

# **Committee of the Parties**



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

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### **Implementation report submitted by Albania on the conclusions adopted by the Committee of the Parties on 7 December 2021**

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**CONCLUSIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN  
RESPECT OF ALBANIA ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES TO  
THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION**

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**Responses prepared by Albania**

**December 2023**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CA</b>	Cash Assistance
<b>CRM</b>	Coordinated Referral Mechanism for Domestic Violence
<b>DCM</b>	Decision of the Council of Ministers
<b>DFLA</b>	Directorate of Free Legal Aid
<b>DVL</b>	Law No. 9669/ 18.12.2006, “On measures against domestic violence”.
<b>GBV/DV/SV</b>	Gender-based violence/Domestic violence/Sexual violence
<b>GDSP</b>	General Directorate of State Police
<b>GEO</b>	Gender Equality Officer
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
<b>INSTAT</b>	Institute of Statistics
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MoFE</b>	Ministry of Finances and Economy
<b>MoHSP</b>	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
<b>MoI</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>MTBP</b>	Medium-Term Budget Program
<b>NCGE</b>	National Council on Gender Equality
<b>NGO</b>	Non-profit organization
<b>NSGE</b>	National Strategy for Gender Equality
<b>OPMP</b>	Order for Provisional Measures of Protection
<b>PO/EBO</b>	Protection Order/ Emergency Barring Order
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Agency for Women
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>VaW</b>	Violence against woman
<b>VDV</b>	Victims of domestic violence

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Albania has the pleasure of submitting to the Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the responses to the list of measures in relation to the conclusions on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Albania adopted by the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention on December 2021.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection coordinated the collection of information from: the Ministry of the Interior/General Directorate of the State Police, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance and Economy and local governments and processed and prepared the following information regarding the measures taken as a response to the list of recommendations adopted by the Committee.

## II. MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBANIA IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES OF INSTAMBUL CONVENTION

*II.b Measures taken as a response to Recommendation no.1 which require Republic of Albania to clearly designate or establish one or more official bodies responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies in the area of violence against women and conferring upon it decision-making powers as well as sufficient dedicated human and financial resources to enable this/these body/ies to exercise effectively its functions.*

1. At central level, the **Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP)** is the institution in charge of **implementing and coordinating policies and** measures aimed at preventing and combating violence against women-coordinated the reporting process. In addition to this, MoHSP is also **responsible for setting up Crisis Management Centres** handling cases of sexual violence and ensuring the functioning of emergency rooms close to the hospitals where the victims are treated. These responsibilities are fulfilled through the Sector of Policies and Strategies for Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, within the Directorate of Policies and Development of Health and Social Protection in the General Directorate of Policies and Development of Health and Social Protection. The Sector is composed on one Department Head and two Specialist Officers. This Sector is in charge of designing, managing and monitoring the implementation of programs and action plans addressing non-discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation; promoting and fostering gender equality in society and addressing gender-based violence and domestic violence. **In financial terms, there is an increase in the budget mainly for staff salaries.** Other activities related to awareness activities, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation processes are also carried out with the support of international organizations.
2. Another important organ in central level is the **National Council for Gender Equality** (with renewed membership according to Prime Minister's Order No. 239, dated 13.12.2017) as the advisory body for the direction, definition and development of state policies for gender equality, as well as for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. The Council is established by Order of the Prime Minister, is renewed once every four years, is headed by the Minister of Health and Social Protection and is composed of nine representatives of line ministries at the rank

of deputy minister and senior managers, as well as three representatives /representatives of civil society, which are selected on the basis of an open competition, having as criteria experience and contribution to these issues.

