

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## **Committee of the Parties**

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

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### **Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence by Greece**

IC-CP/Inf(2023)14

Adopted on 5 December 2023

Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention on  
preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

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;

Having regard to the purposes of the Convention to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence; to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women; to design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence; to promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; and to provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;

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 Greece on 18 June 2018;

Having examined the Baseline Evaluation Report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Greece adopted by GREVIO at its 31st meeting (23-26 October 2023), as well as the comments of the Government received on 9 November 2023;

Considering the overarching priorities set out in Chapter I of the Convention (purposes and scope of the Convention, definitions, equality and non-discrimination, due diligence and gender-sensitive policies);

Bearing in mind the primordial importance of the provisions set out in Chapter II of the Convention, in particular the obligations to (1) ensure a holistic response to violence against women by devising a set of comprehensive and co-ordinated policies implemented by way of effective multi-agency cooperation; (2) institutionalise and fully mandate one or more co-ordinating bodies as required by Article 10 of the Convention; (3) adequately resource policies, measures and mandates introduced to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, including government and nongovernmental specialist support services; and (4) to collect relevant statistical data disaggregated, at a minimum, by sex, age, type of violence, relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and geographic location;

Welcoming the measures taken and progress achieved by the Greek authorities in implementing the Convention and noting in particular:

- the adoption of successive national programmes to combat violence against women and domestic violence, embedded in gender equality policies and based on a gender-sensitive approach;
- the inclusion of an intersectional dimension into the programmes and policies to prevent and combat violence against women;
- the institutionalisation, in 2019, of the network of structures for preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, which includes shelters and counselling centres providing essential services to women victims of gender-based violence;
- the steps taken to align the Greek legal framework with the Istanbul Convention, in particular through the adoption of a definition of rape based on the notion of freely given consent;
- the ratification in 2021 of ILO Convention No.190 on violence and harassment in the world of work and the subsequent development of a domestic legal framework to combat sexual harassment at work;

- the measures taken to improve the law enforcement response to violence against women, in particular through increased police training, the setting up of 74 specialised police units, the adoption of specific guidelines outlining the procedure for police intervention in cases of domestic violence, and enhanced collection by the police of quantitative and qualitative data on gender-based violence.
- A. Recommends, in light of the considerations indicated in the preamble above, that the Government of Greece take the following measures identified in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report<sup>1</sup> for immediate action to:
1. ensure that the legal definitions of all forms of violence against women are fully aligned with those provided by the Istanbul Convention and that inconsistencies in the existing provisions on domestic violence are resolved; ensure that laws, policies and programmes adequately address all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, and that they integrate the gender dimension of violence against women (paragraphs 8, 9 and 22);
  2. step up action to prevent and combat violence against women exposed to intersectional discrimination, by taking measures to eliminate any discrimination against these women, raise their awareness about their rights, improve their access to protection and support services, and support research into the forms of violence they experience (paragraph 18);
  3. ensure the effective implementation of the policies to prevent and combat violence against women by fostering increased co-ordination and greater consistency among the policies and measures at the various territorial levels (paragraph 28), and by allocating appropriate, sustainable and long-term financial resources for the implementation of these policies (paragraph 33); ensure sustainable funding levels for women's rights NGOs that provide support services for women victims of violence (paragraph 38), and step up consultation with a range of women's rights organisations in order to include their opinions and experiences in the design of laws, policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women (paragraph 39);
  4. further support the work of the General Secretariat as the national co-ordinating body by allocating the necessary financial resources to ensure the sustainability of its work; and ensure independent monitoring and evaluation of policies on a regular basis (paragraph 47);
  5. further improve data collection on all forms of violence by setting up systems to collect data on victims of violence disaggregated by sex and age of both the victim and the perpetrator, type of violence, relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and geographical location; introduce a system allowing cases of violence against women to be tracked at all stages of the law-enforcement and judicial proceedings; collect data on decisions on the custody/visitation/residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence; collect data on the number of asylum claims on grounds of gender-based violence against women (paragraph 57); carry out research on all forms of violence against women, including in relation to specific groups of victims who may be subjected to intersectional discrimination and invest in the evaluation of existing policies, laws and practices (paragraph 64);
  6. ensure that all professionals working with victims or perpetrators of all forms of violence, in particular the judiciary, receive systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training to identify and respond to violence against women (paragraph 92);
  7. strengthen the capacity and outreach of perpetrator programmes by rolling out programmes throughout the country -on the basis of common minimum standards, introducing them in custodial settings, ensuring that their impact is adequately evaluated and increasing the level of attendance and the rate of completion of such programmes ordered by prosecutors in the context of the mediation mechanism; ensure that the interplay between perpetrator

