



Committee of the Parties

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

**Implementation report submitted
by Sweden on the conclusions adopted
by the Committee of the Parties
on 8 June 2022**

IC-CP/Inf(2024)6

Published on 20 June 2024



Ministry of Employment

Written information submitted by the Government of Sweden on the measures taken to implement the conclusions of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Sweden, under the baseline evaluation procedure

B. Encourages the Government of Sweden to take further measures to implement the recommendations addressed to its authorities, in particular by:

- 1. pursuing the efforts to enhance and formalise co-operation structures in relation to cases of all forms of violence against women among all relevant actors, in particular local authorities (law enforcement agencies, social services, unemployment agencies) and the public health sector as well as the specialist support services for women victims of violence;**

In Sweden, as outlined in the Government Baseline Report to GREVIO submitted on 4 September 2017, the subject matter of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereafter the Convention) is addressed by the Government in various policy areas, most comprehensively in its policy for gender equality with the overarching goal, anchored with the Parliament, of equal power for women and men to shape society and their own lives.

That men’s violence against women must end is the sixth sub-goal of the Swedish gender equality policy. The ten-year national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women as outlined in the Government Baseline Report to GREVIO, and covering the period 2017–2026, was developed with the Convention as a crucial reference point and it chiefly harmonises with the latter in terms of its scope and application and specific measures. The strategy has remained the guiding framework for subsequent governments and national work and coordination in this field.

Within the ten-year national strategy, national action plans are adopted for shorter time spans to implement the strategy with concrete actions and measures. Combined, the strategy and national action plans aim to enhance continuity, overview, coordination, and long-term planning while also incorporating continuous evaluation and lessons learned as well as allowing for further development and adaptation to emerging needs and priorities.

Since the Baseline Evaluation Report by GREVIO in 2019, the (former) Swedish Government presented an action plan for the period 2021–2023 consisting of 99 measures covering both prevention of violence and support and protection for victims (A2021/02397). One area of priority mentioned in the action plan is preventing and detecting violence among especially vulnerable groups.

The current Government entered office on 18 October 2022 and has made the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy its top priority within the gender equality policy.

The Prime Minister has addressed ending men’s violence against women in his two subsequent Statements of Government Policy in front of the Parliament in 2022 and 2023. In the most recent Statement, he asserted that “Men’s violence against women must be combated with the full force of society”.

The Government is furthermore committed to stepping up efforts to combat honour-based violence and oppression, and the Prime Minister has also addressed this in both Statements of Government Policy 2022 and 2023.

In the spirit of the ten-year national-strategy and to ensure the continuity of the work in this field, the Government continued the implementation of the 99-point action plan announced by the former Government.

The Government has furthermore initiated the drafting of a new action plan for the period 2024–2026. The process was launched through six dedicated round tables with civil society organisations, academia and public authorities for feedback and inputs during 2023.

On 3 August 2023, the Government decided to appoint an Inquiry on A Strengthened Long-term Governance of the Work against Gender-based Violence and Honour-based Violence and Oppression. The Inquiry submitted an interim report on 7 March 2024 and is to submit its final report in February of 2025 (A 2023:04, ToR 2023:117).

Inter alia, the Committee of Inquiry is tasked with: assessing whether a specific sub-goal to prevent and combat honour-based violence and oppression should be introduced as part of the gender equality policy; analysing and proposing a new, more inclusive wording of the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy that men’s violence against women must end, taking into account that men’s violence against women constitutes the majority of the gender-based violence, but also at least encompassing the areas of men’s violence against women in intimate partner relationships; women’s violence against men in intimate partner relationships, violence in same-sex relationships and other LGBTIQ-relationships, sexual violence and exploitation in prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes; developing a proposal for one or two long-term strategies to achieve the sixth sub-goal and a possible new sub-goal on honour-based violence and oppression using the Council of Europe’s Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence as well as Convention on action against trafficking in human beings as its point of reference. This is to contain proposal(s) for the wording of the goal to achieve the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy and a possible new sub-goal on gender-based violence and oppression; is to focus on physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and material violence as well as threats of violence; be based on knowledge and research; and particularly pay attention to the following areas: the norms and values of youth to prevent gender-based violence, how victims of violence are to more easily be able to leave destructive relationships, how the protection of victims of violence can be increased and

how the perpetrators' violent behaviour can be changed by ceasing their use of violence and reducing the risk of reoffending (ToR 2023:117). The interim report (SOU 2024:21), with proposals for one or several new sub-goals, was submitted for public consultation during spring 2024 and will thereafter be considered by the Government Offices.

