



10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING FOR SIGNATURE OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

This May, the Council of Europe celebrates 10 years of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which is also known as the Istanbul Convention, since it was opened for signature in Istanbul in 2011. Because of its comprehensive nature, many call the Istanbul Convention the “gold standard”: it addresses violence against women in all its forms, sets out necessary tools to prevent it, protects its victims and prosecutes perpetrators. Its appearance results from the consistent and persistent work of the Council of Europe over the years.

As Europe's leading human rights organisation, the Council of Europe has undertaken a series of initiatives to promote protection of women against violence since the 1990s. In particular, these initiatives have resulted in the adoption, in 2002, of the Council of Europe [Recommendation Rec\(2002\)5](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence, and the running of a Europe-wide campaign, from 2006-2008, to combat violence against women, including domestic violence. The Parliamentary Assembly has also taken a firm political stance against all forms of violence against women. It has adopted a number of resolutions and recommendations calling for legally-binding standards on preventing, protecting against and prosecuting the most severe and widespread forms of gender-based violence.

National reports, studies and surveys revealed the magnitude of the problem in Europe. The campaign in particular showed just how much national responses to violence against women and domestic violence varied across Europe. The need for harmonised legal standards to ensure that victims benefit from the same level of protection everywhere in Europe was becoming apparent. Political will to act increased: the Ministers of Justice of Council of Europe member states began discussing the need to step up protection from domestic violence, in particular intimate partner violence.

Assuming its leading role in human rights protection, the Council of Europe decided it was necessary to set comprehensive standards to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. In December 2008, the Committee of Ministers set up an expert group mandated to prepare a draft convention in this field. Over the course of just over two years, this group, called the CAHVIO (Ad Hoc Committee for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), worked out a draft text. It finalised the draft of the Convention in December 2010.

The [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 7 April 2011. It was opened for signature on 11 May 2011 on the occasion of the 121st Session of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul. Following its 10th ratification by Andorra on 22 April 2014, it entered into force on 1 August 2014.

The Istanbul Convention is the first legally binding instrument in Europe on this subject and the most far-reaching international treaty in this field. It aims at zero tolerance for violence against women and domestic violence.

The Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence have issued a [declaration](#) to mark 10 years since it was opened for signature on 11 May 2011, in Istanbul. The Committee reaffirmed the essential role of the convention and reiterated its determination to strengthen and accelerate efforts in the next decade to eliminate violence against women and domestic violence.

On occasion of the 10th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Istanbul Convention, the Violence Against Women Division is launching [a dedicated website](#) to share innovative content, up-to-date information and new publications on the contribution the Istanbul Convention is making in advancing the right of women and girls to live free from violence.

Among the new material is the release of a short documentary on the Istanbul Convention, featuring interviews with professionals working in the area of violence against women and showcasing its added value of the Istanbul Convention. It will also give space to the voices of civil society, advocates, professionals and intergovernmental organisations in a “quote-of-the-day” section, also featured on Twitter. A 360 degree review of all 17 GREVIO baseline evaluation reports will also be published.

On 11 May 2021, in Berlin the key event will place – [Online Conference "Gender equality and the Istanbul Convention: a decade of action"](#). This virtual conference can be followed live without registration.

The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international legal text on the issue to date and it's used as a basis for action by many countries in and outside Europe. It's a touchstone for any country which aims to changes its laws, policies and structures to ensure that violence is effectively challenged. It puts victims first and offers practical ways to protect and empower women and girls.

Ukraine signed the Istanbul Convention on 7 November 2011 but has not yet ratified it.

During all this time, the Council of Europe supports Ukraine in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in the framework of Action Plans by implementing special projects:

- ✓ Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine (VAW in Ukraine), 2013-2016;
- ✓ Combating violence against women and children in Ukraine, 2017;
- ✓ The Istanbul Convention: a tool to advance in fighting violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine, 2018-2020.

Since the beginning of 2021 Council of Europe implements a new two-year project [“Combating Violence Against Women in Ukraine” \(COVAW\)](#). The COVAW project has been designed in line with the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine (2018-2022) as regards supporting national legislation and policy reforms related to combatting domestic violence, and raising awareness of authorities and the Ukrainian public concerning both the Istanbul Convention and violence against women.

The COVAW web page provides key information on the Istanbul Convention (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Translations of key documents into Ukrainian, including [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023](#) and [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)1 on preventing and combating sexism](#).
- Guidance on Articles of the Istanbul Convention, including [“Encouraging the participation of the private sector and the media in the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence: article 17 of the Istanbul Convention”](#).
- *Ukraine-specific publications on Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence:*
 - ✓ [“Media Guidance for the Development of Self-Regulatory Standards to Report on Cases of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, based on Council of Europe Standards”](#),
 - ✓ [“How Ukraine’s System of Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women will Need to be Improved Following Ukraine’s Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence”](#),
 - ✓ [“Myths and Facts about the Istanbul Convention”](#) with a [video presentation](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA MATERIAL

Hashtags

Main: #IstanbulConvention #IstanbulConventionSavesLives

Secondary: #endViolenceAgainstWomen #endVAW #endVAWG #ViolenceAgainstWomen

For more information, please visit the Council of Europe web pages:

- [Istanbul Convention – Action against violence against women and domestic violence](#);
- [10 years of the Istanbul Convention](#);
- [Gender Equality Division](#);
- [Project “Combatting Violence Against Women in Ukraine” \(COVAW\)](#).