3. To improve the situation of women ‘victims of domestic violence and the effectiveness of the functioning of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM), in June 2021, the GoA adopted the Council of Ministers Decision (CoM) no 327 dated 02.06.2021 “On the mechanism of coordination of work between the responsible authorities, for the referral of cases of domestic violence, and its functioning, for supporting and rehabilitating victims of violence”. Based on the above CoM, a local coordinator has been assigned to each municipality for the coordination of cases of violence, which, among others has the responsibility to mediate with NGOs, the State Police, health services, courts, the Service of Probation, legal aid service structures, social services and other reference institutions/organizations to receive and provide information, to connect women victims of violence with services, as well as to ensure continuity of care for them.
4. The work of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism is based and adheres to a number of principles, including: easily accessible and approachable services; treating the victims with respect and dignity; c) prohibition of victimization, re-victimization and secondary victimization; ç) confidentiality and protection of personal data; d) life and health safety for the victims; dh) prohibition of discrimination; e) effective and individual care; and support and partnership. This DCM includes an update of the list of institutions in charge of managing cases of domestic violence at the local level, on the basis of the previously mentioned 2018 amendments to the legislation and specifies their tasks to ensure a better coordination and harmonization of the working standards in all Municipalities. This DCM also consolidates the job position and duties of the Domestic Violence Coordinator (DVC) in managing and referring domestic violence cases, at the local level.
5. This Decision regulates, for the first time, the most important standards of case management, based on a victim-cantered approach. The Decision creates space for the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms to engage, where appropriate, not only in cases of domestic violence, but also in cases related to other forms of gender-based violence. The DCM pays a particular attention to the collection, retention and disclosure of data related to these cases, by means of a dedicated electronic system for data management (REVALB).

**II.b II.a *Measures taken as a response to Recommendation no.1 which require Republic of Albania to*** identify and expand the overall human and financial resources allocated at the central level to the relevant Ministries in order to fight violence against women, as well as at the municipal level; and provide stable and sustainable funding levels for women’s NGOs that support victims of violence against women;

6. The proper implementation of Gender-Responsive Budgeting, both at the central and the local self-government level, is of paramount importance in the allocation of funds for activities aimed at preventing and combatting all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention. Gender Equality was included as one of the core principles of budgetary system in the Organic Budget law in 2016 and the Local Finance Law in 2017. The inclusion of the gender equality principle into the Organic

Budget Law enables that all budgetary programs of line ministries and other budgetary institutions should consider and clearly state their policies pertaining gender equality, without any exceptions.

7. As a result, in the 2017- 2019<sup>1</sup> Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP), the planned gender responsive budget funds amounted to USD 90 million or 2.3% of the total planned budget; in the 2018-2020 MTPB it went up to USD 120 million (2.4% of the total planned budget) while in the 2019- 2021 MTPB, USD 298 million (6.3% of the total planned budget). For 2020-2022 the GRB planned funds amounted up to 348 million USD (7.2% of the total planned budget), 506 million for 2021-2023 (9% of the total planned budget) and 410 million USD (9% of the total planned budget) for 2022-2024 and same 9% for 2023-2025 (for more details, see table in Annex no 1).
8. At the local level, the Law on Local Self-Government Finance (2017) also enables the Local Self-government Units (LGUs) to make an efficient GRB planning, in all stages of local financial management cycle (annual and mid-term budget planning, monitoring, and reporting, evaluation and auditing). It is mandatory for LGUs to address gender inequality or full respect for gender equality, in at least one of the programme policy objectives by setting clear and identifiable gender outputs and indicators. In their compulsory financial reporting, LGUs should also include the share of total expenditure devoted to policies supporting gender equality.
9. In addition to the state budget, the United Nation joint programme “Ending Violence against Women” implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, and funded by the Swedish Government played an important role in financing programmes tackling gender-based violence and violence against women. The total budget funded to cover all types of costs of this programme was around USD 3,103,903 for the period January 2019-June 2022. The National Gender Equality Strategy (2021-2030) is implemented by several central government institutions, local government, and other institutions. The Strategy expands its financial effects for a period of 10 years. The financial costs estimated for each measure and activity are based on the Action Plan accompanying this strategic document. The implementation of NSGE 2021-2030 is estimated to require a total cost of ALL 3,358,697,259, or EUR 27,086,268. The funding of the Action Plan is provided from different sources such as the state budget, local government funds and donors’ support.
10. In addition, the Albanian Government provides financial assistance to the victims of domestic violence. The cash economic assistance given to victims of domestic violence, who have a Protection Order, tripled to ALL 9,900 (about EUR 89) in 2022.<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, to mitigate the financial effects that disadvantaged groups, including victims of domestic violence for whom a Protection Order had been issued, suffered due to Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, a series of secondary legislation

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers can change also due to the exchange rate of USD.

