

# **Committee of the Parties**

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

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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

IC-CP(2025)7

Adopted on 5 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 Montenegro on 22 April 2013;

Having regard to the baseline evaluation report adopted by GREVIO concerning the implementation of the Convention by Montenegro, the Committee of the Parties’ recommendations adopted on 28 January 2019 and the Committee’s conclusions on the implementation of those recommendations, adopted on 8 June 2022;

Having examined the first thematic evaluation report “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” concerning the implementation of the Convention by Montenegro adopted by GREVIO at its 34th meeting (15-18 October 2024), as well as the comments of the Government received on 22 November 2024;

Welcoming the measures taken in implementation of the Convention by the Montenegrin authorities and noting in particular:

- the adoption of a National Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, with an allocated budget, which provides for harmonising relevant definitions in national legislation with the definitions set out in the Istanbul Convention and for regular public awareness campaigns on all forms of violence against women;
- the legislative amendments to the Criminal Code introducing a distinction between the misdemeanour and the criminal offence of domestic violence and an alignment of the definition of domestic violence with the definition set out in the Istanbul Convention;
- the legislative amendments to the Criminal Code introducing sexual harassment, abuse of images or recordings with sexually explicit content, forced conclusion of marriage as new criminal offences and an alignment of the definition of rape with the definition set out in the Istanbul Convention;
- the introduction of a new database connecting the social welfare centres with law enforcement agencies to improve the collection and exchange of data on cases of domestic violence;

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- the initiative to review teaching materials used in schools to remove negative gender stereotypes of women and men, in line with the Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2025, which explicitly recognises the need for more gender-sensitive education;
  - efforts made to improve specialist support services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence, notably through the establishment of two additional shelters;
  - the introduction of a standardised risk assessment form for mandatory use by law enforcement agencies in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, as a complement to the Protocol on Action in Cases of Gender-Based Violence.

A. Recommends, in light of the considerations indicated in the preamble above, that the Government of Montenegro take the following measures identified in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report<sup>1</sup> for immediate action:

1. ensure appropriate human and financial resources for any policies, measures and legislation aimed at preventing and combating violence against women and the institutions and entities mandated for their implementation; ensure sustainable funding for non-governmental organisations providing specialised support services to victims of all forms of violence against women set out in the Istanbul Convention and include a gender-sensitive approach in procurement procedures for such services (Article 8);
2. ensure the collection and disaggregation of data by all relevant stakeholders, namely law enforcement agencies, judicial authorities, centres for social work, and public and private healthcare providers, with regard to the sex, age, type of violence for all forms of violence set out in the Istanbul Convention, relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and geographic location; in particular, make efforts to harmonise the collection of data by law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to allow for the tracking of cases across the criminal justice system to assess conviction, attrition, and recidivism rates (Article 11);
3. make efforts to implement regular preventive measures that eradicate prejudice and gender stereotypes and address gender inequality as a root cause of violence against women across all sectors of the society; make efforts to conduct regular awareness-raising campaigns covering all forms of violence against women set out in the Istanbul Convention as well as digital violence, and highlighting the heightened risk of violence faced by women and girls experiencing intersectional discrimination, such as Roma and Egyptian women and women with disabilities (Article 12);
4. increase efforts to address stereotypes and prejudices towards women in the areas of formal education, culture and media; in particular, ensure that teaching material in formal education is adapted to promote the principles of equality between women and men and non-stereotyped gender roles and that teachers are equipped with the necessary awareness and skills to convey these principles (Article 14).
5. redouble efforts to ensure systematic and mandatory initial and regular in-service training for all professional groups who come into contact with victims, in particular law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, judges, social workers, health professionals and teachers; in this respect, training should include prevention and detection of all forms

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

of violence set out in the Istanbul Convention, promotion of equality between women and men, victims' needs and rights, trauma-informed responses, and existing protocols and guidelines (Article 15);

6. set up and expand programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and perpetrators of sexual violence, with a focus on behavioural change, in line with the elements set out in the Istanbul Convention and its Explanatory Report, and make such programmes available for mandatory and voluntary participation by perpetrators with a view to preventing recidivism and supporting rehabilitation and reintegration of perpetrators into the community (Article 16);
7. increase efforts to enhance multi-agency co-operation in cases of violence against women by ensuring that multi-agency teams are operational and include specialist women's and children's support services, that interventions are based on a gender-sensitive understanding of violence against women and focus on the human rights and safety of victims, that the staff working in all relevant sectors are familiar and comply with the Protocol on Action in Cases of Gender-based Violence (Article 18);
8. ensure adequate financial and specialised human resources to centres for social work to enable them to effectively fulfil their mandate in cases of violence against women; and that all healthcare providers comply with the Protocol on Action in Cases of Gender-based Violence, give priority treatment to women victims of such violence and respect their privacy (Article 20);
9. increase the availability of specialist support services and counselling for all victims of violence against women throughout the country, and ensure that the provision of such services is based on a gender-sensitive understanding of violence against women and a victim-centred approach aimed at empowering women victims (Article 22);
10. set up rape crisis and/or sexual violence referral centres throughout the country to provide victim-sensitive medical care, trauma support, forensic examinations and immediate psychological assistance by qualified staff, and to refer victims to specialist services for short and long-term psychological support (Article 25);
11. take legislative or other measures to ensure that incidents of violence against women and their negative impact on children are systematically taken into account in the reports by the centres for social work and in any decision on custody and visitation rights; ensure co-operation and information sharing in cases concerning custody and visitation rights dealt with by family courts, criminal and misdemeanour courts, and law enforcement agencies; improve the conditions for supervised visits by training staff and allocating resources to the centres for social work (Article 31);
12. ensure that mediation in family law proceedings remains voluntary in cases with a history of domestic violence by introducing screening procedures to detect incidents of violence, requiring judges to inform parties of the voluntary nature of mediation, ensuring that cases are referred to the Centre for Mediation only with the free and informed consent of the victim, with the possibility to terminate the mediation and return to adversarial procedure, training judges and mediators on power imbalances in violent relationships so that they can properly assess whether mediation is appropriate (Article 48);

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13. redouble efforts to allocate sufficient resources and ensure the immediate and gender-sensitive response by law enforcement agencies to all cases of violence against women and increase the number of trained domestic violence officers throughout the country; ensure the collection of all relevant evidence by law enforcement agencies and its transmission to the judiciary to provide a more comprehensive basis for charging decisions and effective prosecution of violence against women; prevent the repeated questioning of victims of violence against women and the practice of “confrontations” between victims and perpetrators in judicial proceedings; ensure that mitigating factors taken into account in criminal and misdemeanour proceedings related to cases of violence against women are in line with the Istanbul Convention and are not used to justify lenient sentences for perpetrators (Articles 49 and 50);
  14. ensure that risk assessment and risk management are systematically carried out in all cases of domestic violence and results shared with all relevant agencies; and that law enforcement officials have access to information on potential risk factors from organisations that are in contact with victims (Article 51);
  15. ensure that emergency barring orders are available to all victims of violence against women and that they are effectively applied by law enforcement agencies and misdemeanour courts; ensure that children are taken into account ex officio in decisions on protection orders; ensure that protection orders are effectively monitored, without placing an undue burden on victims, and breaches are sanctioned (Articles 52 and 53);
  16. ensure that effective use is made of existing measures for the protection of victims and pursue efforts for the introduction of additional protection measures, such systematic information of and assistance to the victims in the course of the judicial proceedings (Article 56);
- B. Requests the Government of Montenegro 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 Montenegro take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO’s first thematic evaluation report.
  - D. Invites the Government of Montenegro to continue the dialogue in progress with GREVIO.