In recent years, as outlined in further detail in the Report submitted by Sweden pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round), in October 2023 (GREVIO/Inf(2023)27), several budget allocations contributing to the implementation of the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy have been made permanent, thereby contributing to the efforts to enhance and formalise structures in relation to cases of all forms of violence against women among relevant actors.

As one of its first undertakings in office, the Government held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union January – June 2023.

The Swedish Presidency made the completion of the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention a priority which resulted in the deposition of the accession instrument with the Council of Europe on 26 June 2023. The Presidency also put significant efforts into and achieved great success on advancing the EU negotiations on a new directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence as well as a revised directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

In Sweden, all government agencies are responsible for implementing policies and measures within their area of responsibility. Key agencies, apart from the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (GEA), to implement and contribute to the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women are, among others, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the County Administrative Boards and The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

In order to develop the governance in the area of men's violence against women and as reported in Sweden's answer to the reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to state parties in January of 2022, the Government in 2020 had tasked the Swedish Agency

for Public Management (Statskontoret) to assess the Government's national strategy to end men's violence against women. The Agency for Public Management is the Government's organisation for analyses and evaluations of state and state-funded activities. In its assessment (2021), the Agency concluded that the authorities have succeeded in implementing many measures to prevent and combat men's violence against women. Furthermore, the Agency assessed that the national strategy and the government assignments given to the agencies in this field of work have contributed to the authorities being more active and cooperating to a greater extent. At the same time, however, the Agency for Public Management pointed out areas where work needed to be improved. Firstly, the Agency concluded that the knowledge chain needs to be enhanced. Such a knowledge chain includes identifying needs as well as producing, disseminating, and applying knowledge in the field. Up until the date of the assessment, many authorities were deemed to have produced and disseminated knowledge about men's violence against women. However, to ensure efficiency, the Government and the responsible authorities also need to focus on making the knowledge come into practical use at the local level. Secondly, the Agency underlined the concurrent lack of evaluated and tested methods in, especially, the field of prevention of men's violence against women. In order to ensure such a development, the Agency called for the development of preventive methods and higher collaboration between the responsible authorities, such as between the GEA, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and the Swedish Police. The Agency also stated that the Government should use the GEA more efficiently in the implementation of the strategy to assist with data and analysis for the Government to improve prioritising between measures and formulate government assignments that contribute to achieving the goals in the strategy. The Government has decided on several joint government assignments to improve collaboration between agencies and increase the ability to detect violence and provide support to victims of violence (see additional information further down in this report as well as in the Report submitted by Sweden pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round), in October 2023, (GREVIO/Inf(2023)27)).

As a measure introduced in the most recent 99-point action-plan (2021–2023), reporting and monitoring of the implementation of the national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women was subsequently further strengthened by an undertaking to submit a biannual Government Communication to the Parliament on the work with the strategy’s implementation. In accordance with ordinance 2017:937, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (GEA) has been tasked with every second year providing an in-depth follow-up of the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy containing an analysis of the development in the field based on a number of indicators and implemented measures. The GEA also further develops indicators (A2022/01635). The follow-up of the GEA of the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy informs the finalisation of the Government’s biannual Communication to Parliament. The first Government Communication to this effect was produced in June of 2022 (Govt. Communication 2021/22:267) and the next one is planned to be submitted during 2024. The GEA recently reported their follow-up of the sixth sub-goal on 22 April 2024.

Every year, the GEA supports the Government’s follow-up of the regional work against men’s violence against women carried out by the County Administrative Boards in accordance with ordinance 2021:995. A particular focus is placed on the monitoring of which results and effects that have been accomplished, on providing an analysis of the development of the work at the county level as well as regional and local needs for support in this field.

The governance and co-ordination of the work against men’s violence against women, other forms of domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression as well as prostitution and trafficking of human beings, has been strengthened at the national, regional and local level. The Government actively works to ensure clarity around the GEA’s coordinating role in this work for all contributing actors. The GEA convenes a national network of public agencies involved in the implementation of the national strategy. Additionally, the GEA coordinates a national council in which the Director-Generals of central public agencies for this work develop their work at the senior management level.

In 2022, the National Centre against Honour-based violence and oppression was established with the mission to support and contribute to a strategic, preventive, and knowledge-based work against honour-based violence and oppression on a national, regional, and local level. Several other public agencies offer guidance and support with information regarding areas covered by the national strategy, e.g., the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish National Agency for Education, Uppsala University (the National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence against Women, NCK) and Linköping University (Barnafrid – National centre for knowledge concerning violence against children).

A clear structure is essential to enable equitable work in this field across the country and to ensure that professionals use the national guidance and knowledge material produced in practice. The regional work carried out to end men's violence against women, other forms of domestic violence and honour-based violence and oppression is key to ensure that the relevant knowledge and support reaches professionals across regions, municipalities, and civil society organisations across the country.

