

Committee of the Parties

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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

Report of the 14th meeting

Strasbourg, 1 June 2023

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Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to respectively as “the Committee” and “the convention”) held its 14th meeting on 1 June 2023 in Strasbourg, with some members and participants connecting online. The Chair proposed to address agenda items 8 and 3 together, in the afternoon, as relevant information was expected from the Swedish EU Presidency. The Committee agreed and adopted the revised draft agenda of the meeting as it appears in document IC-CP(2023)OJ14prov_rev and which is set out in Appendix I.

Agenda item 2. Administrative and budgetary information

The Executive Secretary informed the Committee about the additional human resources in the Secretariat since the last CoP meeting: a new assistant joined the Violence against Women Division in February 2023 and another one was due to join the team in July 2023. The Executive Secretary updated the Committee on the changes in the secretariat staff.

She also indicated that preparations of the new Council of Europe budget for 2024-2027 were under way and would be closely linked to the outcome of the 4th Summit, held in Reykjavík on 16-17 May 2023. The Executive Secretary also referred to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU as triggering an annual financial contribution by the EU, in line with the [CM Resolution of 2022 concerning financial arrangements for the participation of the European Union and non-member States in Council of Europe conventions](#).

Furthermore, the Executive Secretary informed the Committee about new reports and publications under preparation in the Violence against Women Division, addressing the topics of perpetrator programmes, national co-ordinating bodies, respectively, as well as an updated brochure on the Istanbul Convention, entitled “[Sustaining progress towards ending violence against women and girls](#)” and containing examples of “promising developments” at the national level to respond to violence against women, as well as “some of the most common gaps in the implementation of the convention”. The brochure will soon be available also in French.

Agenda item 3. State of signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention

a) Action taken by member States of the Council of Europe towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention: tour de table

The Chair invited signatory states to share information on progress towards ratification. The representative of the Czech Republic informed the Committee that the proposal to ratify the convention would be discussed by the Government on 14 June 2023. Once the proposal gets the green light from Government, it will be sent to both chambers of Parliament. He also indicated that a new Strategy and Action Plan to tackle domestic violence and gender-based violence was being developed.

b) Action taken by non-member States of the Council of Europe invited to accede to the Istanbul Convention

No representatives of Israel, Kazakhstan or Tunisia participated at this meeting.

The Chair informed the Committee about the promising exchanges with the Mexican delegation to PACE held at the end of April, when the Mexican parliamentarians had expressed their country’s interest to ratify the convention. This will be followed up on and the Committee will be kept informed of any new developments.

c) *Action taken by the European Union towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention: legislative developments*

The representative of Sweden informed the Committee that the EU Council, under the Swedish Presidency, had adopted the ratification decisions that same day, to be published in the Official Journal of the EU the following day. The deposit of the instruments in the Council of Europe would take place before the end of June 2023, triggering the entry into force of the convention for the EU on 1 October 2023.

d) *Declarations and reservations*

The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that, since the last meeting, one state party, Cyprus, notified the partial withdrawal and partial extension of their reservations to the Istanbul Convention. The extension concerned the reservation to Article 30, paragraph 2, and the withdrawal related to the reservation regarding Article 44, paragraphs 1.e, 3 and 4, and Article 59 of the convention. The Executive Secretary indicated that GREVIO had been informed about this partial withdrawal and partial extension of reservations at its meeting the week before, and the Group of Experts had welcomed the withdrawal of reservations by this state party.

On a more general note, the Executive Secretary recalled that, in accordance with Article 79(3) of the convention, Parties making a reservation “shall provide, before its renewal or upon request, an explanation to GREVIO on the grounds justifying its continuance”. She further informed the Committee that GREVIO’s Bureau has noted the lack of reasons provided by Parties when renewing their reservations, and it had asked for this issue to be brought to the attention of the Committee of the Parties.

The representative of Andorra informed the Committee that his country’s reservation, due to expire in 2024, would be extended.

Agenda item 4. Election of ten members of GREVIO

4.1. Examination of nominations of candidates for GREVIO membership (Rules 9 and 10 of CM/Res(2014)43)

The Chair recalled that 19 states parties (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine) had submitted a total of 27 candidates (24 women and three men) for consideration for GREVIO membership. She reminded the Committee of the relevant rules on the election procedure of the members of GREVIO according to Resolution CM/Res(2014)43.

