby we coordinate with each other - rather than one after the other – on what voluntary or forced help and interventions are needed to stop domestic violence and child abuse. The organisations involved work on the basis of a joint vision (the phased collaboration on safety vision), whereby we first work on safety, then on combating risk factors and then on recovery. The approach and interventions are aimed at both victims and perpetrators.

The Scientific Research and Data Centre (WODC) has conducted research into the effectiveness of the BORG behavioural training, which is given by the probation service in a criminal context to suspects and convicted perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Based on this training, it can also be concluded in appropriate cases that forensic treatment should be initiated for the suspect/perpetrator. Based on the findings and recommendations of the WODC, this behavioural training is currently being further developed and improved for the use of the training in a criminal justice context. In addition, the Minister for Legal Protection has asked the WODC to explore how the BORG training can also be offered to perpetrators of intimate partner violence outside the criminal law framework, for example upon referral by Safe Home. The aim is to use this behavioural training as early as possible, because perpetrators of intimate partner violence are more likely to follow the behavioural training shortly after the incident and after intervention by agencies such as Safe Home or the Police.

The Minister for Legal Protection has also commissioned a process to improve the use of the temporary restraining order for perpetrators of domestic violence and child abuse. The temporary restraining order is an administrative intervention that can be imposed by the mayor (or by an assistant public prosecutor, employed by the police, on behalf of the mayor). This process aims to improve implementation practice and possibly also to propose a change in the law. The aim is, among other things, to apply the temporary restraining order not only in acute crisis situations (as is currently mainly the case) but also on the basis of well-founded reports about structurally unsafe home situations before the situation escalates into a crisis situation. The use of a temporary restraining order can contribute to a short period of peace, during which assistance can be provided to all involved, both victims and perpetrators, with the aim of creating sustainable safety. It is also currently being investigated how a temporary restraining order work process can be designed in the Caribbean Netherlands and what the necessity and feasibility of a legal regulation for the temporary restraining order for the Caribbean Netherlands is.

Our criminal justice system prioritizes sexual offense cases and has been implementing an action plan to enhance the approach to such cases since 2022. Within this plan, our focus is on improving the implementation of effective interventions and streamlining work processes. This includes early risk assessment of perpetrators and the potential immediate deployment of interventions. Since victims and perpetrators often have a prior relationship, encounters may continue.

Regarding the prevention of sexual violence, the COSA (Circles of Support and Accountability) model is being further developed by the probation office.

Additionally, under the auspices of the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport and Justice and Security, the "landscape project" is underway. Its aim is to establish a unified entry point for victims, perpetrators, and their relatives in sexual offense cases and cases involving violence in dependent relationships. To achieve this, governance meetings are held between various agencies. The project is structured with a "supertanker" (broad overarching goal) and "speedboats" (specific sub-topics with dedicated partners, working towards solutions in sprints). Central to this effort is unified entry point, communication, and case coordination from the moment of reporting.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport works with municipalities to map out the range and availability of assistance for violent perpetrators who can make use of it on a voluntary basis and to what extent this assistance still needs to be supplemented. In the decentralized system in the Netherlands, it's up to municipalities how to offer these voluntary assistance in their region. At the moment there are discussions on the support that the national government can provide for the municipalities. A guidance

named [Focus of the perpetrator](#) for municipalities and professionals is already available, including tools for prevention, interventions and cooperation aimed at assistance of perpetrators. Support groups and the cooperation with experts with experience are elements of this inventory. The result must be suitable interventions and treatment programmes for all types of perpetrators. We are also looking at the necessary conditions these interventions has to comply with.

14. Please provide information on measures taken to:

a. increase the number of men and boys attending perpetrator programmes for domestic and sexual violence;

The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Minister for Legal Protection are currently investigating how assistance can be made easier to find and used in a more accessible way for victims and perpetrators of sexual misconduct, sexual violence, domestic violence and child abuse. Part of this is the expansion of support groups to provide accessible contact between perpetrators and help/advice of experts with experience. To ensure there are programmes and interventions especially for perpetrators available in every region we work together with the Association of Dutch Municipalities who can support and assist municipalities to secure these programmes.

b. ensure that the perpetrator programmes apply standards of best practice;

In addition to question 14a, the BORG behavioural training for perpetrators of intimate partner violence is currently being further developed and it is being explored how it can also be used outside the criminal law framework (see question 13). The probation service's behavioural training is submitted to the Interventions Recognition Committee. The aim is for all behavioural training to be recognized by this committee as theoretically based.

c. ensure the safety of victims and co-operation with specialist support services for victims;

Some of the organisations who provide treatment programmes for perpetrators are also supporting victims. These organisations (i.e. support services and shelters for victims) do have the expertise for assisting both perpetrators and victims. Due to their expertise and the variation of programmes they offer they know how to ensure the safety of victims.

d. ensure that the outcomes of the programmes are monitored and evaluated.

See question 14b.

15. Please provide information on any multi-agency co-operation mechanisms, structures or measures in place designed to protect and support victims of any of the forms of gender-based violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g., interdisciplinary working groups, case-management systems, cross-sectoral protocols/ guidelines...). Please describe:

a. the state agencies involved in their functioning (law-enforcement agencies, judiciary, public prosecutor, local authorities, healthcare services, social services, educational institutions etc.);

The Netherlands uses an integrated approach to combat domestic violence and violence against women. There is a broad range of multi-agency co-operation mechanisms, structures and measures active. With the risk of not providing the full landscape of multi-agency cooperations, the following list is a good indication of the Dutch approach:

Safety first 'Veiligheid Voorop' of the Network Care and Justice (also question 1)

The approach Safety First is a collaborative mechanism and stands for early cooperation in the field of domestic violence and child abuse by Safe Home (*Veilig Thuis*), the police, the Public Prosecution Service, the three probation organisations (3RO), and the Council for Child Protection. Since 2018, this coalition has been focusing on a different way of working together: early and intensive, with the aim of achieving a safer situation more quickly. Victim Support Netherlands is also expected to join the Care-Criminal Justice Networks. Currently, exploratory discussions are taking place on this matter.

Safety First is supported by the Ministries of Health, Welfare, Sport, and Justice and Security, as well as the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG).

Safety First focuses on improvements in the approach to domestic violence and child abuse concerned with the intersection of care and justice. Sometimes a punitive measure is necessary, and sometimes care may be needed first. The coherence in the approach helps achieve safety in the short and long term.

Over the past years, the partners in care and justice have invested in improving the approach, such as the quality improvement in the flow of reports from the police to Safe Home and the improvement of case management within the police, in line with the work of partners. The coalition of collaborating partners particularly focuses on intensive cooperation at four key moments of coordination: 1. Together in Acute - in cases of (suspected) acute danger in crisis situations. 2. Action Meeting - in case of imminent danger or risk of danger when no suspect has been arrested. 3. Joint approach to domestic violence by Safe Home and Careful, Quick and Tailored - when a suspect has been interviewed or arrested. 4. Collaboration in cases of criminal child abuse - in cases of suspected or confirmed psychological or physical injury to children.

With this approach, Safety First concretely fills in the early cooperation between care and justice, enabling better tackling of domestic violence and child abuse. For specific target groups or manifestations of domestic violence (such as (ex-)partner stalking), we make additional working agreements - with possible involvement of other organisations. Safety First is supported both administratively and at national and regional levels and is embedded in the Care-Justice Networks. From Safety First, we establish connections with other partners involved in the approach to domestic violence and child abuse, such as municipalities and women's shelters.

Multidisciplinary Approach ++ (*Multidisciplinaire Aanpak ++*)

MDA ++ is a partnership to stop violence and provide a restorative treatment for all parties involved with the violence on a local/ regional level. For each case a team will collaborate with the family, to make sure that the entire family is supported. The different active agencies in the team are Safe Home, the Police, the prosecution, health care services (medical, psychological). This multi-agency co-operation results in an intersectoral, multidisciplinary, system-based approach.

Care and Safe Home (*Zorg en Veiligheidshuis*)

Another example of a multi-agency structure is Care and Safe Home. Municipalities carry the responsibility for the Care and Safe Home in their region. The collaboration focuses on citizens in the justice system with additional problems (multi problem cases). The best support for these individuals needs to come from different links in the chain toward safety. Care and Safe Home will create a shared view on the situation of the individual and work on an integrated plan with healthcare, the criminal justice system and administrative interventions (such as a restraining order).

Sexual Assault Centre

Furthermore, the centre for victims of sexual violence is also based on a multi-agency principle, to provide the best specialized support. Hospitals works together with psychological health care, the police, Victim Support Netherlands and Municipal Health Service (*GGD*).

Careful, Quick and Tailored ('Zorgvuldig, Snel en op Maat')

This approach is targeting common offenses, including domestic violence (such as stalking). The approach aims to give a victim and suspect swift clarity on the case and its proceedings. This happens through a collaboration between several partners such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, police, Council for Child Protection, Victim Support Netherlands, Probation and Halt. With this network the Public Prosecutor is able to make a quick decision on the proceedings of the case. The network often also work with care- and safe homes, Safe Home, certified institutions and the Municipal Health Service.

Abused Women's Active Response Emergency (AWARE)

[AWARE](#) is an intervention for victims of stalking (women and children) through systemic physical or mental treats. Through pushing one button, a report is filled, resulting in alerting different agencies such as the police, probation office or other support services. The initiative links the different agencies involved in an individual's case by stimulating direct contact (for example between the support services, police and Safe Home).

Action plan sexual offenses

The action plan improves handling of sexual offense cases, and is under the coordination of the Dutch criminal justice chain (overseen by the Ministry of Justice and Security). The action plan is executed under the coordination of a cross-chain expert group, partly guided by external project management, and encompasses three action lines: (1) Enhancing meaningful interventions, particularly improving the utilization of restorative justice services. (2) Optimizing work processes. (3) Capacity and priority management. In addition to justice chain partners, the Sexual Assault Centre, Victim Support Netherlands, Safe Home, the Youth Protection Services, and Perspective Restorative Mediation are involved. The Sexual Assault Care Centre, in particular, is regarded as an expert in the field of women's rights.

In addition, there are several alliances based on a multi-agency cooperation mechanism. Examples are the alliance Act4Respect (see question 1), the alliance Change from Within (see question 5), the alliance 'Jong Gelijk' (see question 9b) and the alliance *Politica* (see question 9c).

b. whether they involve specialist support services provided by civil society organisations, especially women's rights organisations;

Through the process of the design of Dutch policy it is customary to consult civil society. Civil society plays an indispensable role and it widely appreciated as a partner in policy formulation. The importance of involving NGOs in Dutch policy is essential – certainly for issues relating to equal rights, anti-discrimination and tackling violence against women – and more specifically the involvement of organisations for black women, migrants, and refugees (female in particular), and LGBTI people with bicultural backgrounds.

Civil society organisations are specifically active or even in the lead for several of the above mentioned multi-agency structures. One example is Victim Support Netherlands (within AWARE) and the Sexual Assault Centre (an expert in the field of women's rights, within the action plan of sexual offenses).

c. how they adopt a gender-sensitive approach to violence against women, including the prioritisation of the safety of women and girl victims, their empowerment and a victim-centred approach;

The national government works together with municipalities and health care providers to stimulate a gender-sensitive approach in support of women and girl victims. Two examples are:

- (1) The action plan for sexual offenses (see question 15a and b) places victim interests at the forefront. Collaborative partners, including the Sexual Assault Centre, Public Prosecution Service, police, probation service, and Perspective Restorative Mediation, allocate policy capacity to implement recommendations aimed at improving the position of victims and ensuring appropriate attention to suspects/offenders.
- (2) Within AWARE, besides the emergency button, the support services also provide assistance and support to those victims (mostly women). This support is focused on their empowerment and strength. The combination of the button and support is fully focused on the safety of women and girl victims. At the Sexual Assault Centre professionals also provide support to the (women) victims, and when necessary, focused on their empowerment.

Furthermore, there is support on substance and finance from the Public Prosecutor, focused on initiatives for the safety of women and girls. For example for the conference on femicide (see question 11, table 2)

d. the financial and human resources dedicated to their implementation; and

The allocation of resources to these multi-agency structures is divided over the Ministries and municipalities (see question 4). Financial and human resources are furthermore additionally dedicated to multi-agency cooperation and civil society organisations through institutional grants (e.g. alliance Change from Within in question 5), multi-year project grants, and personal efforts (e.g. public prosecutor domestic violence participates in the National Network Care-Punishment).

The network Care and Justice receives an additional 1 million to 2,2 million each year to support the improvement of their collaboration.

e. any available information on the evaluation of their outcome or impact.

The outcome and impact evaluation is different per multi-agency structure. Within the policy cycle there is specific attention for monitoring and evaluation (and taking this into account for further policy making). Evaluation of outcome and impact is thus build into the general policy making process in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, AWARE as an intervention has been evaluated by an independent panel. The conclusion was that the intervention has the right attention for strengthening the personal skills of the target audience in order to prevent repetition of victimization. In addition, two evaluation studies and multiple change studies have been conducted to look at the practical experiences with the tool.

A scientific study has been initiated on the network collaboration between Safe Home (domestic violence organisation) and the criminal justice system, examining both the effectiveness of the approach and the experiences of victims, perpetrators, and other stakeholders. We expect the results in 2026.

16. Please detail whether any such co-operation mechanisms or structures set up for the delivery of support services for a specific form of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention is based on a legal or policy document advocating for or requiring such approaches.

The structures of the co-operations differ per multi-agency structure. In general the mechanisms are supported by (policy) agreements and covenants. For example, the cooperation between organisations involved with AWARE often is described in covenants including agreements about the role of every organisation and the way they share information. For the individual Sexual Assault Centres the collaboration of different partners is also based on (regional collaboration) covenants. The legal basis of a SAC is often based with one of the partners within the collaboration (such as Safe Home, a hospital or the Municipal Health Service). The same holds for the Care and Safe Homes.