The cooperation between the GEA and the County Administrative Boards has been further strengthened through a coordination structure which is under continuous development.

In 2024, as part of the Government's long-term efforts to strengthen the County Administrative Boards' support to municipalities and regions in their work with the sixth sub-goal of the gender equality policy, the Government commissioned the County Administrative Boards to distribute development funds for the purpose of enhancing the coordination between public agencies, municipalities, regions and civil society, including to the regional coordinators against prostitution and trafficking. The County Administrative Boards receive a total of 46 million SEK for this purpose in 2024 (Fi2023/00435, A2024/00486).

The role of civil society to prevent violence and support victims of violence is critical and its role in relaying voices is essential. To enhance the long-term conditions for this, four previous Government Grants to women's and girls' shelters and other NGOs in the field of crime victim support have been merged into a new ordinance and the financial contributions have been

restructured to cover two years. The new ordinance fully entered into force in 2024.

The Government has commissioned the Public Employment Service, the Social Insurance Agency, the Gender Equality Agency (GEA), the Migration Agency and the National Board of Social Affairs and Health to work for improved detection of violence 2022–2024. The five authorities must develop cooperation on

- routines and methods for detection of exposure to violence and violence, as well as referral to the right authority,
- enhanced support for relevant personnel with client contacts and
- support management and governance of the work for increased detection of violence must be able to be made sustainable over time and implemented in the authorities' regular activities.

The authorities must also report on the measures implemented to increase employees' and managers' knowledge of men's violence against women and a common basic understanding of questions about violence, its causes, scope, and consequences. (A2022/00842/JÄM). The final report is due no later than the 31st of March 2025. The need for assistance in finding employment has been addressed in the above-mentioned joint work. The Swedish Public Employment Service has developed methods and routines to make sure that victims of violence can get support and that the measures taken in finding employment are adjusted to their living situation. The GEA is responsible for the coordination and follow-up of the above-mentioned joint work to improve detection of violence.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned by the Government to examine the extent to which victims of violence are offered a contact person who assists them with coordinated support and help to manage contacts with public agencies, adapted to the varying needs and conditions of different persons. The National Board of Health and Welfare has also been commissioned to develop proposals for a coordinated support system, specifying the components to be included, which professional groups should be involved and how such a support system can be adapted for the needs of individuals. The Agency is to consider specific needs of persons subjected to honour-based violence and oppression. The purpose with a support system is to enable more people to leave and not return to a

violent relationship, further contributing to reduce the vulnerability to domestic violence and honour-based violence and oppression. The Commission is to be reported by 10 April 2027 (S2024/00720).

As detailed in the Government Baseline Report to GREVIO in 2017, p. 70, the National Board of Health and Welfare, with the support of other public agencies, is regularly performing death or fatality reviews under a special legal act (2007:606). The cases which concern adult victims of crimes are limited to cases of domestic violence and primarily concern violence against women by men they were close to. The purpose of the reviews is to identify shortcomings in society's safety net and to inform the Government in order to enhance decisions on measures aimed to prevent violence. As of 1 January 2019, the scope of these reviews has been expanded to include some forms of serious non-deadly violence as well as data on the alleged offender. A new provision enables inspections of the authorities concerned, for instance of the social services by the Health and Social Care Inspectorate, in case such inspections have not already been carried out. The National Board of Health and Welfare reports on this work every second year. In its report in January 2024, the Agency concludes that concerned public agencies could have prevented serious violence had they used different working methods. Previous reports have, *inter alia*, motivated measures to increase the detection of violence, such as the Commission mentioned above in this report. While the reviews have developed over time, the National Board of Health and Welfare points to remaining challenges in their implementation. The Government has assessed that the information obtained from the reviews could be enhanced if the reviews were to include interviews with individuals concerned in addition to review of existing documentation. Therefore, the Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to report on what type of information it would be able to obtain through interviews with parties who have come into contact with the victims of the concerned crimes. The report is to be submitted by 31 January 2025 (S2023/03257).

The Swedish Prosecution Agency and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) also currently have ongoing commissions linked to reviewing their contributions to the death and fatality reviews. (Ju2023/02737 and S2023/03257).

In April 2024, the Government convened a large number of public agencies, representatives of municipalities and regions, civil society organisations and academia to discuss how a significant strengthening of the work against men's violence against women and domestic violence can be achieved. The Government furthermore announced that it would convene a number of additional meetings during the coming 12 months to discuss measures against men's violence against women. Themes will be selected based on urgent areas in need of further development and the purpose is to achieve a common understanding of the current situation and to identify concrete short-term and long-term measures to be taken. The above-mentioned death and fatality reviews will serve to inform these meetings.

