

Committee of the Parties

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



Conclusions on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Malta adopted by the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention

IC-CP(2024)4

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The Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”), acting under the terms of Article 68(12) of the Convention and Rule 1(2b) of the Committee of the Parties’ Rules of Procedure;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 66(1) of the Convention concerning the monitoring role of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “GREVIO”);

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by Malta on 29 July 2014;

Having regard to the Baseline Evaluation Report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Malta adopted by GREVIO at its 22nd meeting (13-15 October 2020), as well as the comments of the Government received on 16 November 2020;

Having regard to the recommendation on the implementation of the Convention addressed to Malta by the Committee of the Parties, published on 18 December 2020;

Bearing in mind the adoption, at its 9th meeting on 15 December 2020, of a reporting form which focuses on a maximum of ten areas of the Convention and which states are required to use to report back to the Committee of the Parties on measures taken to implement the recommendations addressed to their authorities;

Having examined the information provided by Malta on the implementation of the recommendation addressed to its authorities, through the reporting form provided for that purpose, as well as the information submitted by non-governmental organisations and civil society;

A. Welcomes the measures taken and progress achieved by Malta in the implementation of recommendations for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, noting in particular:

- the adoption of the 2023-2028 National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in consultation with civil society and based on the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention;
- the inclusion in the 2023-2028 National Strategy of measures addressing the heightened exposure of women subject to intersectional discrimination to violence against women, including through research on the incidence of such violence and measures of prevention (awareness raising campaigns and education);
- the running of awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women experienced by women with disabilities, migrant women and LGBTI women;
- the setting-up and operationalisation of mechanisms to ensure multi-agency co-operation between state agencies with respect to individual cases of domestic violence aiming to provide effective protection to the victim (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Meeting);
- the strategic goal included in the 2023-2028 National and in the Malta Digital Justice Strategy 2022-2027 of enhancing the analytic capabilities of criminal justice actors in line with data collection obligations provided under the Istanbul Convention and the initial steps taken towards its implementation;
- the setting-up of Gender-Based and Domestic Violence Units in the Police Force to provide an effective response to victims of domestic violence by trained officers and the provision of regular training on these forms of violence;
- the measures taken to improve support for victims of sexual violence and rape in Mater Dei Hospital and professional practice in responding to their needs in a victim-centred manner;
- the increase of the number of judges presiding over domestic violence cases, in order to decrease the existing backlog;
- the entry into force of the aggravating factor of “femicide” in the Criminal Code and of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, which introduces a legal mechanism allowing persons in a relationship to verify whether their partner has previously been convicted for domestic violence;

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- the vulnerability screening put in place for asylum-seekers aiming at identifying, among other things, exposure to gender-based violence against women and the introduction of guidelines for the prevention, identification, intervention and follow-up to be given to victims and perpetrators of violence against women who reside in reception centres managed by the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.
- B. Encourages the Government of Malta to take further measures to implement the recommendations addressed to its authorities, in particular by:
1. strengthening co-operation with all non-governmental actors, including those providing specialist women's support services and ensuring their effective participation at various stages of the design of policies, legislative changes and programmes, that address violence against women, while upholding the Istanbul Convention's premise that all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, affect women disproportionately and are a form of discrimination against women;
 2. putting in place a dedicated, transparent and accountable public procedure under which all NGOs which provide specialist support services to victims of violence against women and their children can compete for sustainable and long-term funding; and offering women victims of violence the possibility to self-refer without requiring a mandatory referral from Agenzija Appogg;
 3. prioritising the implementation of the strategic goal on data collection of the 2023-2028 National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence and ensuring the comprehensive collection of disaggregated data in relation to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention at all stages of criminal justice, disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence as well as the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and ensuring the collection of data on protection orders issued under civil and criminal legislation, their breaches and consequences of such breaches;
 4. taking a number of priority actions in the area of custody and visitation rights to ensure the safety of victims and their children, including by verifying that measures that are available to prevent victims and perpetrators from meeting during supervised visitation are implemented in practice; and ensuring that family courts take into account episodes of domestic violence effectively, in particular by fully investigating allegations of domestic violence and recognising the harmful impact on domestic violence witnessed by children and offering a legal basis to restrict visitation rights where this is warranted;
 5. taking legislative and/or policy measures to bring the Maltese legal framework and practice in line with Articles 52 and 53 of the Istanbul Convention, and setting up a centralised system that can record the issue of emergency barring orders and protection orders, as well as any breaches thereof.
- C. Invites the Government of Malta to report back on these measures by 30 May 2026.
- D. Invites the Government of Malta to continue taking measures to implement the Istanbul Convention, particularly on the basis of the conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report.