The co-operation structures of [Safety First](#) and the [action plan of sexual offenses](#) are based on shared policy documents. Some tasks are included in legal texts such as sharing information with the organisations or, if necessary, taking further steps such as referring to voluntary assistance, informing the Child Protection Board, and/or filing a report with the police¹.

The Public Prosecutor has two frameworks that provide the rules for the criminal law approach in (1) [domestic violence cases](#) and (2) [sexual offenses](#). There is information specified about collaboration and the network.

17. Please explain whether all or some of the services of protection and support offered for victims of the different forms of violence against women are provided on the basis of a one-stop-shop approach.

The Sexual Assault Centres are an one-stop-shop for the victims of sexual violence. The centres have a helpline and chat, manned by professionals, to receive questions and reports. The reporter will be linked to a personal guide that will support you with services needed and further follow up steps. This can be a link to a local professional for direct support. In addition there is also help (if wanted) to connect the victim to the police, doctors, psychological support and judicial support. Furthermore, the Sexual Assault Centres are able to connect victims to peer groups.

In the Netherlands Safe Home is the national organisation for signals of domestic violence and child abuse. This approach does not fully cover the one-stop-shop principle but does function as the central reporting and advice point. The reporter can be a victim themselves, an offender, a bystander or a professional. Safe Home will advise the reporter on follow up steps and support the reporter in making an official report. In case of an official report Safe Home is able to further research the report or connect the right support services (voluntary support, police, Council for Child Protection). The further research consists of getting a clear picture and overview of the situation. Therefor Safe Home will discuss the situation with other involved individuals, such as family, friends, but also (district) police agents and health care professionals (with certain limitations with regard to privacy and professional secrecy). Safe Home furthermore is responsible for feedback to the reporter.

The Netherlands is also further developing the reporting system towards more transparency and clarity for reporters. This happens through different initiatives. One example is the National Action Programme Sexual transgressive behaviour and Sexual violence. Among the activities is the objective to collectively design a clearer reporting system for victims, offenders, bystanders and professionals related to sexual transgressive behaviour and sexual violence (see question 13, "*landscape project*"). Another initiative is the financial support for Filomena, the Sexual Assault Centre in the region Rotterdam-Rijnmond. The

¹ Such as Article 4.1.1 of the Wmo 2015 (Social Support Act 2015)

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport granted Filomena the financial resources to explore the possible broadening of their approach to other regions and higher levels.

18. Please provide information on programmes and measures aimed at ensuring, through general services, the recovery of victims of violence, including in the health and social areas, financial assistance, education, training and assistance in finding employment and affordable and permanent housing.

At the moment housing in the Netherlands is limited and there is competition between vulnerable groups for the available housing. Municipalities are able to provide urgency to vulnerable groups through a housing ordinance (*'huisvestigingsverordening'*). Article 12 of the Housing Law (*'Huisvestigingswet'*) states that persons staying in a temporary residence or shelter (*'Oranjehuizen'*) in connection to relational problems or violence, is one of the categories with urgency. Municipalities that do not use the housing ordinance with urgency categories often apply another urgency regulation, executed through housing cooperatives. The municipalities are able to give priority to women from temporary residencies or shelters for permanent housing. This happens for example through the implementation of performance agreements between municipalities, housing cooperatives and rent organisations.

At the moment the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is working on the legislative proposal 'strengthening direction on housing ([*'Wetsvoorstel versterking regie op de volkshuisvesting'*](#)). This bill will make the housing ordinance, with at least one urgency regulation, mandatory for municipalities. The victims of domestic violence within temporary residency or shelters will become an urgency category in that case, and thus get priority in finding housing. This bill is in the phase of going through the House of Representatives.

Specifically, victims of domestic violence are entitled to a place in a shelter, formally called the women's shelter but open for all victims of domestic violence. They will receive care and guidance by professionals who will help them building a new future. Examples of support includes but is not limited to;

- Connecting and/ or facilitating medical care
- Finding a secret address if necessary
- Helping in dealing with family or (ex-)partner
- Help in finding a job in order to become financially independent, a programme called The New Future (*'De Nieuwe Toekomst'*)
- Help in finding a new home after the stay in the shelter in order to return to independent living, a procedure called Swift Home (*'Sneller Thuis'*)

19. Have specific measures been taken to ensure that public health services (hospitals, health centres, other) respond to the safety and medical needs of women and girls victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention on the basis of national/regional standardised protocols?

In the Netherlands health care professionals (and social support professionals) are bound to follow the 'reporting code (*'meldcode'*) for domestic violence and child abuse. This code is an obligation to follow five steps in case of suspicion of domestic violence or child abuse. This results fill determine whether a report to Safe Home must be made. The code is mandatory for health care providers through the Quality, Complaints and Disputes in Health Law (*'Wet Kwaliteit, Klachten en Geschillen Zorg'*) and the Youth Law

('Jeugdwet'). Since 2019 these laws have been supplemented with [assessment frameworks](#). Professions have their own assessment framework, supporting them in their reporting code duties (see question 20).

Furthermore, in specific health care sectors:

In acute situations, Safe Home can be reached 24/7 by anyone who is a professional, a victim of or who suspects violence. Safe Home can take immediate action, if necessary. They provide safe housing for women and children when in need, or in cooperation with the police they can provide safety and help at home. If necessary a temporary restraining order can be imposed by the mayor of municipalities, in cooperation with the police and Safe Home. The perpetrator has to leave the house to secure the safety of the victim(s). Also, in every region there is a Sexual Assault Centre with help for victims through screening, medical needs, gathering forensic evidence and provide psychological needs. Centres are available 24/7 for professionals and victims, mostly through emergency departments from hospitals (such as Radboudumc in Nijmegen). There is acute help (immediately to 7 days) and long term help (after 7 days). Also, victims can call or chat anonymously. Help is also available through the organisation Victim Support Netherlands ('*Slachtofferhulp Nederland*') and anonymous online help can be found at www.safewomen.nl (Dutch, English, Arabic).

General practitioners information about domestic violence is available on www.thuisarts.nl and help is available through every general practitioner, who can contact the above mentioned organisations. In the Netherlands, nearly every citizen is subscribed to a general practitioner in their neighbourhood who are easily accessible.

Specifically for mental health care, the care system also complies with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. The range of care offered in mental health care also includes care to treat medical needs of women and girls that are victims of all forms of violence. It is important to mention that the Dutch care system is in the first instance not focused on groups. All mental health care is equally accessible to all groups. However, there is specialized care that focuses on victims of violence, also specifically women that are the victims of violence. Measures are focused on recognizing victims of violence, such as specific symptoms that can be linked to domestic violence, but also regional/national policy and plans directed to the create cooperation between welfare and care directed to make help easily accessible to have an early respond with mental health problems, also in the case of victims of violence.

20. Do such protocols detail the procedure to:

a. identify victims through screening;

b. provide treatment for all the medical needs of victims in a supportive manner;

c. collect forensic evidence and documentation;

d. ensure that a clear message of support is conveyed to the victim;

e. refer to the appropriate specialist support services that form part of a multi-agency co-operation structure; and

f. identify children who may have been exposed to domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and require further support.

As mentioned in question 19, within health care and support services in the Netherlands there is the obligation of the reporting code. The attached assessment frameworks differ for professions and is mandatory to use through step four and five of the reporting code. The frameworks are geared towards the specific care and circumstances the professions are working in (see examples of doctors and nurses below). Apart from including the five steps, there is no standardized approach, procedure or working method. The five steps lead towards a decision (based on suspicion, safety, ability to help, acceptance involved people and expected result) to report or not report at Safe Home. In case of reporting, Safe Home will start working on screening.

For several organisations (such as Safe Home and Sexual Assault Centres) there are action protocols for professionals. There is a protocol in collaboration with the police and the National Forensic Institute (NFI) specifically regarding proceedings on forensic evidence. The protocols in general support the professionals in retrieving information from victims and documenting this information. This is also the

case for forensic evidence. Furthermore, these professionals are also obliged to the children's check (as a part of the reporting code).

Assessment framework for the professions:

1. [Doctors](#) (children, youth, general practitioner, mental disability, psychiatry, emergency, clinical geriatrician and confidential) and dentists
 - a. The assessment results are a screening on whether the suspicion of domestic violence or child abuse results in a report at Safe Home.
 - b. In step 2 the doctors are referred to several medical (specialist) services with specific knowledge on certain forms of violence.
 - c. In step 1 in research: "*document signals as objectively and completely as possible*" and "*report in the file what the signals are, which tests have been done and what the results are*"
 - d. The assessment framework highlights the expected role of the doctor: "*it is essential to position yourself without prejudice.*"
 - e. The framework directs the doctors towards a decision of reporting at Safe Home. Additionally within step 2 the framework directs towards the expertise at the National Expertise Centre for Child Abuse, the Sexual Assault Centre and the National Expertise Centre for Honour-based Violence.
 - f. The 'children's check (kindcheck)' is a part of step 1 of the general reporting code. This means that the professionals have to identify whether there are children involved in the situation of their adult patient or client. This assessment identifies whether they care for minors and whether the living situation has unsafe conditions.
2. [Nurses and specialist nurses](#)
 - a. Same as for doctors.
 - b. In step 2 the different option for consultation with colleagues are depicted, internally and externally towards Safe Home. Step 3 also pays attention towards asking for the needs of the caretaker.
 - c. Within each of the five steps there are rules for documentation (e.g. document signals objectively, take note of the source of information, what agreements have been made with Safe Home).
 - d. The framework focuses on "*restorative action*" (e.g. prevention of further stress, interested and taking the caretaker serious).
 - e. The framework directs the doctors towards a decision of reporting at Safe Home.
 - f. Same as for doctors.

21. Please provide information on the procedures in place for the documentation and collection by actors of the public health sector of forensic evidence in relation to victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual violence, including rape, and victims of female genital mutilation.

See question 19 and 20.

22. Are all women victims of violence, irrespective of any of the grounds listed in Article 4 paragraph 3 of the Istanbul Convention, in particular asylum-seeking women, refugee women, migrant women, women from national or ethnic minorities, women with irregular residence status, women with disabilities and LGBTI women, able to benefit on an equal footing from existing healthcare services? Please describe any measure taken to reduce legal or practical barriers to their accessing regular healthcare services.

All women victims of violence have the right to equal access to healthcare services. The Dutch government is working on different initiatives to ensure these rights. Recently, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has been working on different initiatives regarding women's health care and women's benefits in existing healthcare services. On March 7th 2024, the Minister of Health – Pia Dijkstra – reacted on a research report from the Dutch Association for Obstetrics and Gynaecology (NVOG) and expressed her concerns about how little is known about women-specific conditions in Dutch society and Dutch healthcare. The research report showed how women-specific conditions, such as menstrual problems and vulvar complaints, impacted women's daily (work)lives. The minister has expressed the importance of putting women-specific conditions on the map in research and Dutch healthcare. Regarding this, the minister wants to set up a knowledge programme surrounding women-specific conditions. The goal of this knowledge programme is to contribute to a national strategy surrounding women-specific conditions. The parties who have participated in NVOG's research report will also be involved in the design of the knowledge programme. The minister will prioritize women-specific conditions and has expressed to do her best to put these conditions on the map within society, so that all women can benefit on an equal footing from existing healthcare services. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport will set up this knowledge programme in collaboration with ZonMw, an organisation that finances innovation and research in healthcare.

Furthermore, the Netherlands is working on the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Women with disabilities get protection against violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation just like anyone else and independent of their residency. In December 2023 the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport launched the [national strategy](#) for implementation with objectives for 2040. Within this national strategy the theme 'health and support' is highlighted. There is highlighted attention towards the vulnerability that persons with disabilities (and specifically women, children and LHBTIQ+ persons) have towards experiencing violence or abuse. At the moment the national strategy is put into action, with special attention paid to make sure persons with disabilities receive the support fit for their situations and needs. In addition the strategy focuses on transparent and clear paths towards health care, with the objective of accessibility.

23. Please provide information on the measures in place to facilitate the identification and care of victims of violence against women in institutions for persons with disabilities and for the elderly as well as for those in closed reception facilities for asylum-seekers and to respond to their safety and protection needs.

There are several measures in place to properly identify victims of (sexual) violence in the Netherlands on macro-, meso- and microlevel.

Macro:

- The Dutch government issued a national action programme against sexual violence and aggressive behaviour (see question 1) in 2023. One main theme is activating bystanders that witness aggressive behaviour, both mentally, physically or sexually. The goal is to equip the general public with knowledge to recognize aggressive behaviour and equip them with ways to adequately react when confronted with such behaviour. The Dutch government commits to these goals by (i) facilitating a broad campaign to facilitate awareness, (ii) stimulate the use and evaluations of interventions that target bystanders, (iii) subsidize an alliance that aims to improve the safety and emancipation of women and LHBTI+ in closed communities and (iv) continuously work together on policy regarding sexual intimidation. These measures are not limited to care for people with disabilities or elderly people, but apply to society as a whole.

- Furthermore, professionals in various sectors (health care, youth care, social support, childcare and justice) are obligated to use the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Reporting Code ('*Meldcode Huiselijk geweld en Kindermishandeling*'). This reporting code is intended for (suspected) physical, psychological or sexual violence or neglect. The steps in the reporting code support professionals from the moment of identification to the decision on whether or not to report to [Safe Home](#).

