

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 Italy on building trust by delivering support, protection and justice on the basis of the Istanbul Convention

IC-CP(2025)26

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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(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 (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 Italy on 10 September 2013;

Having regard to the Baseline Evaluation Report adopted by GREVIO concerning the implementation of the Convention by Italy, the Committee of the Parties’ recommendations adopted on 30 January 2020 and the Committee’s conclusions on the implementation of those recommendations, adopted on 1 June 2023;

Having examined the First Thematic Evaluation Report “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” concerning the implementation of the Convention by Italy adopted by GREVIO at its 37th meeting (13-16 October 2025), as well as the comments of the Government received on 2 December 2025;

Welcoming the measures taken and progress achieved by the Italian authorities in implementing the convention and noting in particular:

- the significant development of its legislative framework on violence against women, demonstrating commitment to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, including reforms on criminal proceedings which require the appointment of dedicated prosecutors for offences under the scope of the convention, increased data collection requirements on gender-based violence against women and reforms in the area of family law proceedings where allegations of domestic violence are enable the fast-tracking of such proceedings;
- the adoption of two subsequent National Action Plans on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the last one supported by an Implementation Plan, which offer a comprehensive set of policies addressing men’s violence against women, are anchored on a gendered perspective and have been developed on the basis of prior strategies’ evaluation;
- the improvement of the regulatory framework in relation to perpetrator programmes with the adoption of an agreement defining minimum requirements at national level and, in parallel, a rise in perpetrator programmes and an improvement of the geographical coverage;

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- the widespread implementation by healthcare establishments of the 2017 national guidelines for victims of violence against women, which provide for a prompt and comprehensive response to and treatment of victims by healthcare services;
 - several measures taken by the authorities aimed at victims' empowerment and their integration into the labour market.
 - measures taken to enhance the criminal justice response to violence against women and strengthen victims' trust in institutions, including: the newly introduced obligation to record on video interviews with vulnerable victims; and the setting up of an interagency database (SCUDO) enabling law enforcement authorities to have an overview of past police interventions involving the same perpetrator or address;
 - on-going efforts of the Court of Cassation and the Ministry of Justice of the Permanent Observatory on the Effectiveness of Norms on Gender and Domestic violence to examine discriminatory language, including gender stereotypes, contained in judicial decisions.

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

1. introduce definitions of domestic violence and violence against women that are in line with Article 3 of the convention with a view to ensuring a harmonised use of these concepts across all areas of the law and policy (Article 3);
2. ensure that the National Action Plan on Violence against Women and regional plans address all forms of violence against women across the four pillars of the convention and are supported by a specific timeline for implementation, financial resources and indicators to measure progress, while fully reflecting the needs of all women exposed to violence; ensure effective consultation and participation with civil society in the shaping of policies, their co-ordination, implementation and monitoring; and improve the co-ordination between all relevant ministries and agencies, as well as with regional/local governments in the implementation of the relevant policies (Article 7);
3. ensure sustainable and long-term funding for the criminal justice sector and for all of the policies and measures aimed at preventing and combating violence against women, including for prevention measures, while ensuring separate budget and funding lines; provide anti-violence centres and shelters with sufficient and sustainable multi-annual funding that is commensurate with their estimated needs, including by simplifying and expediting the disbursement of such funding and ensuring harmonised criteria for their disbursement (Article 8);
4. ensure that all statutory agencies, notably law-enforcement authorities, prosecution services, the judiciary, the health sector and social services, are required to collect disaggregated data on all forms of violence against women and that such obligations are effectively implemented and monitored; harmonise the collection of such data between law-enforcement agencies, prosecution offices and the judiciary, with the aim of tracking the progress of cases across the criminal justice chain from reporting to conviction, identifying attrition rates and the sanctions imposed; and ensure the collection of data on the issue of emergency barring orders/protection orders per year, their breach and the sanctions imposed (Article 11);