Several delegations took the floor to provide information about their internal selection procedure to nominate candidates for this election. Furthermore, many delegations having submitted more than one expert took the floor to inform the Committee about their preferred candidate.

4.2. Election of ten members of GREVIO (paragraph 3 of Article 66 and paragraph 2 of Article 67 of the Istanbul Convention; Rules 11 and 13 of Resolution CM/Res(2014)43)

A total of 15 voting rounds were held (during which several candidates were withdrawn), and as a result of which the Committee elected the following candidates as members of GREVIO:

- Guillaume Robert BARBE
- María Rún BJARNADÓTTIR (re-elected)
- Pascale Florence Egida Emilia FRANCK
- Marie-Claude HOFNER (re-elected)
- Ivo HOLC (re-elected)
- Olena KHARYTONOVA

- Maria Andriana KOSTOPOULOU (re-elected)
- Helmut TICHY
- Pille TSOPP-PAGAN
- Angelina ZAPOROJAN-PIRGARI

In accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 66 of the Istanbul Convention and Rule 14 of the Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/Res(2014)43, the Committee decided that the mandate of these ten members of GREVIO would start on 1st June 2023, for a duration of four years, renewable once.

A number of delegations took the floor to express their dissatisfaction with several rules governing the election of GREVIO members, asking the Secretariat to prepare draft proposals to address them at a future meeting. The issues raised by members included: the maximum number of three members who can be elected in each voting round; the need to carry out a separate election between two candidates having obtained the same number of votes, when there are more than one place to be filled; a possible new criteria for election linked to language balance (i.e. to ensure that there are not only English-speaking experts); and the fact that the eligibility of candidates is assessed just prior to the voting by the Committee, at the same meeting. This issue was also taken up under "other business" (see agenda item 10 below).

Agenda item 5. Exchange of views with the outgoing President of GREVIO

The outgoing President of GREVIO, Iris Luarasi, whose term of office had expired the day before, provided an update on the work of GREVIO to the Committee, including the main results of the GREVIO meeting held the week. This included the adoption of final baseline evaluation reports in respect of Croatia, Luxembourg and North Macedonia, as well as the adoption of the 4th General Report on GREVIO's activities, covering the year 2022 and including a "focus section" that addresses a topic of interest, liked in previous years. This time, GREVIO decided to look closely at legislation on sexual violence and rape in states parties, including the different criminal law approaches, as well as current evolution and trends. The General Report is scheduled to be presented to the Committee of Ministers by the new GREVIO President on 8 November 2023.

She informed the Committee about plans to organise the next four evaluation visits (to Albania, Austria, Denmark, and Monaco), the first ones under the new thematic monitoring round, and which will take place in the autumn. She also explained that GREVIO has started to look into the situation of women fleeing Ukraine as a result of Russia's aggression, as many of the convention's provisions are relevant to Ukrainian women having moved to other states parties, for example as regards services for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in need of psychosocial counselling and support.

Several delegations took the floor to thank Iris Luarasi and GREVIO for the work carried out over the past eight years. In response to questions from delegations, Iris Luarasi provided further information about the remaining evaluations under the baseline procedure; the preparation of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round; co-operation with other international organisations through the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform); including on the digital dimension of violence against women.

Agenda item 6. Presentation of Council of Europe's cooperation work to promote the Istanbul Convention and support its implementation

The Chair introduced Marta Becerra, Head of the Cooperation Unit within the Gender Equality Division, who gave an overview of recent developments and ongoing work on violence against women in certain states parties, as well as in non-parties, to promote the implementation and ratification of the Istanbul Convention, respectively. She focused her presentation on the tailor-made, demand-driven technical assistance carried out by her Unit, funded by extrabudgetary resources, which includes capacity-building activities for legal and other relevant professionals involved in combatting violence

against women, awareness-raising initiatives, and legislative and policy gap assessment. Examples of ongoing and upcoming co-operation projects were provided, including those carried out or planned in non-parties (Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria and Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo*, and Türkiye) as well as in parties (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine).

The discussion that followed the presentation addressed questions related to co-operation activities with Morocco and Tunisia on violence against women and domestic violence; the different focus of co-operation activities in states parties and non-parties; and projects on the digital dimension of violence against women.

Agenda item 7. Supervising the implementation of recommendations issued by the Committee of the Parties

The Chair referred to the framework for supervising the implementation of the recommendations addressed to state parties, adopted by the Committee in April 2021, and thanked the five states parties for having submitted their reports in time. The draft conclusions on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Italy, France, Finland, the Netherlands and Serbia were addressed and representatives from each of these state parties, except for Italy, took the floor to welcome the conclusions as proposed and to give examples of current and planned efforts to implement the recommendations in their respective countries.

