

Speech Iris Luarasi, President of GREVIO
Exchange of views with the Gender Equality Commission, 16
November 2022

Dear members of the Gender Equality Commission, dear participants, dear Chairperson,

I am pleased to be exchanging with you today, following the recent exchange the other way round – with your Chairperson presenting on developments to GREVIO at our latest meeting in October. This continuous dialogue between our respective bodies is precious in order for us to connect the standard-setting work with that of the monitoring. I look forward to keeping it up.

As you may know, we welcomed four new members at our recent meeting, enriching our set of skills and professional backgrounds. We also adopted a record number of final reports in one meeting: 6! This week alone we are publishing four reports, and next week two. In total, this brings us to 9 this year. The new reports are on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Germany, Georgia, Norway and Switzerland. With the publication of these reports, we will have concluded 29 baseline evaluation procedures, out of 37. Three visits have been recently carried out, to Croatia, Luxembourg and North Macedonia. In addition, 4 new evaluations are under way, with visits planned to Ireland, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Greece in January/February. We will also be initiating the baseline evaluation procedure in respect of the UK and Ukraine, the most recent state parties, which both ratified in July this year.

This, dear participants, means that the end of the comprehensive baseline evaluation procedure is approaching, and we have been busy preparing the follow-up procedure. I am therefore pleased to announce to you today that GREVIO has adopted its next questionnaire and will be launching its next evaluation procedure very soon.

Acting under Article 68, paragraph 3 and its Rules of Procedure, GREVIO selected the specific provisions on which the evaluation procedure shall be based, making it more specific and focussed as compared to the baseline evaluation which assessed the implementation of the full spectrum of provisions of the convention by each state party. This first thematic evaluation procedure will therefore be devoted to the theme of “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice”. Covering 19 articles of the convention, this round will address select provisions in the area of prevention, protection and prosecution, and more.

To address the overarching theme, the present questionnaire aims, in its first section, to identify developments in key areas such as comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection that have ensued following the completion of the baseline evaluation procedure. In its second section, it sets to obtain more in-depth information on the implementation of selected provisions in the area of prevention, protection and prosecution, in respect of which baseline evaluation procedures and the Conclusions on the Recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention have revealed significant challenges and the need for further sustained implementation. In its third section, it brings its attention to emerging trends in the area of violence against women and domestic violence, including their digital manifestations, but also any trends in domestic case law and on innovation in preventive strategies. Its fourth and last section requests annual statistics for two complete calendar years prior to receiving this questionnaire on specific administrative and judicial data.

GREVIO will be launching its 1st thematic evaluation procedure in the same order of state parties that has been applied for the baseline evaluation procedure. The first four state parties, Albania, Austria, Denmark and Monaco, will shortly be receiving the advance notices. It is planned for the questionnaire to be sent out early next year with a deadline of 5 months to respond.

One aspect of the convention addressed in the new questionnaire in quite some detail is that of prevention. We chose the theme of “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” to look at those provisions of the convention that aim to ensure women and girls can benefit from systems that have their interest at heart: as victims of violence but also as women and girls who have the right to live

free from violence. Prevention in all its forms, primary, secondary and tertiary, is therefore key. Hence our interest in looking at new developments to incorporate prevention as a core element of a co-ordinated approach to policies on violence against women and domestic violence. And hence our interest in covering Article 12 more specifically, which is the general obligation to ensure prevention of violence against women by reaching out to the hearts and minds of people and reduce gender stereotypes and bias that so often contribute to violence. In this, the questionnaire specifically addresses the aspect of encouraging all members of society, including men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence against women, and promoting the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of life, notably their participation in politics at all levels and in the labour market.

I am aware that the role of men and boys in preventing and combating violence against women is also on your agenda, and that it forms part of a wider discussion on the role of men and boys in gender equality policies. GREVIO was pleased to be able to contribute by commenting on the draft guidelines on this topic. I am grateful to be able to be with you today also for the discussion on this later on.

From GREVIO's monitoring work I can say that action and measures to incentivise men and boys to form part of the preventive effort and to engage in policy making and implementation to prevent, protect and prosecute cases of violence against women, are few. There is thus a real need to strategise around how to achieve better engagement, across different segments of society and across all generations. The education sector definitely has a role to play in this, which is why the Istanbul Convention makes it a specific requirement to tap into its potential. The same goes for training of professionals, many of which are men, especially among law enforcement.

But this is part of a larger issue which GREVIO has identified, and that is the overall lack of strategic planning and funding for primary prevention activities. In my keynote speech at the Dublin Ministerial Conference in September on integrated prevention measures to end domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, I shared the various shortcomings in the area of prevention as identified by GREVIO and pointed to the persistent need for more systematic and coordinated action to prevent violence against women. This includes awareness-raising among the general population, training of professionals and better and more work with perpetrators of gender-based violence. I was therefore enheartened to see this topic being given attention at ministerial level, and that a large number of member states of the Council of Europe united behind the "Dublin Declaration" on prevention. It shows their clear commitment to more and better prevention of the different forms of violence which women and girls in Europe are still experiencing every day. It is inspired by the Istanbul Convention, and in particular its chapter on prevention, and contains the pledge for specific action in relation to nearly every article of this chapter. It is an important basis on which to step up preventive action and will hopefully advance implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

GREVIO will certainly refer to this Declaration wherever possible and I am sure it will be of use to your work as well, notably in advancing the discussions on the role of men and boys in the prevention of violence against women – as professionals, as policy makers, as opinion shapers, bystanders, family members and of course as (potential) perpetrators.

Dear members, dear Chairperson,

these are just some updates on GREVIO's work and some reflections I had wanted to share with you. Each year GREVIO's work has been further enriched with progress and changes, and next year will be no different. Several GREVIO members, including myself, will be ending their second mandate in the course of next year and will, therefore, be leaving GREVIO with 10 seats needing to be filled in the next election. It is therefore a year of transition and I am confident that despite the transition continuity will be ensured to keep up the level of achievement.