



Projects on combating violence against women – the Council of Europe's approach

” Achieving gender equality

” Ending violence against women and domestic violence



BACKGROUND

— The Council of Europe provides focused, flexible and responsive support to beneficiary countries in the area of preventing and combating violence against women, based on the Council of Europe's standards in this area, in particular the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (**Istanbul Convention**).

— Grounded in the principles of the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe's projects promote a comprehensive, rights-based approach to end violence against women in accordance with the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention: prevention of violence, protection of the victims, prosecution of the perpetrators and comprehensive policies. The projects are built on the idea that violence against women is not an individual phenomenon, but is one of the most serious and prevalent human rights violations, a form of discrimination against women and an obstacle to achieving gender equality.

PROJECT DESIGN

— In line with the Organisation's programme and budget, the objective of the Council of Europe's work on gender equality and combating violence against women is that member states take appropriate measures to change their legislation, policies and practices to bridge the gap between formal and substantive equality.

In order to fill that gap, the project team applies a theory-of-change approach to planning, implementing and monitoring the activities carried out within the project by:

- ▶ Identifying the concrete needs and challenges of the beneficiary country in co-operation with national authorities, civil society and, when relevant, academia.
- ▶ Establishing budgetary and human resources requirements for implementation.
- ▶ Defining measurable and sustainable goals/outcomes.
- ▶ Monitoring progress to ensure ownership throughout the project cycle and sustainability of results.

— For states parties to the Istanbul Convention the design of the project takes into account monitoring findings and recommendations (by GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties). Relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights are also considered, as are information and research provided by other international, European and national organisations, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Institute for Gender Equality as well as international, regional and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

PROJECT STRUCTURE

THEMES

The projects focus on the following **thematic areas**:

- ▶ Promotion of the Istanbul Convention standards and the path towards ratification.
- ▶ Legal, regulatory and policy frameworks.
- ▶ Institutional and operational capacities, including practices and multi-agency co-ordination.

MODULES

— The practical implementation of the projects is based on several **modules**. Depending on the specific situation of the country, different modules can be used.

— **DIAGNOSTIC MODULE:** This “start-up” module will apply to most projects, regardless of whether the countries have ratified the Istanbul Convention. The module delivers detailed needs assessment reports concerning the legal, regulatory, and institutional framework for preventing and combating violence against women. As the number of GREVIO reports increases, they increasingly become the basis for such needs assessment reports.

Examples of diagnostic module activities:

- ▶ Preparing a review of legislation and the regulatory framework with regard to different forms of violence against women in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.
- ▶ Preparing an assessment report and providing peer-to-peer experience and good practice examples on the institutional response to combating violence against women.

— **ISTANBUL CONVENTION PROMOTION MODULE:** This module targets in particular beneficiary countries that are not yet parties to the Istanbul Convention or those that have signed but not yet ratified and that can be supported in the path to ratification. It aims at raising awareness of the convention standards on gender equality and violence against women among key stakeholders, including government officials, members of Parliament (MPs), NGOs, the private sector and the media. The module strengthens competences and know-how, dispels misconceptions and enhances national commitment to support signature and/or ratification of the convention.

Examples of promotion module activities:

- ▶ Organising peer-to-peer meetings and roundtables for relevant authorities, MPs, professionals and journalists, on gender stereotypes and the measures needed to implement international and national standards on gender equality and violence against women.
- ▶ Developing a concept and a plan for an awareness-raising strategy for early prevention, engaging all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the media, educational institutions, civil society organisations, professional groups and NGOs, in preventing and combating violence against women.

— **NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND CO-ORDINATION MODULE:** This module provides specialist advice on anti-violence strategies, co-ordination among relevant agencies, and policy issues in line with the Istanbul Convention. An important component of this module is to ensure that critical knowledge is transferred to national officials, parliamentarians, NGOs, the private sector and the media, with a view to developing their capacity to devise efficient policies and frameworks for preventing and combating violence against women.

Examples of national strategies and co-ordination module activities:

- ▶ Stakeholder meetings and roundtables for relevant authorities and professionals, including law enforcement, legal professionals and social and health workers in order to foster multi-agency co-operation.
- ▶ Technical advice in establishing co-operation protocols for joint action among agencies.
- ▶ Support defining broad public awareness-raising campaigns, reporting guidelines for journalists, etc. in co-operation with specialist NGOs and other relevant stakeholders.

— **LEGISLATION AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK MODULE:** This module illustrates one of the Council of Europe’s comparative advantages. Advice and assistance are provided in reviewing laws and regulations and preparing legal analysis on violence against women and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The module also facilitates peer-to-peer exchange with other member states.

Examples of legislation and regulatory framework module activities:

- ▶ Analysis of national criminal legislation and court practice in order to identify gaps in the compliance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention, in particular, the need to criminalise the different forms of violence against women.
- ▶ Mapping of specialist services available for victims of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and in line with its relevant standards.

— **STRUCTURES AND TOOLS MODULE:** This module is typically delivered after a country’s laws and institutions have been established. Detailed legal and operational advice and assistance will be provided in relation to setting up and/or developing the relevant institutions, such as co-ordinating bodies, and staff training, including in the area of gender stereotypes.

Examples of structures and tools module activities:

- ▶ Developing guidelines/codes of conducts, protocols for different professional groups, including law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and other legal professionals, on investigating and dealing with cases of domestic violence, sexual violence and rape or other forms of violence, and on multi-agency co-operation (in particular to facilitate women’s access to justice).
- ▶ Model training programmes on violence against women for legal professionals in close co-operation with police and justice academies and national training institutes.
- ▶ Preparing handbooks and learning resources and organising training of trainers on violence against women for various professionals, including law enforcement, legal professionals, health professionals and social services.

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