

Committee of the Parties

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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation to Denmark on building trust by delivering support, protection and justice on the basis of the Istanbul Convention

IC-CP(2025)4

Adopted on 6 June 2025

The Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”), acting under the terms of Article 68, paragraph 12 of the Convention;

Having regard to the purposes of the Convention to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence; to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women; to design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence; to promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; and to provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 66, paragraph 1 of the Convention concerning the monitoring role of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “GREVIO”);

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by Denmark on 23 April 2014;

Having regard to the baseline evaluation report adopted by GREVIO concerning the implementation of the Convention by Denmark, the Committee of the Parties’ recommendations adopted on 30 January 2018 and the Committee’s conclusions on the implementation of those recommendations, adopted on 7 December 2021;

Having examined the first thematic evaluation report “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” concerning the implementation of the Convention by Denmark adopted by GREVIO at its 34th meeting (15-18 October 2024), as well as the comments of the Government received on 13 December 2024;

Welcoming the measures taken and progress achieved by the Danish authorities in implementing the Convention and noting in particular:

- the improved alignment of the national legislation with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention by criminalising stalking and psychological violence, allowing for the subsequent withdrawal of the relevant reservation to the convention in early 2025, as well as by adopting a consent-based definition of sexual violence in the criminal code thereby strengthening victims' trust in the system, encouraging more victims to come forward and preventing the impunity of perpetrators;
- the substantial increase in funding allocated to the implementation of domestic violence policies;
- the establishment of a flagging-up system allowing for data on general offences to be marked when committed in an intimate partner context, facilitating the identification of offences including those related to physical and psychological violence, stalking and rape as instances of domestic violence throughout the criminal justice chain;
- plans to develop guidance material on sexuality education that will touch upon subjects such as gender norms, consent, boundaries and prevention which will also guide teachers on how to deal with reactions from parents to mandatory sexuality education in schools;

- introduction of a screening system by the Danish Health Authority and the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration to prevent and detect domestic violence during pregnancy and the child's first two years of life;
- the establishment of specialised and multidisciplinary police teams to handle cases of violence against women based on a gender-sensitive and trauma-informed approach;
- the amendment to the Administration of Justice Act to allow the video recording of the initial police interview with victims of sexual violence and to ensure its admissibility in criminal proceedings with a view to mitigating the risk of re-victimisation and re-traumatisation in the courtroom;
- efforts to address emerging forms of violence against women by successfully prosecuting a significant number of perpetrators involved in the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

A. Recommends in light of the considerations indicated in the preamble above that the Government of Denmark take the following measures identified in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report¹ for immediate action to:

1. embed in any definitions of the forms of violence against women covered in the Istanbul Convention in use in Denmark an adequate understanding of violence against women as a human rights violation and a form of discrimination against women, as well as recognition of their gender-based nature (Article 3);
2. ensure that the gendered nature of all forms of violence against women, including those affecting women exposed to intersectional discrimination, including women from ethnic minorities, migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, women with irregular migration status and LGBTI women, receives due policy attention and develop a long-term national strategy in line with the Istanbul Convention addressing all forms of violence against women and covering all policy sectors and entities to be regularly evaluated based on predefined indicators (Article 7);
3. pursue efforts to implement gender-responsive budgeting to ensure appropriate allocation of funds and effective monitoring of public expenditures, including for domestic violence shelters serving both women and men, while considering gendered differences in the prevalence of violence and the different reasons for which men and women seek accommodation in such shelters (Article 8);
4. ensure that law enforcement, judicial authorities and health and social services collect data on violence against women disaggregated by sex, age, type, relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, location and other relevant factors, including information on the presence of children; expand data collection in healthcare to cover all forms of violence, including female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation; and ensure that the handling of data complies with the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data to guarantee confidentiality (Article 11);
5. prioritise a gender-sensitive approach in initiatives to prevent all forms of violence against women under the Istanbul Convention including by promoting the understanding within society of the gendered nature of violence against women and by advocating changes in the mentalities and attitudes that inadvertently support and perpetuate such violence (Article 12);

1. The Istanbul Convention's provisions concerned by GREVIO's proposals and suggestions are indicated in brackets.

6. ensure systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training for all justice system professionals, municipal social welfare officers, Family Law Agency employees and their external experts on identifying and responding to all forms of violence against women, including its digital dimension, with a focus on victims' human rights, safety, empowerment and the prevention of secondary victimisation, while maximising the impact of these efforts by drawing on the expertise of women's rights organisations and specialist service providers (Article 15);
7. set up institutionalised structures for co-operation among governmental and non-governmental agencies, including the healthcare sector, to ensure effective multi-agency co-operation based on a gendered understanding, victim safety and respect for human rights while also recognising the important role of specialist women's support services in upholding victims' rights (Article 18);
8. ensure that victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention have access to long-term psychological counselling in outpatient settings; establish and enforce stringent quality standards for domestic violence shelters for women and their children while ensuring their financial sustainability; and improve the availability and accessibility of shelters for all women victims of gender-based violence, including those with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities (Article 22) while also ensuring the necessary holistic, mid- and long-term psycho-social and other support for women victims of rape and sexual assault (article 25);
9. ensure that in the context of custody and visitation cases, the Family Law Agency and family courts take into account the negative impact on children of their exposure to any of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and as jeopardising their best interests; systematically screen for a history of such violence and improve co-operation with criminal courts and specialist support services; implement safeguards for victims such as separate appointments and waiting areas; amend guidelines that portray women in domestic violence cases as unco-operative, replacing them with ones raising awareness of violence's harmful effects on children and ongoing safety concerns; support these measures with comprehensive training for all relevant professionals, including psychologists and child psychiatrists and prohibit the legitimisation and use of "parental alienation" or similar concepts in the Act on Parental Responsibility and by all professionals in the justice system (Article 31) while also taking adequate measures to move away from practices that amount to mandatory mediation in parental separation cases involving domestic violence and ensure more awareness of the use of family law proceedings by perpetrators as a means to commit post-separation abuse (Article 48);
10. take measures to allow prosecution to continue in cases where victims withdraw their statements; step up efforts to raise awareness among criminal justice actors about new legislation criminalising psychological violence and stalking and introducing a consent-based definition of rape to ensure its effective implementation (Articles 49 and 50);
11. ensure that risk assessment and management are conducted in co-ordination with all relevant agencies and service providers supporting the victim and her children, including law enforcement, social welfare, healthcare, women's specialist services and education institutions (Article 51);
12. increase the use of emergency barring orders to safeguard women victims of domestic violence and their children and rigorously monitor compliance with such orders, including through electronic monitoring systems (Article 52); enhance the protection

for women victims of domestic violence, rape, FGM and stalking by maximising the use of protection orders as well as ensuring their effective monitoring and enforcement through protocols, training and the use of electronic tags; and hold perpetrators accountable with dissuasive and proportionate sanctions in case of breach of such orders, while also ensuring that exceptions in Section 15 of the Danish Act on Restraining Orders do not compromise victims' safety (Article 53);

13. ensure the proper implementation of victim protection measures in investigations and judicial proceedings, including family law and administrative proceedings on custody and visitation, for all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention (Article 56);
- B. Requests the Government of Denmark to submit a written report to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the Convention in the above-mentioned areas by 7 June 2028.
 - C. Recommends that the Government of Denmark take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report.
 - D. Invites the Government of Denmark to continue the dialogue in progress with GREVIO.