

The Permanent Representation of Belgium to the United Nations in Geneva
and the Council of Europe have the honour to invite you to the side event

The Istanbul Convention in practice
Holistic care for victims of sexual violence

TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2019 FROM 13.30 TO 14.45

Room XXIV, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Many initiatives have been taken to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls following the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, also at a regional level. Since the 1990s, the Council of Europe has undertaken a series of initiatives to promote the protection of women against violence, which culminated, in 2011, in the adoption of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. This convention is open for accession by non-member States of the Council of Europe. By accepting the Istanbul Convention, governments are obliged to change laws, introduce practical measures and allocate resources to effectively prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence.

Five years after entering into force in August 2014, 34 states have ratified the Istanbul Convention and taken concrete actions. They have amended laws, strengthened the criminal justice system, established or strengthened multi-agency collaboration, and adopted National Action Plans. Among these efforts we can mention the setting up of appropriate, easily accessible rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres for victims (Istanbul Convention, Article 25).

This side-event will allow experts, governments and civil society organisations to share experiences, good practices and challenges in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention as a framework for action at national level in providing support to victims of sexual violence. Particular focus will be placed on sexual violence referral centres and Belgium's recent experience. Ukrainian efforts towards holistic care for victims of sexual violence will also be presented.



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
**Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation**



” Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of violence against women is a matter of concern to all states and should be addressed.”

Beijing Platform for Action

PROGRAMME

Moderator

- ▶ **Geert Muylle,**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the UN in Geneva

Panellists

- ▶ **Marceline Naudi,**
President of GREVIO, independent group of experts monitoring the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
- ▶ **Marijke Weewauters,**
Head of the federal unit on gender-based violence, Institute for the equality of women and men, Belgium
- ▶ **Ines Keygnaert,**
Assistant Professor in Sexual and Reproductive Health, International Centre for Reproductive Health, Ghent University, Belgium
- ▶ **Kateryna Levchenko,**
Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy, Ukraine

Sandwiches and refreshments will be available prior to the event