Meso:

- Long-term care organisations for people with disabilities play a pivotal role in preventing and identifying cases of emotional, physical or sexual abuse against their clients and/or staff. The care organisations felt this responsibility and took appropriate action. In 2023 clause 11.1 was added to the [collective labour agreement](#) long-term care for people with disabilities. This clause states that care facilities for people with disabilities must provide an approach to prevent physical and emotional aggression in their organisation, as well as an approach to adequately act when aggression has taken place.
- In addition, the *Vereniging Gehandicaptenzorg Nederland* (VGN) has produced an [instruction](#) for organisations on how to prevent, identify and act on cases of emotional, physical or sexual violence.
- Moreover, the Dutch Inspectorate of Healthcare and Youth (IGJ) has published in 2023 [factsheets and folders](#) on how to prevent and identify emotional, physical or sexual violence against clients and patients.

Micro:

- There are also measures in and out of the long-term care organisations where people with disabilities, elderly people, people with severe psychological disease or their family can make a notification of violence or other complaints. Organisations are able to hire independent counsellors for their clients (and staff). Clients can also speak with complaints officers. Moreover, the Dutch inspectorate of healthcare and youth provides independent reporting centres, online, where people with disabilities or their families, can make a notification of violence or a general complaint.
- With specific regard to the facilities for asylum-seekers (these centres are not closed-reception): Central Organ for shelter for asylum seekers' (COA) residents have access to health care (general practitioners) and can be referred to specialized health care (mental health care). The Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Obligatory Reporting Code Act also applies to COA staff. The reporting code helps staff when they suspect domestic violence or child abuse. By means of a 5-step plan, they determine whether they must report to Safe Home and whether they are able to provide adequate assistance themselves.
- Moreover, COA aims to have 'focus officers for domestic violence and child abuse' at each reception facility (see question 11). These COA employees have had training. They collect all signals people receive in the reception centre: colleagues, Trigion security guards, residents, volunteers, partners. When domestic violence or child abuse is suspected, they talk to the victims and organisations such as schools and the GP. If necessary, they make a report to Safe at Home. Safe at Home will then see what is necessary to restore safety and deploys assistance. COA provides several trainings for its employees with the aim of raising awareness on possible victimization, e.g. human trafficking, domestic violence, honour related violence.
- In addition, at Safe Home employees of domestic violence can have a specialization (designated officers). These employees have deepened knowledge on a certain theme and are able to brainstorm with colleagues about received signals and reports. These functionaries are schooled through LVAK (Association for designated officers domestic violence and child abuse).

24. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure that different groups of women and girls, inter alia women with disabilities, Roma women and other women belonging to national or ethnic minorities, migrant women and intersex persons are fully informed, understand and freely give their consent to procedures such as sterilisation and abortion.

According to the Termination of Pregnancy Act, healthcare providers are obligated to ensure that the woman makes her request to terminate her pregnancy voluntarily and to provide information about various solutions for her situation. The recent evaluation of the Termination of Pregnancy Act (2020) shows that abortion providers always verify if the decision is voluntary.

As part of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport's approach to unintended and unwanted pregnancy, efforts are made to provide accessible information and support. For instance, through the Information Point 'Onbedoeld Zwanger', which provides a website, chat, and telephone line (available 24 hours, 7 days a week). Information and assistance are also available in English and for the Dutch Caribbean in Spanish and Papiamentu. The language used on the website is at "B1 level - simple Dutch". Moreover, when someone requires information concerning the decision, they can contact a decision aid provider (in person or digital). The decision aid providers are trained to assess the level of understanding of the 'help-seeker' in order to have an adequate conversation and provide relevant help in making a decision or possibly refer to specialized care.

25. Please describe the type of specialist support services dedicated to women victims of the forms of gender-based violence covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g., stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced sterilisation, forced abortion), including those specialist support services providing:

a. shelters and/or other forms of safe accommodation

Shelter locations are spread throughout the country for both male and female victims who are not safe in their own environment. Specialized shelter is available for victims of specific forms of violence, such as for victims of honour-related violence, forced marriage and human trafficking. Within these shelter locations, specialist professionals support victims and formulate together with the victim a plan for assistance and development to more independency.

In addition, especially for victims of human trafficking with multiple problems there are special shelter locations. For these victims with multiple problems (for example psychological problems, psychiatric problems, PTSD, mental disabilities, addiction) specialized shelters are available in six municipalities across the Netherlands (*Opvang slachtoffers Mensenhandel Multiproblematiek, OMM*). Victims with the Dutch nationality and non-Dutch victims with a B8 status can apply for shelter specific for people with multiple problems other than exploitation. Nationwide there are OMM-places, accommodated at different shelters in the Netherlands in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Zwolle. For the second phase places are divided over Amsterdam, Alkmaar and Almere.

For victims of harmful practices specialised shelter is available, including departments that are solely for women. These specialised shelters offer support and accommodation for women that experienced harmful practices such as honour-related violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Special attention is paid to the safety of these women in terms of traceability, trauma care and psychological counselling.

b. medical support

Every GP can provide the help needed immediately and refer when necessary (see question 19).

c. short- and long-term psychological counselling

It is important to mention that the Dutch care system is in the first instance not focused on groups. All mental health care is equally accessible to all groups. This is also the care for short- and long term psychological counselling. However, there is specialization in gender-based violence in the care system that is accessible for women, for example focused on trauma care or the psychological effects of violence.

d. trauma care

See question 25c.

e. legal counselling

Victim Support Netherlands provides emotional, practical, and legal support in the criminal process to victims of (suspected) criminal offenses, including forms of gender-related violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

Dutch societal organisations are also invested in strengthening the position of women victims of gender-based violence. An example is the initiative of the foundation Clara Wichmann, that supports the legal position of women. Through financial help in strategic legal cases the foundation strengthens the position of women in relation to gender discrimination, inequality and stereotyping. Among the cases is sexual assault and sexual intimidation in a work environment. The foundation pays specific attention to intersectional discrimination, for example through focus on non-binary or trans persons.

f. outreach services

As for (potential) victims of harmful practices, outreaching activities are conducted by means of an information campaign – including a website – about the different forms of harmful practices, called “Right to no” (*‘Recht op nee’*). This campaign, which runs online as well as offline, is funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and is conducted by Pharos (a knowledge centre in the field of female genital mutilation and other harmful practices). The campaign was launched in January 2023, but is prolonged until December 2025 due to its success in reaching young people to inform them about signalling harmful practices and available support services.

Offlimits (centre of expertise) is dedicated to supporting individuals who have experienced or are experiencing online boundary-crossing behaviour and abuse, particularly sexual (child) abuse and exploitation. This includes:

- Child Pornography Hotline

Individuals who come across online imagery depicting sexual abuse of minors can anonymously report it to the Child Pornography Hotline online. The hotline verifies whether the material is indeed illegal, and if so, takes action to have it removed. In this way, internet users contribute to the detection of perpetrators and victims, and the removal of such material from the internet.

- Helpwanted

Helpwanted is knowledgeable about online issues and the various forms of online boundary-crossing behaviour someone may encounter. Anyone who has experienced or is concerned about online

boundary-crossing behaviour can call or chat with Helpwanted staff for free and anonymously (see question 25g). Helpwanted.nl provides tips and explanations on various topics, teaching materials for educators, and an online advice module. Additionally, parents, caregivers, bystanders, and professionals can seek advice from Helpwanted.

- Stop it Now

Additionally to the helpline (see question 25g), Stop it Now informs about perpetrators of sexual child abuse through factsheets and lectures.

g. telephone helpline

There is no national helpline specifically for women victims of gender-based violence. In the Netherlands there are several other notifications, advice and help centres, for domestic violence and violence against women, that offers support and help through the telephone or chat:

1. *Veilig Thuis* (Safe Home with chat and telephone)

The notification and advice centre for questions related to domestic violence and child abuse from victims, perpetrators, bystanders and professionals. The helpline is an initiative of the Dutch government run by regional NGOs who know the local service providers and can refer survivors to the appropriate services. There is also the possibility to use the national interpretation centre, which is funded by the state and decentralised via municipalities, to receive support in any language when calling the helpline. This helpline has a statutory basis and is staffed by professionals. The chat function can be used anonymously. There are 26 Safe Home organisations.

2. *De Kindertelefoon* (Child Helpline with chat and telephone)

A helpline for children experiencing domestic violence and/or child abuse. The Child Helpline has between 1.000 and 1.500 conversations every day and is staffed by volunteers.

3. *Centrum Seksueel Geweld* (Sexual Violence Centre with chat and telephone)

Helpline (telephone and chat) for victims, bystanders and professionals about sexual violence. This helpline is staffed by professionals.

4. *HelpWanted* (with chat and telephone)

Helpline for victims and bystanders of online sexual violence with personal advice and practical support.

5. *Slachtofferhulp Nederland* (Victim Support Netherlands with chat and telephone)

Helpline provides victims with practical, legal, financial and emotional support.

6. *Fier* (with chat)

A helpline staffed by professionals for (potential) victims and bystanders of violence in dependency relations (children, youth and adults). The professionals care share information and tips and give advice on support services and other partners in case needed. There is the option to share anonymously.

7. *Qpido* (with chat and telephone)

A helpline for victims of sexual transgressive behaviour such as sexting, grooming, sexual abuse and human trafficking (and broader questions about sexuality).

8. The Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment (LKHA, with telephone)

A helpline for (potential) victims of forced marriage and abandonment, if victims are abroad.

9. Stop it Now (with chat and telephone)

Stop it Now offers anonymous, confidential, and free support to individuals concerned about their sexual feelings and/or behaviour towards minors. Individuals suspecting such feelings and/or behaviour in someone in their environment can also seek assistance here. Stop it Now also provides professionals with advice and support.

10. *De Luisterlijn* (The Listening Line with chat and telephone)

Helpline for adults who need a listening ear. 'De Luisterlijn' has 330.000 conversations on a yearly basis and is staffed by volunteers.

11. *MIND Korrelatie* (with chat and telephone)

Helpline for young people and adults dealing with mental difficulties and/or worrying about others. This helpline is staffed by professionals (psychologists and social workers).

In addition, many local and regional initiatives are available. Such as the helplines run by women-only shelter organisations. For example Fier, Strong House (*'Sterk Huis'*), Stay Group (*'Blijf Groep'*) and Moviera (available 24/7 in case of emergency).

h. other forms of support (e.g. socio-economic empowerment programmes, online assistance platforms etc.)

Other forms of support are offered by specialized organisations aimed at assistance to victims of harmful practices. The National Expertise Centre for Honour-based Violence (LEC EGG) of the police supports victims of honour-based violence. In addition, the Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment (LKHA), housed under Safe Home in The Hague, treats complex cases of forced marriage and abandonment if victims are abroad.

In addition, local/regional initiatives are available.

26. Which type of specialist support service includes child psychologists or other professionals specialised in supporting children who have been exposed to domestic violence, including violence perpetrated by one parent against the other?

Child psychologists and other specialized professionals in supporting children that have been affected by domestic violence are employed within youth (health) care, care for persons with a disability, (specialized) education and the criminal justice system. These professionals can be based at youth health care providers, psychiatric clinics, hospitals and centres specialized in violence in dependency relations. The support can be provided through outpatient assistance, residential assistance, day- and/or night treatments and stimulation of independence/participation.

27. Do specialist support services exist that cater to the specific needs of migrant women and girls or those belonging to national or ethnic minorities who are victims of violence against women, including women and girls seeking asylum and those granted refugee or international protection status?

Yes.

Victims of violence are generally entitled to various forms of assistance and support, based on the EU Directive on Minimum Standards for Victims Rights. This applies regardless of residence status. During the procedure for applying for residence permits, victims are entitled to shelter for as long as care is needed due to the safety situation. The same regulation applies to support as to the shelter.

There are no national specialist support services focused on women in relation to violence against women. There are several interest organisations active on the topic, which as financed on a project basis. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport also subsidizes several organisations which provide information, advice and support to migrants in order to prevent and combat harmful practices. For example, the Federation of Somali Organisations in the Netherlands (FSAN) and other societal

organisations carry out its activities by the use of trained migrant ambassadors. They are people who come from the community itself and educate their community about the dangers of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and honour-related violence. They give advice and support by activities such as information sessions and living-room discussions, and they help with referral to other support services.

Migrant women and girls which are victims of forced marriage or abandonment can turn to the Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment. This organisation, housed under Safe Home in The Hague, treats complex cases of forced marriage and abandonment if victims are abroad. The centre is financed by the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport, and Foreign Affairs. Funds have also been provided by municipalities.

For women and girls seeking asylum and granted refugee status COA is in close contact to external organisations with a focus on victims, such as Safe Home, Fier, care coordinator trafficking in human beings (*zorgcoördinator mensenhandel*). In situations where a victim is too unsafe in a particular COA reception facility, it is possible to accommodate her in another reception facility or in a safehouse outside the COA environment.

28. Please indicate if any of the below services are available in your territory:

a. sexual violence referral centres (e.g. specialist support services offering immediate medical care, forensic examination and crisis intervention to victims of sexual violence);

The Sexual Assault Centre (SAC) is a place where victims of sexual assault or rape can get all the help they need: forensic, medical and psychological help. The Sexual Assault Centre is a collaboration between hospitals, the Public Health Service, Mental Healthcare Service, police and Victim Support Netherlands and operates in 16 regions, spread throughout the Netherlands. The 16 centres are financed by the government and municipalities and base their methods on scientific research. The centres work based on specific quality criteria for victims of acute and non-acute violence. The centres can be reached through a national phone number (0800-0188) and a chat service online (chatmetcsg.nl).

At the Sexual Assault Centre (SAC), a team of doctors, nurses, police officers, psychologists, social workers and sex therapists work together to provide specialist care to victims of sexual assault and rape.

Ideally, professional help is provided within seven days after the event (the acute phase), as this time frame reduces the chances of medical and psychological issues considerably. The police also have a much better chance of finding the perpetrator if forensic investigations are carried out within a week of the event.

b. rape crisis centres (e.g. specialist support services offering long-term counselling, therapy and support to victims of sexual violence regardless of whether the sexual violence occurred recently or in the past);

The Sexual Assault Centre provides help for both recently victimized persons and persons who have had a non-consensual sexual experience over a week ago. In case of the latter, the SAC can provide support victims in finding the right help. For example bring them in touch with police or help finding the right doctor or psychologist.

c. any other specialised services offering short-term and/or long-term medical, forensic and psycho-social support to victims of sexual violence.