Following the request of a delegation, the representative of Serbia agreed to send to the Secretariat their third Gender Equality Index, published in October 2021, for distribution to all members of the Committee.

The Italian delegation indicated that written comments would be sent to the Secretariat after the meeting (they were received on 21 June 2023 and appear as Appendix III to this meeting report).

The conclusions addressed to Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Serbia, were adopted by the Committee.

Agenda item 8. Exchange of views on the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties regarding the implications of the forthcoming ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU

Some delegations took the floor to express their concern that a document with proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Committee to take account of the implications of the ratification of the convention by the European Union, regarding voting, had not been distributed to inform these discussions. The need to find a “good balance” and not to complicate procedures unnecessarily were underlined, as it was recalled that the voting practice of the Committee so far has been limited to electing GREVIO members. The Committee asked the Secretariat to look at examples and practices of other Council of Europe conventions and related committees, and to hold informal meetings with the EU to discuss this issue before the next Committee meeting scheduled in December 2023.

A number of delegations raised questions related to the scope of the ratification of the convention by the EU, and the allocation of competences between the EU and its member states in the field of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

The Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare an information document on the consequences of the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and to circulate it together with a proposal to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties. The Committee also instructed the Secretariat to rapidly propose an informal information and consultation procedure on this topic.

Agenda item 9. Date of next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its next meeting on 5 December 2023.

Agenda item 10. Other business

Some delegations brought up the discussions held after the election of ten new GREVIO members, indicating the need to review the Rules of Procedure of the Committee as regards the issues raised in the morning (see agenda item 4, above), and including the number of candidates per party; the requested qualifications, including language skills; the procedure and timeframe to determine the eligibility of candidates; and the vote to elect a member between two candidates having obtained the necessary quorum with an equal number of votes. The need to inform the Committee of the Parties to the CoE anti-trafficking convention, as well as the Committee of Ministers, was also underlined.

Taking into account the difficulties encountered during the procedure to elect GREVIO members, the Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for a possible review of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties regarding the election procedure of GREVIO members, and of the Committee of Minister Resolution CM/Res(2014)43.

Agenda item 11. Adoption of the list of decisions taken

The Committee adopted the list of decisions as set out in document IC-CP/Inf(2023)LD14.

Appendix I: Agenda

1. **Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda (9:30 am)**
2. **Administrative and budgetary information**
3. **State of signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention**
 - a) Action taken by member States of the Council of Europe towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention
 - b) Action taken by the European Union towards signature and ratification of the Istanbul Convention
 - c) Declarations and reservations
4. **Election of ten members of GREVIO (10:15 am)**
 - 4.1 *Examination of nominations of candidates for GREVIO membership (Rules 9 and 10 of CM/Res(2014)43)*
 - 4.2 *Election of ten member of GREVIO (paragraph 3 of Article 66 and paragraph 2 of Article 67 of the Istanbul Convention; Rules 11 and 13 of Resolution CM/Res(2014)43)*
 - Resolution CM/Res(2014)43 on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 19 November 2014 CM/Res(2014)43
 - Names and *curricula vitae* of the candidates submitted for the election of members of GREVIO (with the summary table of the CVs of candidates) IC-CP(2023)1
CONFIDENTIAL
 - Questions and answers on the election procedure of members of GREVIO IC-CP(2023)2
RESTRICTED
 - Information provided by the States Parties on the manner in which candidates were selected at national level IC-CP(2023)3
RESTRICTED
5. **Exchange of views with the outgoing GREVIO President**
6. **Presentation of Council of Europe's cooperation work to promote the Istanbul Convention and support its implementation (14:30)**
7. **Supervising the implementation of recommendations issued by the Committee of the Parties**
 - **Finland** [IC-CP(2023)5-prov]
 - **France** [IC-CP(2023)6-prov]
 - **Italy** [IC-CP(2023)7-prov]
 - **Netherlands** [IC-CP(2023)8-prov]
 - **Serbia** [IC-CP(2023)9-prov]

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- 8. Exchange of views on the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties regarding the implications of the forthcoming ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU**
 - 9. Date of next meeting**
 - 10. Other business**
 - 11. Adoption of the list of decisions taken**