<sup>2</sup> In 2021 and 2022 the amount of cash assistance increased. Under DCM. No. 868, dated 29.12.2021, it raised at ALL 9,000, while under DCM No. 617, dated 22.09.2022, it went up to ALL 9,900

were adopted in 2021 and 2022 aiming at increasing the economic assistance. Women victims of violence also benefited from these measures for certain periods of time.<sup>3</sup>

11. The number of women benefiting cash assistance has increased during the period 2021-2022. In 2021, about 732 women victims of domestic violence with a Protection Order were recipients of monthly cash assistance (about EUR 20,109.89) and 1,017 women in 2022 (about EUR 92,200.55). Also, the economic assistance benefit was increased during 2022 with 20% for 64,000 households in need. This benefit was doubled for 11,000 households with 3 and more children; doubled for 5,866 women households with up to 2 children; doubled for 5,200 household members over 65 years old and without old age/social pensions; tripled for 991 orphans and 963 victims of domestic violence and victims of trafficking.
12. In addition to this, from 1 October 2022, with Decision no 617, dated 22 September 2022 "On some changes and additions to decision no. 597, dated 4.9.2019, of the Council of Ministers, "For determining procedures, documentation and measures for the monthly economic assistance benefit and the use of the additional fund on the conditional fund for economic assistance", amended, women heads of households, beneficiaries of the economic assistance program who have up to two children aged between 0 and 18 years as part of the family benefit twice the amount of the existing payment of economic assistance, according to the structure of the family.
13. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection is implementing the financial support program for mothers with three or more children through social security support for unemployed mothers with 3 or more children with a total income less than 100,000 ALL. In total 8,200 mothers have benefitted from this program, and a considerable of them were victims of domestic violence.
14. MoHSP also funds two specialized supporting services, at the national level. They offer long-term accommodation (shelter) and support services, focusing on the reintegration of victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. The Ministry allocates budget funds to two centres: The National Centre for Treatment of Cases of Domestic Violence which received an ALL 21,530,000 in 2021 and 2022 (about EUR 191,719) and The National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking which received ALL 22,350,000 in 2021 and 2022 (about EUR 199,020). In addition, MoHSP has financed two other centers: The LILIUM Center and the National Counseling Line for Women and Girls 116-117. Two one-stop centers have been set up for services for child victims of sexual violence in Fier and Shkoder.
15. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is one of the institutions that allocates funds for: - Free Legal Aid to women and girls in need. MoJ allocated respectively: ALL 28,000,000

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<sup>3</sup> Under DCM no. 254, dated 27.03.2020, according to which in the period April-June 2020, the amount of cash assistance doubled for the period April-June 2020 amounting to ALL 6,000 (about EUR 53.72). Under DCM no. 85/2021, it increased at ALL 6,000 for a 6-month period (January-June 2021). DCM No. 159, dated 12.03.2022, aimed to mitigate the effects of the war in Ukraine. As a result, in April and June 2022, the victims of domestic violence and trafficking received ALL 3,000 support per month (ALL 9,000 for three months, i.e., about EUR 81). In late 2022, according to DCM.899, dated 29.12.2022, victims of domestic violence and trafficking received financial support only once amounting to ALL 8,000 (about EUR 72).



(about EUR 233,000) in 2021; and ALL 20,500,000 (about EUR 187,728.94) in 2022. About 1,000 women and girls have received free legal aid. It has to be noted that the free legal aid to women and girls in need, mostly dominated by victims of domestic violence, increased in 2018 by 10% compared to 2017; 64% in 2019 and 56% in 2021. The budget of the MoJ was also increased from 18,000,000 (about 150 thousand Euro) for offering free legal aid to 1000 women and girls in need in 27,000,000 ALL for 3700 women and girls beneficiaries of free legal aid in 2023.