See question 28a. Also, a case manager is assigned to anyone who visits an SAC who will do a follow up for four weeks after the visit. They will monitor how well the victim is doing and whether stress responses are decreasing. If not, the victim can get treatment to process the trauma. This process is also known as watchful waiting.

29. Please provide information on the number of such services and the number of women and girls supported annually.

A total of 16 SAC exist in the Netherlands, spread throughout the country. In 2022, the SAC's has provided help or advice to 15.241 persons.

- 2441 of these have received care or (forensic) research in the acute phase. Out of the 2441 victims who received care or (forensic) research in the acute phase, 2163 (88.6%) were female.
- 1162 of the total number have consulted the SAC through its telephone service but did not visit the SAC in the end.

Of the total number of persons helped;

- 5564 who were assaulted over a week ago received assistance.
- 6073 of total victims received support through the SAC's online chat.

30. Please indicate the procedures and time frames for collecting and storing forensic evidence in cases of sexual violence (e.g. existence of protocols, use of rape kits) in the relevant services.

The Netherlands has quality criteria for disciplines working in a sexual assault centre (police, public prosecution, Dutch Forensic Institute, The Royal Dutch Medical Association, Safe at Home, Women's shelter, medical professionals) for victims of acute sexual violence (≤ 7 Days Ago).²

In the Directive on Sexual Offenses (2016A004) of the Public Prosecution Office, the Police Instruction on Sexual Offenses (01-01-2016) and the Guideline on Forensic Medical Examination in Sexual Offense Cases by the Forensic Medical Society and Municipal Health Services³, quality standards are described for the investigation of sexual offenses, which also pertain to actions carried out in the context of Forensic Medical Examination in sexual offense cases.

Forensic medical investigation:

- In cases of suspected sexual offenses where it is likely that traces have been left behind, cooperation with the Forensic Investigation Team (TFO) is established to find, secure, seize, examine, and, if necessary, interpret these traces and trace carriers.
- If it is likely that traces can be found in or on a body, a Forensic Medical Examination (FMO) is conducted with the victim's (or parents') consent.
- During the FMO, the forensic doctor and forensic investigator work closely together, possibly supported by a forensic nurse.
- A certified sexual offense investigator is always involved in the preparation and execution of an FMO in sexual offense cases.

² [kwaliteitscriteria_onbepaaldetijd.pdf \(centrumseksueelgeweld.nl\)](#)

³ <https://www.forgen.nl/richtlijn/13/forensisch-medisch-onderzoek-bij-zedendelicten>

- For acute sexual offense cases (≤ 7 days) involving a victim aged up to 12 years, the FMO is generally performed by a specialized doctor from the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI). If the victim is younger than 16 years old, the sexual offense investigator always contacts the National Research and Expertise Agency FMO (LOEF) to determine, based on available information about the child's physical and social development, whether conducting the FMO by the LOEF provides added value.
- The guideline for the time frames for collecting forensic evidence is as soon as possible after the crime. The faster action is taken after the report by the victim, the greater the chance of securing evidence. However, sometimes the consideration may be to move the investigation in consultation with various parties to a more favourable time to facilitate the process. The maximum time frames for sampling different body regions, as indicated in the guideline for forensic medical professionals in chapter 7.3, can be taken into account in this consideration. For STDs and intoxication tests, several tests up to 3 months after the crime will be taken when necessary.
- Regarding the dossier maintained by the forensic physician regarding the sexual assault investigation, the Medical Treatment Contracts Act (WGBO) is applicable accordingly. The retention period for the medical record, of which the sexual assault investigation is a part, is thus at least 20 years after the last update. For minors, the retention period extends until their 34th year of life.

Preparation and Setup of Forensic Medical Examination (FMO)

- **Preparation Meeting:** Prior to the FMO, a preparation meeting is held between the forensic doctor, the forensic investigator, and the certified sexual offense investigator. The sexual offense investigator shares all relevant information available up to that point with the FO investigator and the FO doctor.
- **Documentation of Sexual Acts:** The book "Investigation Kit for Sexual Offenses" is used to document the sexual acts that took place, utilizing as much information as possible provided by the victim during the initial information session.
- **Decisions Made During the Preparation Meeting:**
 - Identify where traces might be found, how they will be secured, and in what order, in accordance with Forensic Standards (FO standards).
 - Determine which trace carriers (e.g., clothing, sanitary products) need to be secured and seized.
 - Decide which professionals will be present in the examination room.
 - Define the roles of each professional during the FMO.
 - Decide whether to initiate a procedure for an STD test on the suspect.
 - Plan how to handle the medical history of children who will later be interviewed in a studio setting (identify medical questions to ask before the FMO and questions to address during a possible studio interview).
- **Customization and Considerations:** The setup and approach of the FMO are always customized, depending on the victim's capacity, the available space, and the type of trace investigation required. The areas where the FMO takes place are renovated one-by-one to be more victim focuses, i.e. similar to a living room. When the FMO takes place in a centre for sexual violence, a trained caseworker of the centre is always present when the victim so wishes to support the victim.
- **Victim Preparation:** The sexual offense investigator ensures that the victim is prepared for the FMO.

These measures are designed to ensure a thorough, respectful, and effective forensic medical examination, tailored to the needs and circumstances of the victim.

The criteria and directives also include the STD and intoxication tests, the criteria for the rooms, and the roles, responsibilities, behaviour and the necessary competence of the professionals during the FMO.

31. Please describe any applicable access criteria for use of these services (e.g. affiliation with a national health insurance, residence status, prior reporting of the case to the police, other).

There are no formal access criteria to medical help or support. There is no criteria such as a report of the case to the police or having health insurance.

32. Please indicate whether under national law incidents of violence covered under the scope of the convention must be taken into account in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children. If this is the case, please clarify to what extent these provisions:

a. explicitly list domestic violence as a criterion to be taken into account when deciding on custody and/or visitation rights in the applicable legislation. If so, please clarify whether this criterion is/has been applied in practice in the determination of both custody and visitation rights;

Joint parental authority

The principle of Dutch law is that parents jointly exercise parental authority over their child. In line with this principle, parents who are married or have a registered partnership automatically exercise joint parental authority over their child at birth. Additionally, since January 1, 2023, the parent who has acknowledged the child also automatically obtains parental authority unless the parties jointly declare to waive joint parental authority. In that case, the mother solely exercises parental authority. The law does not specify the grounds on which such a declaration can or must be made. This is a free decision that parents are allowed to make themselves.

If a mother, for her own reasons, refuses to cooperate in establishing the father's parental authority, the father can ask the court to also assign parental authority to him. This request is only rejected if:

- a. there is an unacceptable risk that the child would become caught or lost between the parents and it is not expected that there will be sufficient improvement in this within a foreseeable time, or
- b. rejection is otherwise necessary in the child's interest.

In view of the court's assessment framework, committing an act of violence as defined in the Convention is not an independent criterion to be assessed. Those events are included in the assessment whether there are circumstances to fulfil the caught or lost criterion or as an argument to support the claim that the request is not in the child's interest.

When there is reasonable doubt as to whether the child is at risk of becoming caught or lost between its parents and whether joint authority is in the child's interest, and this is related to violence between parents, the court can instruct the Council for Child Protection to conduct an investigation into the above questions. In the context of this investigation, the incidents of violence may be considered, and to that extent, screening does take place. The report of the Council for Child Protection is confidential and may generally only be used for the purpose for which it was requested.

Termination of joint authority at the request of the other parent

The parental authority can also be terminated by the court at the request of the other, non-violent parent. The court can only grant this request if (in line with mother refusing establishment of the father's parental authority):

- a. there is a situation where there is an unacceptable risk that the child will become caught or lost between its parents and it is not expected that there will be sufficient improvement in this within a foreseeable time, or,
- b. if a change in authority is in the child's interest for another reason.

On a case-by-case basis, it will have to be examined whether termination of parental authority and granting the request for sole parental authority is appropriate. Here again, the mere fact that there has been violence in the sense of the Convention is not an independent assessment criterion. Those events are included in the assessment whether there are circumstances to fulfil the caught or lost criterion or as an argument to support the claim that the request is not in the child's interest. In this regard, the open norm of the child's interest allows for – depending on the circumstances of the case – recognition of the harm caused by being a witness to violence by one parent against the other parent.

Again, the court may instruct the Council for Child Protection to conduct an investigation into the above questions if the incidents of violence between parents give rise to this. In this respect, there is indeed a risk assessment, with the understanding that this assessment takes place in the light of the overarching question to what extent parents are capable of jointly exercising parental authority and whether such joint exercise is in the child's interest. The report of the Council for Child Protection is confidential and may generally only be used for the purpose for which it was requested.

Termination of joint authority at the request of the Council for Child Protection or the Public Prosecution Service

In addition, the court can also terminate parental authority if:

- a minor is growing up in such a way that his or her development is seriously endangered, and the parent is unable to bear responsibility for the care and upbringing within a term that is acceptable for the person and the development of the minor, or
- the parent abuses their authority.

A request on the above grounds can only be submitted by the Council for Child Protection, by the Public Prosecution Service, or by a non-parent who has cared for and raised the child as part of their family for more than a year, the latter only if the Council for Child Protection does not proceed to submit the request.

Again, the mere fact that a parent commits violence as mentioned in the Convention is not an independent assessment criterion, but those circumstances are included in the assessment whether there are circumstances to support the claim that termination of parental authority is warranted.

b. acknowledge the harm that witnessing violence by one parent against the other has on a child;

The Dutch Youth Law acknowledges witnessing domestic violence as a form of child abuse. This means that support services are able to act resulting from the harm of witnessing violence of one parent against another.

Furthermore, see question 32a (the open norm of the child's interest allows for – depending on the circumstances of the case – recognition of the harm caused by being a witness to violence by one parent against the other parent.)

c. ensure that custody with the non-violent parent is preferred over foster-care;

See question 32a for an explanation of Dutch law on custody and the termination thereof. Foster-care can be applied in agreement with the parent(s) in a voluntary state. However it can also be imposed on parents by a judge. In Dutch civil law a judge can decide to impose alternative care for a child by request of the Council for Child Protection or the Public Prosecution Service. The judge will have to decide whether alternative care is necessary in the interest of the child. This does not relieve the parents with parental authority of their custody or impact their visitation rights. However it does mean a child could be placed in foster care. The incidents of violence covered under the scope of the convention as with the termination of parental authority are not independent assessment criterion but can be mentioned as circumstances to support the claim that alternative care is warranted. However the primary principle remains the right of the child to remain with his or her non-violent parent.

d. foresee the screening of civil proceedings related to the determination of custody or visitation rights for a history of domestic violence among the parties;

See answers to 32a, b and c. Additionally, in case documents or civil/ criminal proceedings are known and on file, the court takes them into account. The court has developed several professional standards: quality standards that help courts to make well-informed and considered decisions about custody or visitation rights.

e. foresee that judges conduct risk assessments or request the disclosure of risk assessments drawn up by law-enforcement agencies or other competent stakeholders for victims of domestic violence, with a view to taking them into account and determining the best interest of the child in the context of custody and visitation decisions.

See question 32a.

33. Please describe the measures in place to ensure that judges, court-appointed experts and other legal professionals:

a. have sufficient knowledge of the law and understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence, including the psychological impact of witnessing violence on the child;

There no measures taken by the government to ensure judges, court-appointed experts and other legal professionals have sufficient knowledge nor can they be taken for they are independent. However, the training institute for the judges (in training), prosecution office (additionally tot the training mentioned in question 11), court-appointed experts and other legal professionals offers several courses (within a point system) on (complex) domestic violence that includes intimidate partner violence, the psychological impact of witnessing violence on the child, partner alienation and or other analogous concepts which requires complex and well-informed considerations for decision. Within the professional standard for family and juvenile law judges it is mandatory to be well-trained and to ensure that they stay informed about developments in their field.

b. duly take into account victims' grievances in cases of domestic violence and hear children victims/witnesses, where applicable, in the determination of custody and visitation rights;

When deciding on custody and visitation rights, the court considers all the signals surrounding a family. This includes signs of unsafety and, if present in the file, the victim's grievances in cases of domestic violence.

In custody and visitation right cases children, at least from the age of 12, are invited to be heard during the so-called child interview with the judge. This does not depend on whether they are witnesses or victims or otherwise.

c. are informed of the unfoundedness of notions of “parental alienation”² or analogous concepts that are used to overshadow the violence and control exerted by perpetrators of domestic violence over women and their children.

The training institute of the Dutch judicial system and the Public Prosecution Service also includes training in complex cases involving partner alienation and or other analogous concepts which requires complex and well-informed considerations for decision.

Furthermore, the Minister of Legal Protection has asked the Council for the Application of Criminal Justice and Youth Protection to give advice if in family law proceedings there is enough attention to safety risks in regard to domestic violence. The advice is expected in September of 2024. For this advice judges, welfare and care professionals, solicitors, mediators, parents and children are questioned.

34. Please provide details on the procedures in place to ensure that the competent court for family-related issues co-operate/communicate with other relevant bodies/professionals, including, but not limited to, criminal courts, law-enforcement agencies, health and education authorities and specialist women’s support services when taking decisions on custody and visitation or when offering family law mediation. Please specify whether the law provides a legal framework for any of the procedures in place.

If, based on the information in the file in a specific case, there is reason to, there will certainly be co-operation with other relevant bodies or professionals. How to act and make complicated decisions on custody and visitation is laid down in professional standards.