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

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5. ensure the teaching of the principles under Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, as well as the notion of freely given consent in sexual relations and the harmful effects of violent pornography, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners, by mainstreaming them in the education system and/or ensuring their teaching across the country in a dedicated, mandatory subject by teachers with appropriate training; monitor to what extent these subjects are taught in schools in practice; raise parents' and educators' awareness of the importance of these subjects to protect children from harm; and review teaching curricula and materials with a view to removing negative stereotypes of women and girls (Article 14);
 6. introduce systematic and mandatory initial and in-service trauma-informed training for social services staff, law-enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers and court-appointed experts, medical/healthcare providers and teachers, on all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including on its digital dimensions and on the need to systematically carry out, for victims and their children, a risk assessment, supported by dedicated protocols; ensure that the mandatory training of judges presiding over cases involving custody and visitation address, *inter alia*, the negative effects that witnessing violence against women has on children (Article 15);
 7. increase the number and capacity of specialist shelters in an adequate geographical distribution and ensure accommodation for all victims; ensure that minimum quality standards imposed on anti-violence centres and shelters require long-standing expertise in the provision of victim-centred and empowering support, underpinned by an understanding of violence against women as a gendered phenomenon and that compliance with such standards is monitored; ensure that victims of female genital mutilation have access to helpline support provided by specialist staff; and ensure that the provision of psychological counselling to children exposed to domestic violence or any other form of violence against women is not subject to the approval of both parents (Article 22).
 8. systematically screen all pending cases on custody and visitation for instances of domestic violence, requesting the disclosure of risk assessments and safety plans drawn up by all relevant bodies and exchanging any other relevant information; ensure that incidents of domestic violence against women are a mandatory legal criterion to be taken into account in such cases; ensure that all relevant professionals are trained and understand the unfounded nature of the so-called parental alienation syndrome that portray women victims of abuse as alienating, hostile or unco-operative and that the use of such concepts is prohibited in/by courts; ensure that children are not removed from the custody of non-violent parents, including as a result of the application of such concepts; and provide safe premises where supervised visits with the support of professionals trained in domestic violence (Article 31).
 9. ensure that judges and other relevant public authorities proceed with caution when proposing or accepting restorative justice in cases of offences under the scope of the Istanbul Convention, including by carrying out a risk assessment of the suitability of such an approach; duly taking into account the gendered nature of violence against women and the power imbalance that is typical in cases of domestic violence; providing full information on the nature, aims, consequences and non-mandatory nature of restorative justice; and verifying and assessing that the victim has given her free and informed consent, before being referred to a restorative justice centre and is aware of her right to withdraw consent; ensure that victims benefit from legal representation and support where decisions on restorative justice are being taken (Article 48).

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10. step up efforts to ensure prompt and appropriate responses from law-enforcement agencies to reports relating to all forms of violence against women as well as their effective investigation and prosecution; assess to what extent the current standard of prosecution is impacting on the prosecution of such offences and examine and address factors that contribute to the high number of dismissals in criminal justice proceedings; encourage a wider use of immediate production of evidence with a view to ensuring that criminal proceedings can continue even where the victim wishes to withdraw her statement; review the impact of warnings on victims' safety and perpetrator accountability to assess whether their use is appropriate in these cases; ensure that sentences and measures imposed are effective, proportionate and dissuasive; and take measures to ensure that any fast-tracking process applies to all stages of criminal proceedings, with a view to decreasing the duration of trials (Articles 49 and 50);
 11. ensure that risk assessment and management are systematically carried out for victims of all forms of violence against women, using evidence-based risk-assessment tools by law-enforcement authorities and all other relevant stakeholders; ensure that such obligation is grounded in manuals and guidelines that take into account lethality risks such as non-fatal strangulation in domestic violence settings and address the need to include children and their individual risks in the assessment; strengthen domestic violence fatality reviews and ensure that such a review mechanism is made permanent and identifies systemic gaps in the protection system for victims of violence (Article 51).
 12. ensure that emergency barring orders are issued in practice in cases of immediate danger in a context of domestic violence where harm is imminent or has already materialised and is likely to happen again, with arrest and detention being the preferred option where there is a risk of serious harm or death; monitor respect for such orders effectively with appropriate means and give a prompt response in case of a breach; include children in the scope of emergency barring and protection orders; make civil protection orders available to victims of all forms of violence against women regardless of any criminal or other proceedings and ensure that no gap in the protection of the victim arises (Articles 52 and 53).
- B. Requests the Government of Italy 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 8 December 2028.
 - C. Recommends that the Government of Italy take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report.
 - D. Invites the Government of Italy to continue the dialogue in progress with GREVIO.