16. From 2019 and onwards, the Ministry of Justice, in the account of “Free Legal Aid” Program, allocates ALL 4 million for each budget year for non-profit organizations providing primary legal aid to women and girls in need. The sub-legal framework governing the funding of NPOs is adopted and this enabled DFLA to initiate funding procedures. In March 2021, the first call was opened for granting funds from the state budget to NPOs authorized by the Minister of Justice for the provision of primary legal aid. None of the ten applicant NPOs received an award by the Evaluation Commission and the Appeal Commission composed of members from MoJ and DFLA.
17. At local level, the Social Fund is one of the most important funding sources, providing funds for services and projects in the field of violence against women and domestic violence. In 2021, the Social Fund allocated ALL 11,258,165 (or EUR 94,000) to four municipalities for services to victims of domestic violence and persons at risk. (More detailed data in this regard is provided in Annex No. 2. In 2022, the Social Fund allocated ALL 7,126,725 (EUR 64,320.62) funds for three services to victims of domestic violence and persons at risk. During the period 2020-2022, the Social Fund funded a total of 15 community and specialized services aimed at empowering the family, preventing and providing support to tackle situations of domestic violence and gender-based violence. During the period 2020-2022, 14,416 persons benefited from ALL 254,184,892 (EUR 2,294,087.47) funding in total, while 130 persons were employed to deal with gender based violence issues.
18. Regarding allocating appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources to women rights organizations that provide special support to victims, including supporting migrant women and girls it is to be mentioned the allocation of funds through the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) to civil society organizations<sup>4</sup>. ASCS is a central public entity that, through the financial support to civil society, promotes and supports the principles of rule of law, human dignity, freedom, equality, non-discrimination, and observance of human rights. Fostering cooperation with NGOs working in the field of overseeing the fight against corruption, the fight against human trafficking and the treatment of its victims, against domestic violence and violence against children, is one of ASCS objective. During 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2022, ASCS signed 220 contracts with NGOs for a total of ALL 415,750,000 (about EUR 3,752,256.32) disbursed, out of which ALL 17,900,000 (EUR 161,552.35) or 46.67% of the total budget were awarded to projects related to violence against Women/Domestic Violence<sup>5</sup>.
19. **From 2018**, the Fund supporting social enterprises was set up in 2018, under the Law No. 65/2016 on Social Enterprises. The DCM provided a total of ALL 249,760,000 (or

<sup>4</sup> 16<https://amshc.gov.al/raporte-vjetore-te-veprimtarise/>

<sup>5</sup>

about EUR 2,081,000) subsidy, for the period 2019-2021, where only ALL 37,000,000 (or about EUR 308,000) is devoted to creation of new jobs. ALL 7,776,000 (about EUR 65,000) is devoted to compulsory social and health insurance of employees of social enterprises belonging to disadvantaged groups and the rest for their activity, provided they submit a business plan. The economic undertaking is required to hire at least 30% new staff from the disadvantaged categories, within 12 months from the date of receipt of the subsidy. The granting of subsidies is preconditioned on the employment of persons from disadvantaged groups and the duration of the contract in this case should not less than 2 years. During the reporting period, nine non-profit organizations took the status of social enterprises and they will receive funding in the second half of 2023.

20. MoHSP, upon request of the District Authorities, has provided funds to three organizations providing shelter services to victims of violence and trafficking. These include “Different and Equal” in Tirana; “Other Vision” Organization in Elbasan, and “Vatra” Centre in Vlora. Such funding amounted at ALL 28,879,324 in 2021 (about EUR 248,994), and EUR 29,932,553 in 2022 (about EUR 270,149.40). Additionally, in 2021 the MoHSP funded the Counselling Line for Women and Girls (116 117) in the amount of ALL 6,768,552 (about EUR 60,868) to cover salaries and social insurance for nine months for five employees. In 2022, this fund amounted to ALL 6,768,552 (about EUR 60,868).
21. At local level, the majority of the country's population lives in Tirana Municipality. Since 2018, this Municipality is providing an ALL 474,000 support to the “Counselling Line for Women and Girls” (CLWG 116 117 - a national helpline service managed by and NPO). In 2020, such funding was multiplied to ALL 922,725 under a special agreement between Tirana Municipality and the Counselling Line for Women and Girls intended to empower the Counselling Line for Women and Girls and the Counselling Line for Men and Boys supporting of victims of domestic violence, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, for several years, Tirana Municipality is supporting financially the ARSIS Initiative that is providing emergency shelter for up to seven days to the persons in need, including women and girls victims of domestic violence. In 2022, the Municipality supported also “Edlira Haxhiymeri Shelter”, a member organization of CRM Tirana. Tirana Municipality is cooperating for years (including the period 2018-2021) with the “Different & Equal” Organization, which is providing services for children of mothers victims of violence or former victims of trafficking (day care in the morning and afternoon). This childcare programme contributes to the integration of victims of domestic violence and victims of human trafficking through their employment. Tirana Municipality has made available to the Organization a part of premises of the “Shkoza e Re” Kindergarten, where children stay after coming back from the kindergarten or even on Saturdays, while the parents are at work. During their stay there, the children are fed, cared for and assisted by the staff to do their home works.