Furthermore, efforts are made to determine whether it's possible to combine the criminal case with, for example, a family law case. This is done in collaboration with chain partners (Public Prosecution Service, Council for Child Protection, Child Protection Services, Probation, Safe Home). An example is the new procedure regarding domestic violence cases which is implemented from January 1, 2022, in the Rotterdam Court. Combined sessions take place where multiple cases concerning a family are handled by the same judge. The Care and Safety House checks whether there are any other ongoing legal procedures after the arrest of a suspect.

35. Please provide detailed information on the procedures in place (including, if applicable, the relevant personnel used, the specific infrastructure available), in the exercise of custody and visitation rights, to:

a. eliminate the risk for the abused parent to be subjected to further violence;

In custody and visitation cases, judges can impose binding conditions that contribute to the safety for the abused parent, such as agreements on the contact moments between the ex-partners and even suspend visitation if the safety of the ex-partners and the child so requires.

If there is acute or structural insecurity of the child or the other parent, it is not up to the judge involved to create immediate safety, but the police and Safe Home are quickly on the scene to take the necessary measures for safety and appropriate help.

b. eliminate the risk for the child to witness or experience violence;

See question 35a and c.

c. ensure that the responsible personnel are trained and that the facilities are suited to enable safe supervised visitation.

Safe supervised visitation can take place in visitation houses. A visitation house is a neutral and safe place where a parent and child can have contact with each other. With visitation supervision the child will never be alone with the ex-partner. There is always a trained professional around to make sure the contact goes smoothly and ensures a sense of safety. Visitation supervision can be voluntary. But a judge can also impose visitation supervision in which it is determined that the child's visitation with the parent will take place under supervision. For example, when there are serious concerns about the safety of the child with the other parent.

36. Please indicate whether national provisions foresee the withdrawal of parental rights in criminal sentences if the best interest of the child, which may include the safety of the victim, cannot be guaranteed in any other way.

The Dutch Youth Law foresees the withdrawal of parental rights in criminal sentences if the best interest of the child, which may include the safety of the victim, cannot be guaranteed in any other way. Only when the child's development is seriously threatened, for example as a result of criminal offenses committed by a parent.

37. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are prohibited in criminal proceedings related to cases involving the different forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

Since March 2021 the Public Prosecution Office has been using a new guideline for criminal proceedings in domestic violence, including stalking. An important change is that the Public Prosecution Office will in principle subpoena cases of domestic violence and child abuse.

Mediation during an ongoing criminal case can, in cases where appropriate, be a meaningful way to contribute to the resolution of the case. The victim and the suspect have the opportunity to make agreements; it can reduce the victim's anxiety, provide insight into each other's actions, aid in better processing, facilitate dialogue, and foster relationship restoration. It is not intended as an alternative to the criminal justice procedure. Ultimately, the judge or the prosecutor decides substantively on the outcome of all criminal cases after mediation.

38. Where voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes exist for any criminal offences within the remit of the Istanbul Convention, such as conciliation or mediation, please provide information on the safeguards incorporated to ensure the free and informed consent of the victim to such processes and the measures taken to avoid that direct or indirect pressure is placed on the victim. Please also state whether the offer of alternative dispute resolution processes may result in the discontinuation of criminal investigation and prosecution or other consequences for the victim. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are prohibited in criminal proceedings related to cases involving the different forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

Not applicable.

39. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that alternative dispute resolution processes such as mediation or procedures which can be considered tantamount to the latter are not used in family law proceedings such as divorce proceedings or proceedings related to custody and visitation of children, where there is a history of violence.

No new measures have been taken since 2018. Mediation is still voluntary and joint parenting (via mediation) is not pursued by the judges or professionals or advised by the Child Protection Council if there is a history of violence or if there are suspicions of violence. The Minister of Legal Protection has asked the Council for the Application of Criminal Justice and Youth Protection to give advice if there is in family law proceedings enough attention to safety risks in regard to domestic violence.). The advice is expected in September of 2024. For this advice judges, welfare and care professionals, solicitors, mediators, parents and children are interviewed.

40. Please describe the human, financial and technical resources provided to law enforcement agencies to diligently respond to and investigate all cases of violence against women, including their digital dimension.

In 2024, the Dutch government has allocated 27.5 million euros to enhance the response to sexual crimes and online child pornography. Of this amount, 20 million euros are designated for the implementation of the Sexual Offences Law, which will come into effect on July 1, 2024. These funds are intended, among other things, to increase capacity. More than 5 million euros of this 20 million have been allocated to the police.

The remaining 7.5 million euros will be used to improve processing times in vice cases and combat child pornography. These funds will gradually become available from 2024 (€1 million in 2024, €2 million in 2025, and €4 million in 2026). Since June 7, 2023, the Expertise Centre for Online Child Abuse (EOKM), now known as Offlimits, has been receiving 1.5 million euros annually since 2022. An additional 2 million euros have been allocated annually since 2022 to strengthen the integrated approach to (online) sexual crimes. For example, this funding supports Helpwanted.nl, part of Offlimits, which provides immediate help and advice to victims of imminent online sexual violence. The EOKM/Offlimits plays a crucial role in self-regulation concerning online child abuse.

41. Which measures have been taken to ensure that the premises of police stations are accessible and suitable for receiving and interviewing victims of violence while ensuring their privacy? Is it possible to report cases of violence against women elsewhere than in police stations, including through digital means?

The police ensure that the privacy of people who want to report crimes is respected and handles their (personal) data with care. The report takes place at the police station in closed rooms. In the case of domestic violence, the perpetrator and the victim know each other. To protect the victim or the complainant, measures are taken to prevent perpetrators from gaining access to the address details of the victim's place of residence. Under very strict conditions, which require permission from the examining magistrate, it is possible to report anonymously. This is only possible in special cases. For example, there must be a very good reason to fear revenge attacks. In that case, the name and home address in the official report will be replaced by a number (the address can be found in the police administration). The police and the Public Prosecution Office have also recently established a nationally uniform 'domicile' working method. This method specifically means that:

- the address details of victims who choose domicile are not included in the report and criminal file;
- victims can use a government domicile address; When a victim uses a government domicile address and he or she cannot receive mail at home, the mail is sent to the domicile counter.

Victims can also choose to report alone. Domestic violence can be prosecuted ex officio. A report may be sufficient to initiate an investigation.

It is not possible to report cases of violence against women to the police through any means other than calling or in person at the police station. It is possible to notify the police through a digital form, however this is not advised. It is also possible to report domestic violence and child abuse via Safe Home. Advice is given via an online chat and phone call. To report violence it is asked to call the organisation.

42. Please explain whether specialist police/prosecution units exist to investigate and prosecute violence against women and specify:

a. which forms of violence against women they are competent for (see question b);

b. whether such units exist in all police/prosecution districts throughout the country.

The police and the Public Prosecution Office do not have units that specifically focus on crimes and violence against women. However, the police in all ten police regions have specialized vice detectives, family detectives and care and safety coordinators in the basic units who have expertise in domestic violence and child abuse. These specialised coordinators are knowledgeable on gender patterns as well. Additionally, The National Expertise Centre for Honour-related Violence is part of the Dutch police and addresses honour-related violence (against women) through various measures, such as:

1. Providing support and guidance to victims of honour-related violence.
2. Conducting research to better understand the root causes and dynamics of honour-related.
3. Offering training and education programmes to raise awareness and prevent violence.
4. Collaborating with law enforcement agencies and other organisations to ensure effective response and intervention.

The Public Prosecution Office has specialized officers for domestic violence, child abuse and sexual offenses in all ten districts, who handle criminal cases themselves and can support other public prosecutors if necessary. For sexual offense cases, only the specialized officers are allowed to take on the case. The Public Prosecution Office also has a national officer for domestic violence, child abuse and morals.

43. Please describe any measures taken to ensure swift investigation into and effective prosecution of cases of violence against women and domestic violence such as prioritisation through fast-tracking, benchmarking or other initiatives, without compromising the thoroughness of the investigation.

The main organisations involved in the detection and prosecution of cases of violence against women and domestic violence are Safe Home, the police, the Public Prosecution Office, the probation organisations, and the Council for Child Protection. Since 2018, these organisations have been working together in the form of a coalition to adopt a different way of collaboration: early and intensive, with the aim of achieving a (sustainable) safe situation more quickly. The various expertise, education, and interventions (care/justice) are brought together. Based on this, agreements are made, actions are coordinated, and interventions are deployed in a well-considered manner.

At the Public Prosecution Office domestic violence classifies through a specific label, but this does not result in priority. For cases with sexual offenses, there is a prioritization flow (independent of the gender of the victim and suspect).

44. Are any measures taken to encourage women and girls who experience any of the forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention to report incidents of violence to the authorities? Please provide examples of any measures taken to instill confidence in law-enforcement officials, including those aimed at addressing any language or procedural difficulties they encounter when lodging complaints, in particular those of migrant women, asylum-seeking women, women with disabilities, women with addiction issues and other women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination.

The Netherlands makes an effort to stimulate willingness and increase accessibility for reporting to authorities. One of the means for this objective is the use of public campaigns. At the end of 2023 a campaign for [domestic violence](#) was launched by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, to activate bystanders to start a conversation with a suspected victim and create awareness. The campaign consisted of three specific videos addressing elderly abuse, child abuse and partner violence. The videos highlight the steps one can take: where to go with questions or make a report: [Huiselijk geweld | Campagnetoolkits.nl](#) (all campaign materials can be downloaded on this website, the videos can be downloaded here [Cube - Share-link \(cube-cloud.com\)](#)). The campaign is spread through television commercials, social media and a website.

Another campaign stimulating societal dialogue and breaking the taboo is '[Together we put down boundaries](#)' ('*Met elkaar trekken we de grens*') specifically focuses on transgressive behaviour in the work environment. Materials such as flyers, social media posts and videos are used to open more discussion and normalize the societal dialogue on this issue.

'*A piece of me*' is a campaign developed by the artist MEAU, KPN (telephone provider), Rutgers (government sponsored expertise centre), victim support and several NGO's to raise awareness for the

consequences of forwarding sexual explicit material from other people:

<https://youtu.be/MC3184WBOWo?si=Hcl2iC1X7vd78cxC> (The last sentence says “think before you forward”).

“*You are not alone*” is a campaign from a government sponsored expertise centre to make migrants aware of support by SGBV: [You are not alone – SAMEN video on SGBV survivor support \(English\) - YouTube\[2034553278\]](#) (available in several languages).

“*Talking about forced marriage and abandonment*” was a collaboration between the Dutch national government and Dutch influencer / vlogger Selma Omari who invites her guests to talk about forced marriage and abandonment while cooking on her YouTube and Instagram channel: [IN GESPREK OVER HUWELIJKSDWANG| SELMA OMARI - YouTube\[2034553290\]](#)

“*The right to say no*” is a campaign from a government sponsored expertise centre and targets young people at risk for harmful practices to empower them to say no and seek help. The campaign consists of written and spoken stories: [Overzichtspagina Verhalen\[2034553290\] \(rechtopen.nl\)](#)

“*Dare to see*” was a campaign from the Sexual Assault Centre to raise awareness about child sexual abuse. Many famous Dutch people are part of the video, the video aims to raise awareness about the amount of victims of child sexual abuse and it also aims to change the view on who can be perpetrators of sexual abuse: [Durf te zien campagnevideo - YouTube\[2034553290\]](#)

From 2019 to 2021, the Dutch government also conducted a campaign to encourage victims of sexual violence to seek professional help as soon as possible. Through social media and a website, victims were provided with information on which professionals they could best turn to for proper medical and psychological care or emotional support. Videos showed the benefits that professional help had brought to victims. The website was consulted extensively, and victims' satisfaction with the services offered was high (compared to previous government campaigns).

The government is developing public communication for the National Action Plan against sexual violence and harassment. The goal is to encourage dialogue among people. The emphasis is on boundaries and desired social behaviours: how we want to interact positively with each other. The government is initiating various campaigns, all conducted under the overarching theme “setting boundaries together”. This theme connects all public communication on this topic. The first campaign has begun in March 2024 and focuses on the importance of discussing desired social behaviours and sexually inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. In June 2024, the Ministry of Justice and Security will launch an informative public campaign about the new Sexual Offences Act. In close conjunction with this, a broad public campaign about norms and consent will follow in the fourth quarter of 2024. The network approach of the National Expertise Centre for Honour-related Violence (part of the Dutch police) also pays attention to building relationships with various closed communities⁴. Furthermore, the accessibility of reporting to authorities is increased through the use of interpreters. In women shelters there is availability of interpreters to diminish the language barriers and better help the victims to the suitable care and support.

Through the national strategy for the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities there is highlighted attention for the accessibility to (juridical) aid and assistance. Persons with disabilities have the right to equal accessibility to legal aid and assistance, medical support and the police. The strategy stresses that there is more effort needed to protect persons with disabilities from violence, abuse and exploitation. Crisis communication through the national emergency number (112) is getting more accessible. Through the strategy multiple objectives for further support and accessibility to the authorities for 2040 are formulated and being implemented through actions at the moment. Communication about the new sexual offences act will also be accessible to people with disabilities.

⁴ A closed community intentionally limits links with outsiders and outside communities. Closed communities may be of a religious, ethnic, or political nature.

Since 2018, Victim Support Netherlands also launched several campaigns encouraging women and girls who are victims of offenses mentioned in the Convention to report them to the authorities. For instance, in 2022, Victim Support Netherlands launched a campaign to encourage victims of shame sexting to seek help (Article 40 of the Istanbul Convention). Furthermore, in 2023, Victim Support Netherlands launched the campaign "Don't Stay Invisible for Help" to encourage victims more broadly to seek assistance.