In April 2024, the Government also announced that there may be a need for closer monitoring of the public agencies' work to prevent and combat men's violence against women, other forms of domestic violence and honour-based violence and oppression. The Government will therefore review the need for strengthened governance and regular follow-up of the public agencies' work in these fields. For example, this concerns the Swedish Prosecution Authority, the Police Authority and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service.

Also announced by the previously mentioned 99-point action plan, the Government in June of 2022 decided on a national violence prevention program. It contains measures to strengthen both the early violence prevention work and measures directed towards individuals who have an increased risk of violence.

Since June 2023, Sweden has a new action plan for sexual and reproductive rights. The action plan will contribute to the strengthening and developing of the national work with sexual and reproductive health and rights. The action plan constitutes a joint platform for these efforts and will be in force for 10 years. The action plan is based on the national strategy presented in 2020 by the Swedish Public Health Agency and has six prioritised areas: To develop and further integrate SRHR in public health policy, to strengthen health promotion and preventative efforts, to increase the public knowledge about SRHR, to promote equal access to care, support, and treatment, increased coordination and cooperation, and lastly, to strengthen the production of knowledge as well as assessment and evaluation. The action plan contains actions on national, regional, and local level and includes a

broad variety of actors such as civil society, academia, national authorities, decision-makers, and relevant professions.

Since June of 2021, the GEA has further been commissioned by the Government to strengthen its work to combat the sexual exploitation of children, prostitution, and human trafficking. The assignments include measures to strengthen the Agency's preventive work and efforts to ensure that those who are exposed to sexual exploitation, prostitution and human trafficking have access to protection and support. This has included increased capacity building-support and further reinforcement of the regional coordinators against prostitution and human trafficking who as of 2023 were 16 in total. This work is being carried out within the framework of Sweden's National coordination against prostitution and human trafficking (NSPM), based in the GEA, which also leads the National Task Force in this field, consisting of a large number of relevant public authorities.

The Government has also appointed an Inquiry to investigate the possibility to incorporate an EXIT-programme for adults subjected to prostitution and victims of human trafficking for sexual purposes, and another programme for children subjected to sexual exploitation and human trafficking for sexual purposes (A 2022:04, ToR 2022:115). Both this Inquiry and the Inquiry on Protection, Support and Care for Victims of Abuses in the Production or Distribution of Pornography (A 2022:02, ToR 2022:100, ToR 2023:37) presented their reports in December 2023. The reports have undergone public consultation during spring 2024 and are currently under consideration by the Government Offices.

In January 2023, a Government Committee of Inquiry submitted a proposal for a ten-year National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence against Children, A childhood free from violence – A national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children (SOU 2022:70). Covering all forms of violence against children, the proposed strategy contains an overall goal and five long-term objectives as well as an organisation for implementation and an action plan of nearly 60 measures in this area. The proposal was undergoing public consultation until 7 August 2023 and the responses are now being reviewed within the Government Offices of Sweden. It can also be noted that on 1 July 2021, changes in the Health and Medical Services Act entered into force which, *inter alia*, introduced a new

chapter outlining the fundamental mission of primary care (HSL 13 a kap). In this context it can especially be noted that this chapter spells out that preventive measures as well as a coordinating role is part of the fundamental mission of primary care.

The cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) continued through agreements for 2021–2023. The focus turned towards fighting men’s violence against women. The Government has also entered into an agreement with SALAR concerning maternity care and women’s health 2021–2022 and new agreements for 2023 and 2024 respectively. Within the framework of these agreements, the regions must ensure a well-developed chain of care for people who have been subjected to sexual violence or genital mutilation. Furthermore, the regions must work to increase the knowledge of healthcare employees in order to improve their ability to detect sexual violence and genital mutilation. The Government has also entered into agreements with SALAR concerning efforts in the field of mental health and suicide prevention 2021–2022, 2023, and 2024, a field important to preventing violence. (See further information in the Report submitted by Sweden pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round), in October 2023, (GREVIO/Inf(2023)27). Additionally, the Government has entered an agreement with SALAR 2023–2025 regarding open day care in order to increase labour market participation of foreign-born women.

As stated in Sweden’s Reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to state parties in January 2022 (1.1), the Government in 2019 commissioned the Sámi Parliament to map out and analyse Sámi society from a gender equality perspective (KU2019/00469/CSM, KU2019/01249/CSM). In its report presented in 2021 (Dnr. 1.3.8-2019-821, Ku2021/01191), the Sámi Parliament suggested new measures to increase gender equality in the Sámi community, preventive work, and increased research on gender equality and to combat and prevent violence against Sámi women and girls. One of the proposed measures in the study was to establish a support structure for Sami women and girls who are victims of violence and to identify gaps in the support and protection provided by authorities and women’s shelters. During 2021–2024 the Government has commissioned the Sámi Parliament to promote gender equality in the Sámi society and to prevent and combat men’s violence

against Sámi women and girls (Ku2020/00767 Ku2021/01191 Ku2021/02210). As part of this commission from the Government, the Sámi Parliament commissioned a study on “Violence against Sámi women” which was finalised in early 2024 and submitted to the Swedish Government. The report is currently under consideration by the Government Offices.