**II.c Measures taken as a response to Recommendation no.3 which require Republic of Albania to** strengthening data collection and ensuring that both the law enforcement and criminal justice sector collect data on all forms of violence against women, beyond domestic violence, and systematically disaggregate such data including on the basis of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

22. MoHSP is the main authority responsible for coordinating the work for the collection and retention of statistical data on domestic violence, including the annual analysis, publication and has access to the data of REVALB system. To meet such obligations, the Ministry cooperates with the principal line authorities that collect disaggregated data, such as the State Police that reports quarterly these data to the Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Policies Directorate of MoHSP.
23. The statistical yearbook 2019 of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) included for the first time a chapter on domestic violence with information collected from all courts countrywide. This chapter provides new data regarding the perpetrator such as: residence, age, gender, marriage status, number of children, education level, employment status, request for a protection order, and family relation with the victim of violence.
24. Through Department of Free Legal Aid (DFLA), MoJ collects data on victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual abuse, victims of human trafficking, child victims, etc. benefiting from free legal aid. These data form the basis for drafting and implementing further policies in the field of free legal aid . The Ministry of Justice and the High Judicial Council (HJC) drafted and approved a Joint Instruction No. 9, dated 07.06.2020, “Laying down the rules for a special database on domestic violence cases in courts and unification of such data entry”, as amended. HJC is in charge of managing the database on domestic violence cases, whereas MoJ is responsible for the statistical data processing, analysis and publication in the statistical yearbook. The database is set up based on the Istanbul Convention (Article 11), as well as the 2017 recommendations of the GREVIO expert group. It retains data such as gender, age, marriage status, education level, employment status, family relation with the perpetrator, and request for EBO/PO from the victim, etc.
25. Also, HJC has improved the Court Case Management System. The court portal enables access to the data on EBOs and DV, under Article 130 of the Criminal Code. Additionally, the portal has created a Domestic Violence Report that is updated in real time by the courts. For the first time, an Integrated Juvenile Justice Data System is set up. Such juvenile justice database generates information on child victims of domestic violence or gender-based violence.
26. At Local Government, the REVALB system plays a key role in collecting case data identified and managed in a concerted multi-agency approach, under the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms at local level. This system is specially designed to collection certain data, such as cases of domestic violence handled at local level, the performance of institutions, protection orders issued and their monitoring. During this reporting period, this system underwent a series of upgrades, while at the same time the Local Coordinators were trained to be able to enter updated data. The Section in charge of monitoring the Protection Orders and their breach is added as a user of this system following the respective recommendation of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention put forward for Albania in 2021.
27. Law enforcement agencies and the judiciary (namely General Directorate of State Police, General Prosecution Office and General Directorate of Prisons) provide regularly to INSTAT statistical data on crimes and criminal justice concerning the cases of domestic violence, as provided for in Domestic Violence legislation and Criminal Code (Article 130/a). They also provide data on cases reported to the police, suspects

and defendants. The judiciary sends data on criminal cases, types of sentences imposed to perpetrators of domestic violence. The main variables refer to the number of offenses, the demographic characteristics of the injured persons and the perpetrators, by gender and age group, as well as the relation between victim and perpetrator. 2. Collecting disaggregated data on the number of Order for Provisional Measures of Protection, Protection Orders, number of breaches and relevant sanctions; the number of cases when court decisions, in addition to the prison sentence, also imposed the restriction and removal of parental right, due to the violence that one parent had exercised against the other.