45. Please indicate whether protocols/standard operating procedures or guidelines for police officers are in place providing guidance on how to receive reports, interview victims, investigate and collect evidence in cases of rape and sexual violence, domestic violence, psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment (including their online manifestation), forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sterilisation/abortion. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure the comprehensive collection of evidence beyond the victim's testimony.

There are protocols in place for domestic violence and [child abuse](#) and [sexual violence](#) that guide prosecutors and police officers on how to receive reports, interview victims, investigate and collect evidence.

Specifically, the procedure for sexual offense and sexual child abuse detectives is included in a police instruction. Separate action perspectives/methods have been developed for the police teams, call centre, and front office for this purpose. Furthermore, 30,000 employees within the police will undergo learning interventions due to the new Sexual Offences Act (implementation 1st of July 2024).

Additionally, the checklist honour related violence provided by the National Expertise Centre for Honour-related Violence (part of the Dutch police) is a manual for police officers and covers various aspects including risk factors, victim vulnerability, perpetrator profiles, family dynamics, community factors, safety planning, and cultural sensitivity in addressing honour-related violence. The [checklist](#) aims to assist professionals in identifying and addressing cases of honour-related violence effectively and sensitively. It gives guidance on how to receive reports, interview victims, investigate and collect evidence, especially when the family might be perpetrators as well.

46. Please describe the efforts taken to identify and address all factors that contribute to attrition (the process whereby cases drop out of the criminal justice system) in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

The Public Prosecution Office uses formal grounds and guidelines for dismissing criminal cases. Since March 2021 the Public Prosecution Office has been using a new guideline for criminal proceedings in domestic violence, including stalking. An important change is that the Public Prosecution Office will in principle subpoena cases of domestic violence and child abuse. Specifically for psychological violence, the Ministry of Justice and Security works together with the publication office and the police to increase the prosecution of psychological violence and recognizing a pattern of criminal behaviour in the systems to increase the prosecution of psychological violence, coercive control and stalking. Guidelines and experts have been included in this effort.

Victim Support Netherlands encourages victims to report to support agencies and authorities (see question 44). When victims report to Victim Support Netherlands or the police, Victim Support

Netherlands provides information about the criminal process, including, if applicable, the option of lodging a complaint against the decision to dismiss the case. Furthermore, Victim Support Netherlands endeavours to prevent victims from falling through the cracks of support agencies through its policies on psychosocial support and referral practices.

Our criminal code includes the crime of stalking. Stalking is a grave offense with a major impact on the lives of victims. Science shows that stalking is one of the red flags that can lead to serious or fatal violence. There is currently a criminal complaint requirement for stalking. This means that the Public Prosecutor can only initiate prosecution after the victim files a criminal complaint next to reporting the crime. The complaint requirement for stalking was once introduced by the legislature. The intention of the legislature was to protect the victim against the disclosure of intimate details about the relationship with the perpetrator in a criminal procedure. The question arises to what extent the legislator's intention still holds up, given the seriousness of the offense, the knowledge resulting from scientific research and the fact that the willingness of victims to report domestic violence is low. The Ministry of Justice and Security has carried out an exploration in which the complaint requirement for stalking has been examined in more detail. This exploration involved experts working in care and criminal justice functions, scientists and an expert by experience. This has shown that the criminal complaint requirement hinders proper protection of the victim. The experts therefore concluded that the complaint requirement should be deleted as a requirement for initiating prosecution. The Ministry of Justice and Security will further investigate the (legislative) possibilities for removing the criminal complaint requirement from the Criminal Code to ensure the protection of victims who encounter stalking.

In those cases where prosecution for stalking does get initiated, another problem arises. The European Court of Justice has ruled that government agencies should only have access to traffic data to combat 'serious crime'⁵, and that must be assessed in advance by the examining magistrate. It is currently unclear whether stalking can also be classified as a 'serious crime'. The Supreme Court⁶ has asked preliminary questions to the European Court of Justice to provide clarity about the scope of 'serious crime'. We are still awaiting a decision. The Supreme Court has further ruled that - pending the decision of the European Court of Justice - traffic and location data can be demanded if there is a suspicion of a PTD offense. Harassment is a PTD offense.

Nevertheless, the Public Prosecutor notes that there are investigating judges who do not view the crime of stalking as a serious crime. This means that no authorization to request data is issued, which is crucial for collecting evidence in cases regarding stalking. As a result, some criminal cases are dismissed due to a lack of evidence. The Public Prosecutor continues to request authorization for traffic data and location data from the investigating judges, and they appeal whenever their request is rejected.

47. Please indicate if legislative or other measures have been taken to issue a renewable residence permit to migrant women who have become a victim of any of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention if the competent authority considers that their stay is necessary for the purpose of their co-operation in investigation or criminal proceedings.

In the Netherlands, there are policies regarding residence permits for two categories of individuals:

1. Victims of domestic violence and honour-related violence.
2. Victims of human trafficking.

⁵ Europese Hof van Justitie 2 maart 2021, ECLI:EU:C:2021:152 (H.K./Prokuratuur).

⁶ Hoge Raad 5 april 2022, ECLI:NL:HR:2022:475.

For the first category, it concerns foreigners who have (had) a dependent residence permit for staying with a spouse. If this permit expires due to a divorce resulting from violence within the relationship, the victim in question can obtain an independent residence permit. This is separate from cooperating with the prosecution of the violence. The same applies to victims of domestic or honour-related violence who have not previously had a residence permit.

For victims of human trafficking (category 2), the duration of the residence permit granted when reporting human trafficking depends on whether the victim cooperates with the investigation and prosecution. Unfortunately, the permit expires in the event of a dismissal. We are currently examining this issue.

48. Please describe any standardised and mandatory risk assessment tools in use by all relevant authorities in all regions for forms of violence against women such as stalking, violence committed in the name of so-called honour and domestic violence and to what extent these tools are being used in practice to assess the lethality risk, the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence with a view to preventing further violence. Please specify whether the following elements are considered as red flags when carrying out the risk assessment:

a. the possession of or access to firearms by the perpetrator; b. the filing for separation/divorce by the victim or the break-up of the relationship; c. pregnancy; d. previous acts of violence; e. the prior issue of a restrictive measure; f. threats made by the perpetrator to take away common children; g. acts of sexual violence; h. threats to kill the victim and her children; i. threat of suicide; j. coercive and controlling behaviour.

Safe Home works with a scientifically researched triage instrument to assess the urgency and expertise required to intervene to ensure the immediate and long-term physical and emotional safety of family members. This triage instrument is included in the action protocol. Sub questions a, d, f, g, h, i and j are included in this triage instrument. Sub question b and c are risk factors that are taken into account in the further proceedings, but are not a part of the triage instrument. The reason for this is that the triage instrument assesses safety, and pregnancy and separation/ divorce are taken into account as risk factors.

The police uses the domestic violence risk assessment tool. With this instrument, it can be assessed whether a domestic violence situation warrants a restraining order imposed by the (assistant) public prosecutor. The following elements are considered red flags:

- Question a) The possession of firearms or the license by the perpetrator
- Question b) Ongoing divorce proceedings, 'other relationship problems'
- Question c) Not accepting the pregnancy
- Question d) The severity of violence has increased in recent years, the frequency of violence has increased in recent years
- Question e) As part of 'Antecedents of the victims or their family members'
- Question f) This could be considered as 'threatening to force someone to do something against their will' or 'threatening to commit violence against children'
- Question g) Rape or sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and (suspicions) of sexual child abuse
- Question h) Threats to kill (in general), threatening to commit violence against children and/or roommates
- Question i) Threats to harm themselves or actually hurt themselves
- Question j) (Threatening to) force someone to do something against their will, extremely jealous, humiliation of the victim, limiting contact with the outside world (solely via perpetrator, no contact or no contact with friends and people they know), controlling the finance (or passport), victim has no say in the house, victim cannot leave the house, social isolation in general and lastly, by the perpetrator: denial or minimising of violence, justifying the violence and showing remorse but hiding behind external factors.

At this moment, the police furthermore uses the Screening Assessment Stalking and Harassment (SASH) screening tool for stalking. If possible, the police fill this out together with Safe Home once a case is identified as stalking. The following elements are considered red flags:

- Question b) in the form of 'Are there currently any conflicts or legal disputes regarding dealings with joint children or shared assets?'
- Question d) 'Does the person concerned have a history of physical or sexual violence?'
- Question e) 'Did the person concerned ignore or did he ignore a warning from the police? violate legal conditions regarding stalking (for example a contact or area ban)?'
- Question f) 'Are there currently any conflicts or legal disputes regarding dealings with joint children or shared assets?'
- Question g) 'Does the person concerned have a history of physical or sexual violence?'
- Question h) in the form of 'does the person concerned threaten the victim or his or her loved ones? Is the person involved aggressively intimidating towards the victim or his or her loved ones?'
- Question i) 'Does the person concerned appear to have psychological problems? For example: Is there a history of psychiatric problems? Talk to the person involved about suicide? Does the person involved say bizarre things or does the person concerned have the lost sight of reality?'
- Question j) 'Was there a sexual relationship between the victim and person involved? If so, the ex-partner is extremely possessive and/or jealous relating to the victim?'

When there are suspicions of honour related violence the police uses the checklist honour-related violence when filing a police report. The following elements are considered:

- Question a) The access to firearms
- Question b) 'Is there a (planned) divorce in the case? Who initiated the divorce? What are the thoughts of the involved families regarding the (planned) divorce? Is the divorce related to a civil and/or religious marriage? Does a potential divorce have consequences for the dowry or bride price?' And 'How is the phenomenon of divorce viewed within the group? Is divorce possible? If yes, how should it be carried out?'
- Question d), g) and h) Several questions about previous and current violence by the suspect, family and/or acquaintances
- Question e) The police system check and questions about former contact with police or other authorities
- Question h) In the form of threats with violence
- Question j) Questions about forced marriage

The Dutch government is currently exploring to improve the risk assessments to increase the early detention of the leadup to femicide.

There are several other risk assessment tools that can be used:

- Tool for assessing child abuse or unsafe family situation, used by youth protection and youth health care providers: [LIRIK](#)
- Risk assessment tool focused on restraining orders for the Public Prosecutors Office: [Risicotaxatieinstrument Huiselijk Geweld \(RIHG\)](#)
- An approach (including a risk assessment tool) focused on safety within family situations. The goal is to strengthen the capacities of the family itself, through a solution based method: [Signs of Safety](#)

49. Please specify how effective co-operation is ensured between the different statutory authorities and specialist women's support services in making risk assessments and whether the risks identified are managed by law enforcement agencies on the basis of individual safety plans that include also the safety of the victim's children.

In the event of acute insecurity, Safe Home works together with the police, women's shelters and other relevant partners such as, where applicable, the Public Prosecution Office, the Child Protection Council, local teams, etc.

With cooperation agreements, called 'Safety First (see question 1)' agreements are made about acting together in the event of acute unsafety, and there are consultation tables (action consultations) to share information with each other right from the start and to act together. Example for stalking: the police completes the risk assessment instrument (SASH), with the help of information from Safe Home.

Furthermore, as previously explained in the response to question 43, since 2018, healthcare and criminal justice partners have been collaborating on a different approach to addressing cases of domestic violence and child abuse. This approach focuses on early and intensive collaboration with the aim of achieving a (sustainable) safe situation more quickly. Various expertise, information, and interventions (care/criminal) are combined in this process. Based on this, agreements are made, actions coordinated, and interventions used deliberately. This collaboration appears to yield results, especially in cases of stalking, as evidenced by the most recent report from the National Inspection Justice and Security of January 2024, which specifically addresses the approach to stalking.

The umbrella organisation of women's shelters (Valente) in cooperation with the national police, Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) and several other actors have created a toolbox of 21 instruments that help professionals in women's shelters in making the right risk assessment for all forms of domestic violence. The risk assessment is focused on providing support and help in and from the shelters themselves and includes topics such as safety, psychological problems and honour related violence. From 2024 onwards, Valente will periodically facilitate (internal) expertise development for the use of the instruments in the toolbox. Valente annually assesses the toolbox for composition and application, in collaboration with women's shelter organisations.

Overall, all involved organisations collaborate based on their own expertise, utilizing available information and intervention possibilities. Since each case is unique, it is assessed each time which authority takes action. Safe Home plays a coordinating role in drafting an individual safety plan, ensuring the safety of the victim's children.

Initial agreements have also been reached regarding sexual offenses, focusing on improving early collaboration to protect and support victims, while also enhancing efforts to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Actions in this regard are undertaken by the working groups under the Criminal Justice chain action plan aimed at improving sexual offense cases and through the National Criminal Justice Chain Consultation for Recidivism Prevention of Sexual Offenders. The latter operates in accordance with the collaboration agreement for the prevention of sexual offender recidivism and the resulting handbook on regional criminal justice chain collaboration. See answer to question 15 for more information on the action plan.

50. Please describe the efforts made to analyse retrospectively all cases of gender-based killings of women, in the context of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women to identify the existence of possible systemic gaps in the institutional response of the authorities with the aim of preventing such acts in the future.

At the moment, not all cases are being retrospectively analysed, although authorities often conduct analyses of specific cases themselves. They organise evaluations with organisations involved in the respective case. In this way, they identify possible systemic gaps in the institutional response of the authorities, with the aim of preventing such acts in the future.

The Minister for Legal Protection has asked the Scientific Research and Data Centre, the knowledge institute for the rule of law, to start an exploration of a Dutch domestic homicide review to gain more and better insight into and research (attempted) fatal cases of domestic violence and child abuse in (European and Caribbean) Netherlands. This also involves retrospective analysis of gender-related murders of women, to identify possible systemic gaps in the institutional response of the authorities with

the aim of preventing such acts in the future. The outcome of this exploration is expected by the end of 2024.

In a new action plan on the prevention of femicide, existing risk assessment and safety assessment tools will be recalibrated in order to include red flags and patterns of violence possibly leading to femicide. The national government together with the organisations also explore how the safety and risk assessment by the different organisations can better connect with each other or even become designed in a way that the same instrument can be used by different organisations and how these tools can be better used.