Appendix II: List of Participants

14th meeting CoP

BUREAU

Ms Marie FONTANEL
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Ambassadrice Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentation Permanente de France
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mr Domenik WANGER
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Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein
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Mr Andrej SLAPNIČAR
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IV/4 – Violence against Women and women-specific legislation

Ms Aloisia WÖRGETTER
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BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

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Attaché
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Permanent Representation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Council of Europe

CROATIA / CROATIE

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CYPRUS / CHYPRE

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Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the Council of Europe

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Permanent Representative of Denmark to the Council of Europe

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Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (NAPE)

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Mme Frédérique AST
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GEORGIA / GÉORGIE

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Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights Issues

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SAN MARINO / SAINT-MARIN

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SERBIA / SERBIE

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Mr Aleksandar DZELETOVIC
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SPAIN / ESPAGNE

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Ministère de l'Égalité

SWEDEN / SUÈDE

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Ministry of Employment

SWITZERLAND / SUISSE

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Adjointe au Représentant permanent
Représentation permanente de la Suisse auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI

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Ministry of Social Policy

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Ms Pavla PEŠATOVÁ

SECRETARIAT

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Mr Roberto OLLA
Head of Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department

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Executive Secretary, Head of the Violence against Women Division

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Administrator

Ms Francesca MONTAGNA
Administrator

Ms Elif SARIAYDIN
Administrator

Ms Sabrina WITTMANN
Administrator

Mr Mihail STOJANOSKI
Administrator

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Ms Christine EBEL
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Ms Zsuzsanna MOLNAR
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Ms Irene SUOMINEN
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OTHER

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Outgoing GREVIO President

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Ms Sylvie BOUX-STINTZY

Appendix III: Comments sent by the Italian authorities regarding the conclusions on the implementation of the convention in respect of Italy

“Italy welcomes the appreciation expressed in Part I regarding measures and actions taken, with particular reference to: additional financial resources allocated, namely assistance to victims through the micro-credit of freedom and the income of freedom; the work of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Femicide; systematic data collection on gender-based violence in all its forms (Law No. 53/2022); ruling of the Italian Constitutional Court on parental alienation syndrome (24th March 2022); SCUDO database managed by the Central Directorate of Criminal Police; amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure regarding judicial caseload relevant to family law; assistance provided to victims at Police Forces and Carabinieri Corps’ offices; modalities designed to facilitate anonymous reporting of violence; and finally use of the electronic bracelet to ensure the physical distancing of the offender from the victim.

In Part II of the document, the CoP has made specific recommendations, and Italy should provide written feedback by 2 June 2025, as follows:

- compiling and implementing comprehensive policies on violence against women, reporting on how they are implemented at the regional and local levels;
- provide relevant coordinating bodies with a proper institutional mandate and appropriate resources in terms of finance and staffing;
- strengthen the institutional framework at the central and local levels in dialogue and collaboration with non-institutional actors (organizations and associations working in the field);
- ensure adequate allocations for interventions at the central and local levels, in the short and long term, assessing their proper use;
- intervene through specific measures in civil matters concerning the duty of due diligence on behalf of state authorities (art. 29 of the Istanbul Convention), as well as the prior risk assessment for the victim, and about custody and visitation procedures; restraining orders for the adequate protection of the victim; and amendments inherent to *ex parte* and *ex officio* prosecution (art. 55, para.1, of the Istanbul Convention).

To date, these recommendations, both general and specific in scope, are in line with the implementation of the current National Strategic Plan on Male Violence Against Women (2021-2023) and are associated with the Government bill, proposed by the Minister for the Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities Eugenia Roccella, the Minister of the Interior Matteo Piantedosi and the Minister of Justice Carlo Nordio, which has been approved by the Council of Ministers on 7 June 2023.

This bill provides to:

- speed up preventive assessments of the faced by potential victims of femicide or crimes of violence against women or in the domestic sphere;
- make preventive protection actions more effective, focusing on “spy crimes”;
- strengthen measures against reiteration of crimes against women and recidivism (including the compulsory distancing and electronic bracelet);
- ad hoc judiciary specialization training;
- compensation for victims and relatives;
- improve the overall protection of victims of violence.

The Governmental bill incorporates, inter alia:

- urgent requests that emerged within the framework of the Observatory on the phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence that operates at the Department for equal opportunities;
- observations contained in the final report of the “Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on Femicide as well as all forms of gender-based violence”;
- the General Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Cassation guidelines on the subject”.