28. Based on the Albanian legislation, the General Directorate of State Police, General Prosecution Office, Courts, Prosecution Offices, Local Government Units, MoJ, MoHSP, and HJC, collect annual data on domestic violence and violence against women. The databases are designed and governed by the secondary legislation. These systems generate data on the number of Order for Provisional Measures of Protection and Protection Orders issued, breach thereof and relevant sanctions. HJC is in charge of generating statistical information from the electronic IT system on domestic violence. The courts report these data to HJC by 20th of the second following month for the quarter, and by 20th of February for the annual data. Based on the data reported by the courts, HJC generates various statistics on violence against women and domestic violence concerning the cases of Emergency Barring Orders, Protection Orders and violations thereof. Under the Minister of Interior Instruction No. 274, dated 10.09.2014 "On Crime Statistics", General Director of State Police Order No. 1531, dated 24.10.2014 "On producing crime statistics", the General Directorate of State Police keeps statistics on the victims ( such as the age (under 14 and from 14-18 years, and over 18 years), sex, marriage status, education, age, employment, relation to the perpetrator, place of residence) and perpetrators (criminal offense committed, sentence imposed, breach of court decisions, etc).
29. Based on Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention and Albanian legislation, INSTAT in cooperation with UN Women and UNDP conducts the survey "Violence against Women and Girls in Albania" every 5 years. In 2018, the third round of the violence survey was conducted, where new forms of violence were added and social norms, attitudes and behaviors related to violence against women and girls were added for the first time. The data and the publication are accessible to the public on the official website of INSTAT, fulfilling point 4 of article 11. The "Violence against Women and Girls in Albania" survey measures five forms of violence: intimate partner violence, dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment and stalking. The types of violence measured are psychological, physical, sexual, economic and controlling behavior. The 2018 survey was enriched compared to the previous survey by adding the two new forms of violence (dating violence, sexual harassment and stalking), as well as adding the types of measured violence.
30. In addition, INSTAT provides from law enforcement agencies and the judiciary data related to cases of domestic violence (Article 130/a) reported to the police, suspects and defendants, given by the judiciary in criminal cases, as well as the measures punishment of persons convicted of domestic violence. An example of the presentation of this data is given in appendix 5 of this report.

31. In the statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Justice of 2019, a chapter dedicated to domestic violence was included for the first time with information from all the courts operating in the Republic of Albania. This chapter contains new data such as: residence, age, gender, civil status, number of children, educational level, employment status, request for a protection order, family relationship with the victim. The Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council drafted and approved Joint Instruction no. 9, dated 07.06.2020 "On defining the rules for creating a special database for domestic violence cases in courts and unifying their registration ". Based on this instruction, work is ongoing to collect relevant data.
32. The Institution of the People's Advocate has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with INSTAT, for cooperation and strengthening of data collection, (sharing), dissemination and analysis in the light of human rights and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. In this context, from 2020 INSTAT publishes "Men and Women in Albania ", an annual publication, which presents data in different areas of life divided by gender, with the aim of reflecting the problems of society in the context of achieving gender equality, was including a chapter with indicators on human rights.

**II.d Measures taken as a response to Recommendation no.4 which require Republic of Albania to** taking measures to ensure that fees associated with the obligatory psychological assessment required for the issue of a protection order for a child does not hinder, in practice, the issue of such protection orders, including those that entail the temporary removal of custodial/parental rights;

33. Law on Domestic Violence provides for a quicker reaction of the court in cases where the Emergency Barring Order (EBO) concerns children - a maximum of 24 hours (Article 18). Measure of protection for children are included in the Protection Order (PO)/EBO, not only if they have experienced direct violence, but also if they were present or are at risk of being present when violence is used between family members (Article 10, paragraph 3/1). Article 10/j provides for the temporary removal of parental responsibility from perpetrators or, if applicable, removal of custody of a minor, of a person with disabilities, or of a person whose capacity to act has been removed or restricted.
34. The PO/EBO, issued by a court decision, or the termination of its effects does not permanently infringe ownership or custody rights (Article 11). When the court decides to remove parental responsibility from both parents or from a single parent, it assigns temporary custody of children, in compliance with the procedural rules and those provided for in the Family Code. In addition, the Family Code contains a number of articles related to violence against the spouse and children. It determines parental rights and obligations to children in family life, child abuse and negligence<sup>93</sup>, and the right to use the custodial parent's apartment after the divorce.
35. According to Law on Domestic Violence, as amended, in order to draft the lawsuit, prepare the acts and representation during the court proceedings, the claimant shall be assisted by a lawyer that provides secondary legal aid, in compliance with the conditions and rules envisaged by the applicable legislation on legal aid, provided by the state. In this case, the applicant for IPO/PO and the holder of OIPPM (order on immediate protection preliminary measures) **shall be exempted from:** a) paying the court fees and expenses, in compliance with the applicable legislation on legal aid