Furthermore, a research will be conducted to cases of killings in the domestic environment. The circumstances are analysed and action is taken mapping out what was done with any previous signals of unsafety and how the environment has responded to the situation. This way the limitations or bottlenecks that may have arisen in the way in which bodies have acted can be described. These analyses are intended to draw and implement lessons examining what improvements are possible in tackling domestic violence. The final goal is to prevent future victims.

51. Have any legislative or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing emergency barring orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 52? If yes, please specify whether:

a. emergency barring orders may remain in place until a victim can obtain a court- ordered protection order in order to ensure that gaps in the protection do not arise;

We are considering taking legislative or other measures to amend the legal framework. Perpetrators of domestic violence can receive a temporary restraining order for a period of 10 days. The mayor (or an assistant of the public prosecutor) can impose this temporary restraining order. During this time, the person with the temporary restraining order, the victim, and any children receive help. The perpetrator who ignores this restraining order can be sanctioned with 2 years of imprisonment or community service. The mayor can extend the duration of a temporary restraining order for a maximum of 4 weeks.

b. support and advice are made available to women victims of domestic violence in a pro-active manner by the authority competent to issue an emergency barring order;

On behalf of the Minister of Legal Protection, an analysis based on scientific insights and daily practices has been carried out to investigate if the use of the temporary restraining order can be improved. The improvements also relate to the necessary protection after the restraining order expires, to mend the gaps in protection (as mentioned under question 51a). Another improvement concerns the provision of the necessary assistance for victims and perpetrators. During a restraining order, perpetrators are not allowed to have contact with their partner and their children.

Besides the administrative emergency barring orders which can be imposed by mayors, a criminal law emergency barring order can be imposed by the judge. The problem with getting a restraining order through a criminal procedure is that it is usually only imposed after a conviction. Therefore, victims remain unprotected, and the perpetrator still has access to the victim during the procedure. For that reason, the possibilities to expand the administrative measures to protect victims from the start and during the criminal procedure are also subject to the analysis. The results of the analysis will be used to examine whether legislation needs to be adjusted or other measures need to be taken.

The contact ban that accompanies the emergency barring order applies to all members of the family, including the children, who reside at the address in question. Parental duties can be taken into account

by specifying the decision accordingly; It is very important that a safety and risk assessment takes place with a view to the safety of the children.

Violation of the emergency barring order is a criminal offense. However, if the emergency barring order is violated during the period of the extension, prosecution does not always take place because there is no evidence that the evicted person knew about (the extension of) the emergency barring order. In the above-mentioned process, this bottleneck is included in improving the use of the emergency barring order. Probation officers record the violations of protection orders. The type of follow-up depends on the nature of the violation.

52. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce emergency barring orders and on responses to any violations of such orders.

a. children are specifically included in contact bans issued under the emergency barring order;

The contact ban that accompanies the temporary restraining order applies to all members of the family, including the children, who reside at the address in question. Parental duties can be taken into account by specifying the decision accordingly; It is very important that a safety and risk assessment takes place with a view to the safety of the children.

b. any exceptions to contact bans are made and in which circumstances.

Violation of the temporary restraining order is a criminal offense. However, if the temporary restraining order is violated during the period of the extension, prosecution does not always take place because there is no evidence that the evicted person knew about (the extension of) the temporary restraining order. In the above-mentioned process, this bottleneck is included in improving the use of the temporary restraining order.

53. Have any legislative or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing restraining and protection orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 53? If yes, please specify whether:

a. restraining or protection orders are available – in the context of criminal proceedings and/or upon application from civil courts - to women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence related to so-called honour as well as digital manifestations of violence against women and girls; b. children are specifically included in protection orders; c. any exceptions to contact bans are made and, if so, in which circumstances these may be made.

We have not taken any legislative or other measures to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing restraining and protection orders since 2018.

54. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce protection orders and on responses to any violations of such orders.

Since 2022, the Minister for Legal Protection has been facilitating pilots involving a 'victim device' aimed at enhancing the approach to stalking and enforcing responses to breaches of protection orders. In this pilot, the victim carries a so-called 'victim device' equipped with GPS location tracking. The probation service is alerted if the electronic ankle monitor of the convicted perpetrator of domestic violence or child abuse comes too close to the victim's victim device. The probation service then assesses whether the situation poses a threat and determines if the victim needs to be informed. This approach was developed in the Rotterdam region in 2022 and is set to be implemented in two other regions in 2024. The objective is to carefully consider the requirements for potentially deploying the victim device nationwide. By preventing the perpetrator from getting too close to the victim, the victim is safeguarded against the recurrence of violence, potentially with fatal consequences. The breach of a protection order can be followed by a prison sentence or a penalty payment as sentenced by the court.

55. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the following:

a. that the relevant agency informs the victim when the perpetrator escapes or is released temporarily, at least when they or their family might be in danger (paragraph 1 b);

During the execution of the judgement, victims are entitled to proper provision of information. Currently in the Netherlands, the responsibilities of the Public Prosecution Office for informing and consulting victims in this phase are being gradually transferred to the Central Fine Collection Agency (CJIB). This ensures that victims are informed as much as possible by a single organisation during the implementation phase. Efforts are also being made to further improve communication with the victim. As of February 1, 2023, the CJIB provides information to victims regarding the progress of detention. Starting April 1, 2024, the CJIB informs the victim about the final judgment, serving as the sole point of contact for information regarding the execution of the sentence. Another aspect of the Punishment and Protection Act involves considering the interests of the victim in reintegration leave based on current information. A specific implementation date for the transfer of responsibilities to the CJIB for this aspect has not yet been determined.

b. the protection of the privacy and the image of the victim (paragraph 1 f);

The Netherlands is currently working on legislation to better protect the privacy of victims in the criminal justice process. This legislation will stipulate that certain victim data, originating from law enforcement officers of the police and the Public Prosecution Office, will be omitted at the source. This prevents victim data from unnecessarily reaching the suspect. The aim is to implement this legislation by January 1, 2025. In addition to setting norms, handling victim personal data carefully requires (greater) awareness among professionals in the criminal justice system. Therefore, agreements have been made in the Netherlands with organisations such as Victim Support Netherlands, the Netherlands Forensic Institute, the Council for Child Protection, and the probation organisations, which also regularly provide documents for the criminal case file.

c. the possibility for victims to testify in the courtroom without being present or at least without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, notably through the use of appropriate communication technologies, where available (paragraph 1 i);

In the Netherlands, options are currently explored to prevent direct confrontation of the suspect with victims and/or relatives by offering the possibility to speak in a different room within the courthouse or to follow the trial via a video link. Additionally, authorized speakers can request the judge to exercise their right to speak through their legal counsel or a specially authorized person (for example, an employee of

Victim Support Netherlands) on their behalf. Victims can also submit a written victim impact statement.

d. the provision of appropriate support services for victims so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account (paragraph 1 e).

The Netherlands has incorporated the current European directive for victims' rights into its own legislation. Victims of sexual offenses can receive free legal assistance from a victim advocate.

Part III: Emerging trends on violence against women and domestic violence

56. Please provide information on new developments since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country concerning:

a. emerging trends in violence against women and domestic violence, including its digital manifestations (types of perpetration, groups of victims, forms of violence);

An overview of the development in monitoring (of trends) on violence against women and domestic violence can be found in question 6. Specifically in relation to these monitors some trends to be signalled are:

Violence against women

The *Emancipation Monitor 2022* (CBS) shows that in the Netherlands, the victimization of violence among both women and men (aged 15 or older) has decreased since 2012. The decline is strongest among men: while 8 percent were victims of a violent crime in 2012, this percentage is 5 percent in 2021. Among women, the decline until 2019 will be less pronounced than among men, from 6 to 5 percent. Between 2019 and 2021, the share of women who became victims of a violent crime increased slightly (0.4 percentage points).

Of the different types of violent crimes, threats are most common among both women and men, but men are more often victims than women (5 versus 3 percent in 2021). Men are also more likely than women to be victims of abuse. Women are more often victims of a sexual crime: 2 percent (142 thousand women) in 2021, compared to 0.3 percent of men (21 thousand). Sexual offenses mainly involve making sexually offensive comments (intimidation) or unwanted touching and kissing (physical violence).

Violation of the temporary restraining order is a criminal offense. However, if the temporary restraining order is violated during the period of the extension, prosecution does not always take place, because there is no evidence that the evicted person knew about (the extension of) the temporary restraining order. In the above-mentioned process, this bottleneck is included in improving the use of the temporary restraining order.

The most recent numbers of the [National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children](#) showed that sexual extortion (national and international) is the most reported form of human trafficking in 2022. In 2018 there were 555 victims, in 2019 886, in 2020 436, in 2021 386 and in 2022 379. The report of 2022 mostly highlighted the influx in Ukrainian victims. From 7 cases (of human trafficking in total), the amount of cases went up to 51 in 2022.

Domestic violence

The *Prevalence monitor of domestic violence and sexual transgressive behaviour* is conducted every two years since 2020. Since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation the [Statistics Netherlands](#) (CBS) published two reports, in 2020 and 2022. In 2022, nine percent of the population above 16 years old indicated to have been victim of domestic violence in the previous twelve months. This excludes verbal aggression, in that case the prevalence would be 33 percent. Specified into different forms of domestic violence, 32 percent of the population was victim of verbal aggression (2020: 31 percent), 4 percent of physical violence (same as in 2020), 5 percent of coercive control (same as in 2020) and 2 percent of stalking by an ex-partner (same as in 2020).

In addition, 11 percent of the population indicated to be the victim of one or multiple forms of online sexual harassment in the last five years. This is an increase of 2 percent compared to 2020. Specified this most often regards abusive sexual comments (3 percent), nude photos or videos (2,5 percent), over insisting on a date (2,1 percent) and asking for sexual photos or videos (also 2,1 percent).

Online sexual harassment is more often indicated by women than men in the past 12 months (8 percent versus 4 percent). Homosexual men (26,1 percent) and women (14 percent) and bisexual men (18

percent) and women (23,1 percent) also experience more online sexual harassment than heterosexual men (3,5 percent) and women (7,2 percent). Furthermore, the prevalence of online sexual harassment increases with age decreasing. Of the youth from 16-18 years old, 21,8 percent reports to be a victim and for the group 18-24 years old this is 18,4%.

Furthermore, Safe Home registers data on *child abuse, (ex-)partner violence, violence against parents, elder abuse and other domestic violence*. [Statistics Netherlands](#) publishes this data: in 2019 there were 6100 finalized researches following from a report, in 2020 7.305, in 2021 7615 and in 2022 7.585. Within these data there is differentiation between types of violence. There is an increase in partner violence from 870 confirmed and finalized researches in 2019 to 1.635 in 2022. For child abuse there is also an increase identified, from 1.840 in 2019 to 2.965 in 2022.

The *impact monitor* (see question 6) partly bases their analysis on the prevalence monitor, and additionally uses policy information of Safe Home, recidivism research, registrations of the Council for Child Protection, Public Prosecutor's Office and Council of the Judiciary. The most recent [publication](#) of 2023 reports on an increase in advice given in relation to child abuse at Safe Home. With 24700 advices in the first half of 2019 and 37.300 advices in the first half of 2023. (Ex-)partner violence has 9.625 advices in the first half year of 2019 and 1.6075 in the first half year of 2023.

b. emerging trends in domestic case law related to violence against women;

The Public Prosecution Office started registering female victimization as a social classification in 2024. This will eventually make it possible to identify the number of criminal cases in which women have (presumably) become victims of violent crimes. It is not yet possible to answer these questions.

However, based on the registration of the Public Prosecution Office and case law, an image can be provided of the number of criminal cases relating to domestic violence in the Netherlands. This is possible because the Public Prosecution Office registers the social classification of 'domestic violence'. The following figures (rounded to the nearest five) are based on data from the Public Prosecution Office and the judiciary that are periodically published in the impact monitor on tackling domestic violence and child abuse (CBS).