Furthermore, the GEA as of 2023 has a Government Commission to map the knowledge among municipalities, regions, and authorities regarding violence against elderly persons, aged 65 and above, and to identify knowledge gaps. The agency is also to assess efforts to prevent and detect violence within this target group, as well as the interventions provided to those who have been subjected to violence. The assignment includes proposing measures at the national, regional, or local level as needed, to enhance the ability to detect violence, and provide support and protection for those affected (A2022/01653 and A2023/00985).

In 2020, the Government commissioned the National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) to study what measures can be taken to prevent violence in intimate partner relationships amongst young persons. (Ju 2020/03036). Based on the recommendations of this study, the Government in 2023, commissioned the GEA to map how different public authorities raise awareness and disseminate knowledge on violence amongst young people in intimate partner relationships, develop guidance material for professional groups as well as further recommend preventive measures (A2023/01276).

In 2023, the Government commissioned the GEA in cooperation with the National Board of Health and Welfare, the National Centre for Knowledge on Men’s Violence Against Women and the Public Health Agency of Sweden to map violence and the risk of violence in close relationships against LGBTIQ-persons. The commission includes to propose measures targeting relevant professionals (A2023/01065).

Information on how policies on violence against women and domestic violence put women’s rights and their empowerment at the centre and on measure taken to enhance the intersectionality of such policies are also further developed in the Report submitted by Sweden pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and

combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round), in October 2023, (GREVIO/Inf(2023)27).

In addition to what is stated above regarding comprehensive and co-ordinated policies and related legislative changes, Sweden has, since the 2017 Government Baseline report to GREVIO, implemented a number of legislative amendments in the area of criminal law, with the aim of strengthening the protection of violence and oppression committed in the name of so-called “honour”, men’s violence against women, violence against children, and sexual offences. Several of these are mentioned in the follow-up reporting and comments from 2019 and 2022, including the major reform of the sexual offences legislation that was made in 2018 and which is based on consent (Govt. Bill 2017/18:177). Additional legislative changes are updated in the Report submitted by Sweden pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round), in October 2023, (GREVIO/Inf(2023)27).

2. strengthening the systematic and comparable collection of data, disaggregated by sex, age and the relation of the victim to the perpetrator at the level of the judiciary, so that all cases of violence against women can be tracked at all stages of the law-enforcement and judicial proceedings with a view to using such data to analyse attrition rates, clarify underlying causes of attrition, follow trends and create evidence-based policies and/or enhance legislation;

As described in Sweden’s reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to state parties in January 2022, new data categories on several crimes related to men’s violence against women were introduced in the official crime statistics in 2019. The new categories specify the age and sex of the victim (under 18 years old/18 or older, man/woman) and for victims 18 or older, the relationship between victim and perpetrator (intimate partner, family member, other perpetrator known to the victim or perpetrator unknown to the victim). The crimes covered by the new data categories include:

- attempted murder or manslaughter

- assault
- unlawful deprivation of liberty
- unlawful coercion
- gross violation of integrity
- gross violation of a woman's integrity
- unlawful harassment
- unlawful threat
- unlawful violation of privacy
- non-sexual molestation
- rape including gross rape
- negligent rape
- sexual assault
- negligent sexual assault
- violation of restraining order without electronic monitoring.

Official crime statistics according to the above-mentioned categories is available for reported and processed offences as well as persons suspected of offences. The statistics on conviction decisions and sentencing is not available in the same way, however, as it is structured according to the section of the law, not according to the data categories mentioned above. Therefore, data on convictions and sanctions is not available disaggregated by the sex of the victim (except for the crime gross violation of a woman's integrity). However, new initiatives have been taken regarding this issue, please see information on the digitization of the judiciary below.

As stated in Sweden's reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to state parties in January 2022, acting on government instructions, the authorities in the judicial chain are continuously working to develop a better exchange of information in the criminal justice process. In 2020, the Government enacted a regulation (2019:1283) on the digitalisation of the judiciary. The regulation contains provisions on the coordination of work on digital information exchanges and other measures relating to digitization in criminal proceedings. A council consisting of the heads of eleven authorities has been established, called the Council for the Digitization of the Judiciary. The Council serves as a decision-making forum where the authorities agree on relevant issues. Each authority then implements its part of the joint agreements that have been reached.