provided by the state; b) the obligation to pay in advance the fee for the execution of the order by the state plaintiff's service, in compliance with the applicable legislation on legal aid provided by the state; c) **paying the fees for the psycho-social expertise, sign language interpretation services, forensic expertise, expertise to assess the risk of domestic violence or any other expertise act.** Upon the issuance of the IPO/PO, the court expenses shall be incurred by the party that exercised domestic violence.

36. Also, based on Law 111/2017 "On legal aid guaranteed by the state", victims of domestic violence, as well as victims of sexual violence and human trafficking are among the categories that benefit from: a\_ primary (legal counselling); b) secondary (representation in court) legal aid free of charge provided by the state; and c) exemption from court fees and tariffs for the execution of court's decisions.

*II.e Measures taken as a response to Recommendation no.5 which require Republic of Albania to introducing restraining or protection orders for victims of all forms of violence against women other than domestic violence;*

37. During this reporting period, Albanian authorities adopted a series of comprehensive and coordinated measures aimed at combatting domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence against women. Especially, in 2018 and 2020, Albania implemented the immediate recommendations concerning the improvement of the legislation on violence against women and domestic violence. It amended the existing Law against Domestic Violence and completed the relevant secondary legislation framework. This Law focuses on prevention and protection against domestic violence, **as well as other aspects of services to be provided in case of other forms of gender-based violence against women, such as sexual violence.**
38. Regarding secondary legislation, the most important is Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 327, date 2.06.2021. This DCM governs the standard basic procedures for the coordination of work between the authorities responsible for prevention of domestic violence, protection, provision of support, and rehabilitation services to victims, while guaranteeing human rights and promotion of gender equality, and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
39. This DCM includes an update of the list of institutions in charge of managing cases of domestic violence at the local level, on the basis of the previously mentioned 2018 amendments to the legislation and specifies their tasks to ensure a better coordination and harmonization of the working standards in all Municipalities. This DCM also consolidates the job position and duties of the Domestic Violence Coordinator (DVC) in managing and referring domestic violence cases, at the local level. This Decision regulates, for the first time, the most important standards of case management, based on a victim-centered approach. **The Decision creates space for the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms to engage, where appropriate, not only in cases of domestic violence, but also in cases related to other forms of gender-based violence.** The DCM pays a particular attention to the collection, retention and disclosure of data related to these cases, by means of a dedicated electronic system for data management (REVALB).

**II.f Measures taken as a response to Recommendation no.6 which require Republic of Albania to** amending the definition of rape and sexual violence to align it with the requirements of Article 36 of the Convention.

40. In 2020, the Albanian Criminal Code underwent significant changes related to the domestic violence offences. 2 The principal novelty is that it criminalized psychological violence and extended protection also to the persons in a current or former intimate relationship with the perpetrator. It ensured thus harmonization between Article 130/a, of the Criminal Code and Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and the amendments of 2018 to the Law on Domestic Violence. Additionally, the law provides for more severe penalties for certain authors of this criminal offense.
41. Currently, the Criminal Code is in the process of amending. The above recommendation is part of the list of legal amendments of the Criminal Code, which will be adopted within 2024.

# Anexx I: OVERVIEW OF GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING OVER THE YEARS

Year	No of budget programs	No of budget programs including GRB	No of objectives	No. of Outputs (by type)	GRB related budget funds (in million USD)	% of total budget expenditures
2017-2019	84	24	32	33	90	2.3%
2018-2020	84	28	41	41	120	2.4%
2019-2021	74	33	52	52	285	6.3%
2020-2022	75	38	57	57	348	7.20%
2022-2024	75	45	41	61	410	9%