Influx of domestic violence cases to the Public Prosecution Office

1st half of 2019	5,170
2nd half of 2019	5,350
1st half of 2020	5,210
2nd half of 2020	5,020
1st half of 2021	4,805
2nd half of 2021	4,375
1st half of 2022	4,455
2nd half of 2022	4,450
1st half of 2023	4,340

Subpoenas

1st half of 2019	2,585
2nd half of 2019	2,620
1st half of 2020	2,495
2nd half of 2020	2,355
1st half of 2021	2,830
2nd half of 2021	2,780
1st half of 2022	2,620
2nd half of 2022	2,675
1st half of 2023	2,740

Public Prosecution Office penalty order / Public Prosecution Office transaction

1st half of 2019	205
2nd half of 2019	175
1st half of 2020	205
2nd half of 2020	230
1st half of 2021	270
2nd half of 2021	195
1st half of 2022	160
2nd half of 2022	180
1st half of 2023	175

Judge's rulings

Declaration of guilt

1st half of 2019	1,970
2nd half of 2019	2,115
1st half of 2020	1,549
2nd half of 2020	2,190
1st half of 2021	2,010
2nd half of 2021	2,015
1st half of 2022	2,090
2nd half of 2022	2,060
1st half of 2023	2,120

Acquittal

1st half of 2019	225
2nd half of 2019	240
1st half of 2020	175
2nd half of 2020	205
1st half of 2021	205
2nd half of 2021	215
1st half of 2022	245
2nd half of 2022	210
1st half of 2023	230

Penalties imposed for cases in which only domestic violence has been proven

Community service

1st half of 2019	1,100
2nd half of 2019	2,620
1st half of 2020	2,495
2nd half of 2020	2,355
1st half of 2021	2,830
2nd half of 2021	2,780
1st half of 2022	2,620
2nd half of 2022	2,675
1st half of 2023	2,740

Custodial sentences

1st half of 2019	770
2nd half of 2019	875
1st half of 2020	615
2nd half of 2020	980
1st half of 2021	880
2nd half of 2021	820
1st half of 2022	790

2nd half of 2022	620
1st half of 2023	560

Fine

1st half of 2019	165
2nd half of 2019	185
1st half of 2020	105
2nd half of 2020	130
1st half of 2021	115
2nd half of 2021	140
1st half of 2022	130
2nd half of 2022	90
1st half of 2023	110

Measures imposed for cases in which only domestic violence has been proven

Compensation

1st half of 2019	260
2nd half of 2019	405
1st half of 2020	260
2nd half of 2020	460
1st half of 2021	380
2nd half of 2021	370
1st half of 2022	415
2nd half of 2022	325
1st half of 2023	340

TBS (psychiatric treatment)

1st half of 2019	15
2nd half of 2019	15
1st half of 2020	0
2nd half of 2020	20
1st half of 2021	20
2nd half of 2021	20
1st half of 2022	20
2nd half of 2022	20
1st half of 2023	20

Other (e.g. placement in an institution for young people or withdrawal of objects from society)

1st half of 2019	10
2nd half of 2019	0
1st half of 2020	0
2nd half of 2020	20
1st half of 2021	15
2nd half of 2021	20
1st half of 2022	20
2nd half of 2022	20
1st half of 2023	15

c. emerging trends in the allocation of funding and budgeting by your state authorities;

As explained in question 1 and 4, the Dutch efforts to tackle violence against women and domestic from the state is spread over different ministries and municipalities. The approach of municipalities is formed through a decentralized structure, partly facilitated through means of the central government (for

example the municipal funds for women shelters named *DUVO*). The municipalities have autonomy in assigning and using the funds for the implementation. This system makes it possible to develop an approach that is aligned with the local needs and options available in the region. The municipal funds for *DUVO* have been structurally increased with 14 million euros since 2020 (addition on the 65 million euros each year).

Among the funds going from the national government to the municipalities is the block grant ('*SPUK regeling*'). All municipalities are able to request specific funds for sports, health promotion, cultural participation and a social basis. Specifically related to domestic violence and violence against women within the *SPUK* are: the national bureau of Sexual Assault Centres, shelters for multi-problem victims of human trafficking, shelters for victims of sexual exploitation and honour-related violence. The SACs also received an increase in funds: 1,1 million euros for three years from 2024 – 2026.

The municipalities concluded that the overall resources made available to them by national government for domestic violence were not sufficient. In recent years, this has led to various investigations and ultimately to a structural increase in the decentralization budget, such as e.g., €38.6 million annually from 2019 onwards for the Safe Home organisations, because of a greater increase in the number of reports and advices than expected as a result of the new statutory reporting code. According to municipalities there currently is enough funding available to finance various services and meet the needs of victims of several types of violence.

d. innovative approaches to primary prevention, for example new target audiences and means of communication, public/private partnerships etc.

The Dutch government is involved in different innovative approaches for primary prevention. Some of the interventions are for the general public and others are focused on specific target groups such as men (e.g. the role of men in prevention in the National Action Programme Sexual transgressive behaviour and Sexual Violence).

In stimulating innovative approaches for primary prevention the Dutch government is financially facilitating societal organisations. The government asked Movisie and FSAN to come up with educate citizens with a migrant background to prevent domestic violence and violence against women (including harmful practices). The grant (for 2024 and 2025) will be able to support municipalities to strengthen innovative ideas in their approach.

In addition, the creative sector wants to make a societal impact in relation to domestic violence and violence against women and aims to target (new) audiences.

- An example is with artist MEAU (Dutch singer). '*A piece of me*' is a song and campaign developed by the artist MEAU, KPN (telephone provider), Rutgers (government sponsored expertise centre), victim support and several NGO's to raise awareness for the consequences of forwarding sexual explicit material from other people: the last sentence says "think before you forward".
- A second example is the short movie NUDES, about forwarding nude photos and videos at a high school. The movie is used to start the discussion with youth, parents and teachers. There is an educational package to facilitate this discussion.
- A third example is the theatre performance '*Au'derdom*' aims to showcase domestic elderly abuse. In 25 minutes two actors showcase two elders who experience physical and financial abuse. Afterwards the public has an open discussion about the performance and their view and experiences on the topic. The Municipal Health Service of the Hague for example facilitates the performance for elders themselves (in community centres, nursing homes, etc.) and students (e.g. social work).

The Dutch government is putting in effort to make a cultural change towards a society that no longer accepts social unsafety and inequality. Among the efforts of government commissioner Mariëtte Hamer (see question 1) is the use of podcasts to generate societal dialogue. Through different episodes of the

series 'Everything in the open ([Alles op tafel](#))' she discusses (the roads toward) the changes needed with professionals from several sectors (such as athletes, musicians, students and surgeons).

The reporting code is mandatory for organisations in healthcare (see question 19 and 20). Through a public private partnership with the organisation Augeo and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport the goal of this collaboration was to brought back to attention of the reporting code to professionals. In reflection sessions cross sector groups discussed dilemma's they face when using the reporting code. These sessions were the base for a conversation guide and tips and these materials can still be used for free. The project was successful and has reached up to 40.000 professionals, the project was finished in 2023. Both Augeo and the Ministry will continuing to pay attention to the products that have been delivered in this project.

Furthermore, several campaigns has been published to create awareness and stimulate different kind of audiences to act when they suspect/experience a form of violence. (see also question 44).

- At the end of 2023 a campaign for domestic violence was launched by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, to activate bystanders to start a conversation with a suspected victim and create awareness. The campaign consisted of three specific videos addressing elderly abuse, child abuse and partner violence. The videos highlight the steps one can take: where to go with questions or make a report: [Huiselijk geweld | Campagnetoolkits.nl](#) (all campaign materials can be downloaded on this website, the videos can be downloaded here [Cube - Share-link \(cube-cloud.com\)](#)). The campaign is spread through television commercials, social media and a website.
- A campaign stimulating societal dialogue and breaking the taboo is '[Together we put down boundaries](#)' (*Met elkaar trekken we de grens*) specifically focuses on transgressive behaviour in the work environment. Materials such as flyers, social media posts and videos are used to open more discussion and normalize the societal dialogue on this issue.
- "You are not alone" is a campaign from a government sponsored expertise centre to make migrants aware of support by SGBV: [You are not alone – SAMEN video on SGBV survivor support](#) (available is several languages).
- "Talking about forced marriage and abandonment" was a collaboration between the Dutch national government and Dutch influencer / vlogger Selma Omari who invites her guests to talk about forced marriage and abandonment while cooking on her Youtube and Instagram channel: [IN GESPREK OVER HUWELIJKSDWANG| SELMA OMARI](#)
- "The right to say no" is a campaign from a government sponsored expertise centre and targets young people at risk for harmful practices to empower them to say no and seek help. The campaign consists of written and spoken stories: [Overzichtspagina Verhalen](#)
- "Dare to see" was a campaign from the Dutch sexual violence centre to raise awareness about child sexual abuse. Many famous Dutch people are part of the video, the video aims to raise awareness about the amount of victims of child sexual abuse and it also aims to change the view on who can be perpetrators of sexual abuse: [Durf te zien campagnevideo](#)

e. emerging trends related to access to asylum and international protection for women victims of violence against women.

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) regularly convene with women-led refugee organisations to exchange knowledge and share experiences. These gatherings provide valuable insights into our policies and their implementation by COA and IND. During one of these meetings, representatives from the women-led refugee organisations brought to our attention that our educational material on reporting sexual and gender-based violence was not accessible for a significant population of illiterate women among those who have filed asylum applications. As a result, we acknowledge that we need to consider this group when creating educational materials on reporting sexual and gender-based violence.

On January 16th 2024 the European Union Court of Justice ruled in a case where prejudicial questions were asked about, among other things, whether women can be considered a social group in the sense article 10 (1) (d) of the Qualification Directive. The Court found in its judgment that both women in

general as well as more restricted groups of women who share a common characteristic may be regarded as belonging to a 'particular social group', depending on the situation in the country of origin. The Dutch policy was always that women in general cannot be regarded as a particular social group because of the fact that this is too broad a category. This judgment has led to a revision of this policy. This has consequences for the qualification of (restricted) groups of women in country specific policy. Where they would previously be categorized as groups under subsidiary protection this judgment means that women can be categorized as groups under the Refugee Convention if a ground for persecution lies in belonging to a social group. It is important to note that it is not expected that this judgment will lead to a different level of protection. Women who need protection due to gender related reasons previously mainly used to get international protection as a consequence of subsidiary protection. This judgment means that they will now possibly receive this protection more often under the Refugee Convention but it will probably not lead to a lower or higher standard of protection.

Part IV: Administrative data and statistics

57. Please provide annual statistics for two complete calendar years prior to receiving this questionnaire on administrative and judicial data on:

a. the number of reports, investigations opened, prosecutions, final convictions secured and sanctions imposed in respect of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the Istanbul Convention;

In addition to question 56b, the following figures concern the number of reports to Safe Home about domestic violence and child abuse (from 2019) and the number of registered violent incidents with the Police (from 2021).

The Safe Home Policy Information (CBS), published every six months, shows the following numbers of reports and completed cases regarding domestic violence and child abuse:

Safe Home

Reports

1st half of 2019	65.075 (62,3% of police)
2nd half of 2019	66.730 (66,2% of police)
1st half of 2020	64.505 (66,5% of police)
2nd half of 2020	62.910 (64,5% of police)
1st half of 2021	60.880 (64,2% of police)
2nd half of 2021	58.500 (65,3% of police)
1st half of 2022	60.040 (66,6% of police)
2nd half of 2022	62.970 (66,1% of police)
1st half of 2023	64.430 (66,2% of police)

Completed cases by Safe Home (a case can contain multiple reports)

1st half of 2019	43,695
2nd half of 2019	47,190
1st half of 2020	50,905
2nd half of 2020	47,805
1st half of 2021	43,660
2nd half of 2021	45,000
1st half of 2022	42,845
2nd half of 2022	46,285
1st half of 2023	46,205

The CBS Victim Monitor, which is based on incidents registered with the police, shows the following numbers of registered incidents for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023:

	Women	Men	Unknown	Total
2021				
- Sex crime	6.330	830	10	7.170
- Child pornography	140	30	0	170
- Child prostitution	0	0	0	0
- (Attempted) murder or manslaughter	930	2.190	20	3.140
- Open violence (person)	780	2.790	0	3.570
- Threat	12.920	14.190	30	27.130
- Abuse	16.850	20.640	50	37.540
- Human trafficking	460	100	10	570
- Cybercrime	6.530	7.200	10	13.740
2022				

- Sex crime	6.940	880	20	7.840
- Child pornography	140	30	0	170
- Child prostitution	0	0	0	0
- (Attempted) murder or manslaughter	980	2.270	0	3.260
- Open violence (person)	930	3.630	0	4.560
- Threat	12.160	13.110	30	25.300
- Abuse	18.080	24.460	50	42.580
- Human trafficking	510	150	0	660
- Cybercrime	6.360	7.530	10	13.890
2023				
- Sex crime	5.840	870	10	6.720
- Child pornography	100	30	0	130
- Child prostitution	0	0	0	0
- (Attempted) murder or manslaughter	840	2.030	10	2.870
- Open violence (person)	940	3.370	0	4.310
- Threat	10.320	11.440	20	21.780
- Abuse	17.040	23.280	50	40.370
- Human trafficking	450	130	10	580
- Cybercrime	5.420	6.100	0	11.520

b. the number of emergency barring orders issued by the competent authorities, the number of breaches of such orders, and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of these breaches;

The temporary (or emergency) restraining order is an administrative measure that can be imposed by the mayor so that the violence can stop and so that there is room for the provision of assistance for both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and child abuse. Statistics Netherlands publishes figures every six months on the approach to domestic violence and child abuse, including the number of requested and imposed temporary restraining orders, in the [impact monitor](#) on tackling domestic violence and child abuse. Based on this CBS data, it is known for the following regions (see table below) in the Netherlands how often a temporary restraining order has been requested, where possible broken down into imposed and non-imposed temporary restraining orders¹. The figures below concern 2022. In the monitor, figures on the temporary restraining order are available from 2019.

Region	Temporary restraining order requested	Temporary restraining order imposed	Temporary restraining order not imposed
Amsterdam-Amstelland	255	230	20
Drenthe	50		
Flevoland	55		
Friesland	90	55	35
Gelderland-Zuid			
Gooi- en Vechtstreek			
Groningen	80	60	25
Haaglanden	515	455	60
Hollands-Midden	155	130	20

¹ Statistics Netherlands does not have access to the number of temporary restraining orders imposed for all regions in the Netherlands; the intention is to make this possible in the future. The published figures have been rounded to the nearest five (which is why the number of requested restraining orders in some regions is not equal to the number of imposed and non-imposed restraining orders). To prevent the risk of disclosure of individuals, numbers lower than 7 are not made available by Statistics Netherlands. The number of imposed temporary restraining orders is also not available if the number of non-imposed temporary restraining orders in the region in question is less than 7. This explains the empty boxes in a number of regions.

Kennemerland	50		
Noord- en Midden-Limburg	65		
Noord- en Oost-Gelderland	125	90	35
Noord-Holland Noord	105	75	25
Rotterdam-Rijnmond	770	610	160
Utrecht	115		
Zaanstreek-Waterland	105	80	25
Zuid-Holland-Zuid	40		
Zuid-Limburg	75	50	20

c. the number of protection orders issued, the number of breaches of such orders and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of such breaches;

See question 56b.

d. data on the number of decisions issued by family courts on custody/visitation/residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence.

Not applicable