The project aims, among other things, to expand the data exchange on reported offences with so-called legal information and will provide the possibility to increase in the quality of statistics on reported abuse of women in that regard.

In 2021, the Council for the Digitization of the Judiciary developed a strategic plan for 2023–2027 that outlines the vision and strategic goals for digitization. One of the goals is to have the right digital prerequisites for follow-up and analysis within the justice system.

In October 2022, a new operational support was implemented in the courts, which enables fully digital criminal case decisions (DiBa). The system means increased traceability through the legal chain, which in turn leads to both better abilities to keep records up-to-date and correct, and time and efficiency gains. It is also a vital prerequisite for the authorities' continued joint digitisation work, including tracking a crime from reporting to conviction.

In 2023, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) initiated a feasibility study regarding the prerequisites for developing new statistics that will enable following a case from prosecution further in the legal chain (at present, reported crime, including cases of violence against women and domestic violence, can be tracked from reporting to prosecution). In this work, international conventions, such as the Istanbul Convention, are considered.

3. revamping its system of protection orders and equipping the competent authority with the power to specifically expel a perpetrator of domestic violence from the residence that he shares with the victim in situations of immediate danger, and as an emergency safety measure and for this expulsion to remain in force for an appropriate length of time to allow the victim to feel safe and to take other measures to ensure safety;

As mentioned before, the assessment underlying the Swedish ratification of the Istanbul Convention, is that Sweden meets the obligations under Articles 52 and 53 of the Convention. The Swedish judicial system has to be viewed as a whole. The provisions on deprivation of liberty in the form of remand,

detention and arrest supplement the provisions on non-contact orders in such a way that the Swedish legislation effectively enables the removal of a suspected offender from a shared dwelling. The system is described more in detail in the Comments submitted by Sweden on GREVIO's final Baseline Report published on 21 January 2019.

In June 2019, the Government appointed an Inquiry tasked with, *inter alia*, analysing and, where necessary, proposing the additional amendments in the area of non-contact orders that were appropriate in view of the evaluation of Sweden conducted by GREVIO with respect to Articles 52 and 53 of the Istanbul Convention.

The Inquiry submitted its report in October 2020, and in June 2021 the Government proposed amendments in the area of non-contact orders, mainly based on the Inquiry's results. The Government shared the Inquiry's assessment that the existing legislation, viewed as a whole, is sufficient when it comes to the opportunities to expel a suspect offender from a joint residence since the current provision on deprivation of liberty in form of remand, detention and arrest supplement the provisions on non-contact orders in such a way that the legislation effectively enables the removal of a suspect offender from a joint residence. In relevance to the state party recommendations (A.13), the Government proposed that an extended non-contact order may, regardless of whether the intended subject of the order has breached a previous non-contact order, be combined with an electronic monitoring provision. At that time specially extended non-contact order and a non-contact order related to a joint residence could only be issued if the grounds for such an order significantly outweighed the intrusion or detriment for the intended subject of the order. The Government proposed that the intensifier "significantly" should be discarded, so that the assessment should concern whether the grounds for such an order outweigh the intrusion or detriment for the intended subject of the order. Moreover, the Government proposed that the scale of penalties for breaches of non-contact orders should be amended from a fine or imprisonment for at most one year to imprisonment for (at least 14 days and) at most one year and that the rule of freedom from responsibility should be replaced with a provision to the effect that in minor cases the penalty is a fine. The proposed legislation entered into force on January 1, 2022.

In order to ensure that the legal framework governing non-contact orders as far as possible meets the interest of providing protection, primarily to women and children who are exposed to domestic violence, the Government, in July 2022, appointed a new Inquiry to review the legal framework (primarily the Non-Contact Order Act) and evaluate whether the possibilities for issuing non-contact orders should be extended. The review was aimed to include an analysis of the need for legislation that specifically enables the removal of the suspected offender from a joint residence. If necessary, the Inquiry was to suggest legislative amendments. The Inquiry was also tasked with examining the scale of penalties for breaches of non-contact orders. Furthermore, the Inquiry was tasked with reviewing whether electronic monitoring could be used more often as well as the possibilities of substantially expanding the geographical area of non-contact orders in the case of particularly serious threats (A Review of the Non-Contact Order Legislation, ToR 2022:114 and ToR 2023:36).

The report of the Inquiry was submitted to the Ministry of Justice on 12 February 2024, A more effective non-contact orders legislation – increased protection for exposed persons (SOU2024:13).

The Inquiry has carried out a major review of the legislation regarding non-contact orders (primarily the Non-Contact Orders Act) and its application. The proposals put forward by the Inquiry aim to make it possible to issue non-contact orders in more cases, to ensure that non-contact orders constitute real protection, and that the crime prevention function is to be strengthened. The aim is also to increase the opportunities for a more uniform application across the country.