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<sup>1</sup> The number of the paragraph setting out GREVIO's proposals and suggestions in the report is indicated in brackets.

programmes and criminal proceedings does not negatively affect the victims' right to fair legal processes; ensure that victims of domestic violence are adequately informed and protected during the mediation procedure (paragraph 96);

8. step up the co-ordination of responses to the needs of women victims of all forms of violence by setting up institutionalised structures for co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant stakeholders (paragraph 113);
9. expand the number and the capacity of shelters for women victims of violence, address the lack of resources allocated to them and remove any obstacles which hamper victims' access to such shelters; ensure that accommodation is available to women in emergency situations (paragraph 146);
10. set up rape crisis centres and/or sexual violence referral centres in line with Article 25 of the Istanbul Convention; introduce standardised protocols for all health professionals on the treatment of women victims of rape/sexual violence; ensure that a victim's access to different support services is not conditional on her willingness to lodge a complaint; ensure timely access to forensic examinations across the country (paragraph 158);
11. ensure that children exposed to domestic violence receive counselling and support, and that children of women victims of violence residing in shelters do not face obstacles to receiving education, healthcare services and psychological support (paragraph 165);
12. ensure that courts are under the obligation to consider all issues relating to violence against women and domestic violence when taking any decision related to custody and visitation rights; incorporate risk-assessment and risk-management procedures in the determination of custody and visitation rights, and restrict these rights when this is necessary to guarantee the safety of the mother and the child; end the practice of removing children from or limiting parental rights of non-abusive parents on grounds of "parental alienation syndrome"; provide appropriate training to judges about the requirements of the Istanbul Convention on custody and visitation rights (paragraphs 200 and 201);
13. introduce training and guidelines for all relevant criminal justice professionals to ensure a common understanding of rape and sexual violence as offences based on the absence of consent, as well as appropriate sanctions for all sexual acts perpetrated without the consent of the victim (paragraph 219);
14. enable a prompt and appropriate handling of investigations and criminal proceedings in cases of gender-based violence, grounded on a gendered understanding of violence against women, by developing standard operating procedures for prosecuting all forms of violence against women, providing all the relevant professionals with appropriate training, assessing progress through appropriate data collection, and an analysis of the handling of criminal cases by law-enforcement, prosecution authorities and courts to identify possible gaps in the institutional response to violence against women (paragraph 268);
15. implement systematic, gender-sensitive, risk assessments and safety management in all cases of violence against women, repeated at all the relevant stages of criminal proceedings and based on an effective multi-agency approach, including specialist services and NGOs (paragraph 277);
16. ensure the availability of emergency barring orders and protection orders to all women victims of domestic violence; monitor and enforce protection orders; ensure that effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or other sanctions for breaching protection orders are effectively applied and collect data on the number of protection orders issued, the number of breaches and the sanctions imposed (paragraph 287);
17. address the negative consequences for asylum-seeking women and girls victims of gender-based violence of the implementation of the Joint Ministerial Decision 42799 of 2021 designating Türkiye as a "safe third country" for asylum-seekers coming from five countries; ensure their effective access to the asylum procedure by lifting the administrative fee

required to submit subsequent applications for international protection; take urgent steps to adequately meet the accommodation and support needs of women and girls victims of violence deemed inadmissible for international protection, pursuant to the Joint Ministerial Decision (paragraph 336);

18. ensure safe and adequate accommodation for all asylum-seeking women and girls as well as sufficient support to meet their basic needs; set up an effective system of screening of vulnerabilities of asylum seekers upon arrival with a view to detecting reception and procedural needs that arise from experiences of gender-based violence; establish effective referral pathways for women and girls victims of gender-based violence and set up dedicated focal points for sexual and gender-based violence within all reception and identification centres; develop and comprehensively implement standard operating procedures or guidelines on gender-sensitive reception of asylum seekers and on the prevention of gender-based violence in asylum accommodation; remove the barriers currently experienced by women victims of violence to accessing specialist support services and provide all asylum-seeking women with relevant information on their rights and existing remedies in case of gender-based violence (paragraph 354);
  19. uphold their obligation to respect the principle of *non-refoulement* of women victims of violence, including as regards asylum seeking women and girls arriving by sea; take resolute measures to prevent acts of gender-based violence against women and girls seeking international protection in Greece and investigate any such allegations (paragraph 359).
- B. Requests the Government of Greece to report to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the Convention in the above-mentioned areas by 5 December 2026.
- C. Recommends that the Government of Greece take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report.