Against this background, the Inquiry proposed, among other things, the following.

- The non-contact legislation should be clarified so that non-contact orders can be used to a greater extent as a protection against "undue surveillance", for example when there is a risk that a former close relative will monitor the protected person through GPS equipment or apps.
- Further circumstances should be taken into account in the risk assessment, in order to increase the chances of issuing a non-contact order even if the prohibited person has not previously committed a

crime (stalking, improper surveillance or other serious harassment, influencing in order to prevent the disclosure of information during legal proceedings and circumstances attributable to the prohibited person).

- It should be possible to issue specially extended non-contact orders as a first-line measure (there is already a presumption that such non-contact orders should be combined with electronic surveillance).
- It should be possible, to a greater extent than at present, to issue non-contact orders covering large geographical areas, in order to constitute real protection and enable the police to bring the protected person to safety.
- A presumption of a non-contact order following a conviction should be introduced for certain offences that are such that there are typically grounds for a non-contact order (crimes against the life, health, freedom, or peace against a person whom the perpetrator has or previously has been in a close relationship with), in view of the high recidivism rate in intimate partner violence.
- Prosecutors should be informed when a person is released from a prison sentence for certain crimes, in order to increase the possibility for the authorities to initiate the issue of a non-contact order.
- The conditions for combining a non-contact order with other protective measures should be improved, for example by ensuring that the Social Welfare Board is always notified when a non-contact order is imposed. The Police Authority should also be obligated to carry out an individual protection assessment and to appoint a contact person for both the protected person and the person prohibited by the non-contact order.
- The scope of the penal provision on the prevention of electronic surveillance should be extended to include measures that are likely to impede surveillance.
- It should be possible to use a search warrant to serve notice of a non-contact order, in order to improve the chances of a non-contact order to have effect as quickly as possible.
- Criminal liability for obstruction of electronic surveillance should be extended to measures that are likely to impede surveillance.
- The punishment for violating a non-contact order should be increased in certain respects.

With regard to non-contact orders concerning a joint residence, the Inquiry has on the basis of an analysis of the issue, made the assessment that the

regulation of non-contact orders regarding a joint residence does not need to be amended. Furthermore, according to the Inquiry, there is no need for additional special regulations for decision-making in matters relating to a joint residence (in addition to the special regulation that already exists).

The Inquiry considered that, in view of the restriction of rights that a non-contact order regarding a joint residence entail, it would be too far-reaching to introduce the possibility of issuing such a prohibition if there is no risk of a crime against the protected person's life, health, freedom or peace. In situations where there is a clear and concrete risk for the protected person, the Inquiry points out that it reasonably should be considered as a risk of a crime against the protected person's life, health, freedom, or peace. In addition, the Inquiry's proposal regarding an extension of the circumstances to be considered in the risk assessment, is considered to increase the conditions for issuing a non-contact order regarding a joint residence.

According to the Inquiry's report, there are not sufficient grounds for the introduction of a special regulation that enables the removal of a suspected perpetrator from a joint residence in the event of immediate danger (interim decision). The Inquiry agrees with the previous assessments that the Swedish system, in relation to Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention, must be seen as a whole, in which the provisions on remand, detention and arrest, constitutes a complement to the Non-Contact Orders Act. According to the report, the Swedish system therefore offers sufficient opportunities to remove a suspected perpetrator from a joint residence. Furthermore, according to the Inquiry, it is not likely that interim non-contact orders would shorten the time from application to such a decision to any appreciable extent. The Inquiry also points out that the proposal regarding search warrants will lead to positive effects in this regard.

The report of the Inquiry has been referred for public consultation until 26 May 2024. After the referral period, the preparation of the proposals within the Government Offices will begin.

The Government has also appointed another Inquiry to consider changes within the framework of the penalty system, for example with regard to parole, which provide for increased or new possibilities to decide where a convicted person should or may not stay. Among other things, this is considered to be an effective means of counteracting continued criminal

offences and providing increased protection for those who are subjected to violence in a domestic context or honour-based violence and oppression. The Inquiry is also tasked with proposing how a violation of a residence ban should be regulated. In order to ensure that a convicted person can be subject to effective control and recidivism prevention measures for a sufficiently long time, the investigator shall also review whether changes are needed regarding the probation period after parole. The investigator shall also consider and, regardless of the position taken on the substance, propose amendments in order to restrict the right to and tighten the conditions for leave and other temporary stay outside of prison. The report is to be submitted to the Ministry of Justice no later than 1 July 2024 (The Inquiry on Enhanced Social Protection and a Reduced Risk of Recidivism, ToR 2022:95 and ToR 2023:74).

The Swedish Prosecution Authority has published an updated version of the legal guidance on the procedures relating to restraining orders and a legal guidance including procedures in regard of violation of a restraining order and obstruction of the electronic monitoring is planned to be launched in 2024.

In March 2024, the Government submitted a bill to Parliament proposing to expand the possibilities for property owners to evict tenants who commit crimes in rental properties, for example by subjecting an intimate partner to violence (Govt. Bill 2023/24:112). The bill furthermore proposed to strengthen the tenancy rights of women who are victims of violence. Through this bill, the Government is advancing proposals that strengthen the possibility for tenants who are victims of violence to keep or to take over the contract to their accommodation and thereby their ability to remain in their residence. The bill was approved by parliament and the new law will enter into force on 1 July 2024.

The Government would also like to add that it aims to appoint an inquiry with the purpose of reviewing the rules regarding matrimonial property division during 2024. The Inquiry will have a general and procedural perspective. At times the procedures for matrimonial property division can be lengthy, which risk causing problems, especially for a more economically vulnerable party to a division. It is important that economic reasons do not prevent anyone from leaving a relationship, for example a violent relationship. This issue has been raised by the Swedish Parliament, which in

2023 decided on an announcement requesting the Government to take measures to ensure a better functioning, effective and legally secure process for property division.

4. swiftly implementing the proposals made by the Committee of Inquiry on a strengthened “child rights perspective” in sheltered accommodation to ensure the necessary support and counselling for children who accompany their mothers to domestic violence shelters, including for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as their continued access to education.

In line with GREVIO’s 2019 recommendation (Baseline Evaluation Report by GREVIO, para 149, p. 40), a new legal framework on shelters for victims of violence and abuse entered into force on 1 April 2024. A draft proposal of the preceding Government bill had been subjected to public consultation in 2022. The law now includes several measures aiming to improve the situation of children accompanying an adult guardian in shelters. Previously, the needs for support and care of these children were usually not assessed and catered for by the public social services, as sheltered accommodation in these cases was seen primarily as an intervention for the guardian who, in turn, assumed full responsibility for the child. Furthermore, many children in this situation have two guardians, and interventions for the child by the authorities often require the consent of both. Sheltered accommodation is now regulated as a specific measure of the social services. Furthermore, operating a shelter requires a license from the Health and Social Care Inspectorate. The social services must assess, and attend to, the needs of children accompanying an adult guardian in shelters. As a precondition for access to specialized health services, including child and adolescent psychiatry, the children are to be offered a health check and their right to education has been further legally clarified. The Social Welfare Committee must appoint a specific social worker to deal with matters concerning the child. Moreover, the Committee has the powers to restrict contact of the child with a violent guardian and to keep the location of the child secret for such guardian during the stay in the shelter. The framework allows for more detailed regulations of staff competence and specialisation of shelters and is therefore likely to imply better adaption to the needs of different target groups in general such as victims with disabilities.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned by the Government to review the existing indicators of quality for sheltered accommodation as well as to monitor the services of sheltered accommodations at the national level with a particular focus on the needs of children, of victims of violence with disabilities, as well as victims of violence in honour-based contexts. The National Board of Health and Welfare is to collect knowledge and experience from the University of Linköping (Barnafrid – National centre for knowledge concerning violence against children). The Commission is to be reported to the Government by 1 December 2026 (S2023/03257).

The University of Linköping (Barnafrid – National centre for knowledge concerning violence against children) is commissioned by the Government to support professionals of the social services, and shelters for victims of violence and abuse, in applying a child rights perspective in their work with children in such shelters with a guardian (A2023/01717). The County Administrative Boards are likewise commissioned to provide similar support, including capacity building of the professionals concerned within their respective regions. The Commission is to be reported to the Government by 31 April 2028 (Fi2023/02050).

The National Agency for Public Procurement has been commissioned by the Government to develop guidance material, capacity building and advisory services to municipalities and non-governmental organisations with the aim to facilitate the application of public procurement rules as municipalities procure services for sheltered accommodation from these actors. The Commission is to be reported by 31 March 2025 (Fi2023/03284).

D. Invites the Government of Sweden to continue taking measures to implement the Convention, particularly on the basis of the conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report.

In addition to what has been reported above, the Swedish Government would in regard to further measures taken to implement the Convention like to refer to the Report submitted by Sweden pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and

combating violence against women and domestic violence (1st thematic evaluation round), in October 2023, GREVIO/Inf(2023)27 (Swedish Government reference no. A2023/01455). It would also like to refer to additional information provided during the ongoing monitoring procedures of the same thematic evaluation involving GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties.