

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

IC-CP(2025)9

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 Sweden on 1 July 2014;

Having regard to the baseline evaluation report adopted by GREVIO concerning the implementation of the Convention by Sweden, 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 Sweden adopted by GREVIO at its 33rd meeting (18-21 June 2024), as well as the comments of the Government received on 28 November 2024;

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

- the continued progress in criminal law which often exceeds the requirements of the Istanbul Convention, such as the adoption of new criminal provisions addressing gender-based violence-related suicides;
- the consequences stemming from the 2018 criminal law reform on the practice of the courts, notably leading to: the successful prosecution of different typologies of rape which would not have been possible prior to the reform; the broadening of the type of evidence that is considered as acceptable by judges to reach a conviction and a rise in the rates of convictions, which is building trust among victims.
- the preventive measures taken following the reform on the criminalisation of all non-consensual sexual acts, including: awareness-raising targeting young people and parents, respectively, on the importance of consent in sexual relations and on how to address this topic with their children; training and a teacher’s guide on the legislation; and the inclusion of this topic in the context of mandatory sexuality education;
- the inclusion of the dangers of pornography in the mandatory curriculum and the obligation for school inspectorates to visit schools and verify that sexuality education, gender equality and combating gender stereotypes are taught in practice;

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- the entry into force of a provision allowing video-taped interviews of victims and witnesses to be used as evidence in courts, subject to the courts' discretion and the obligation for the police to film all interviews, which have led to improved chances for a case to successfully proceed through the criminal justice chain when victims decide not to participate in criminal proceedings; reduce the burden on victims to give their statement repeatedly; and limit the risk of intimidation by perpetrators;
- A. Recommends in light of the considerations indicated in the preamble above, that the Government of Sweden take the following measures identified in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report¹ for immediate action to:
1. ensure that the policies in the area of violence against women sufficiently take into consideration the needs of women and girls victims exposed to intersectional discrimination by mainstreaming these concerns within broader strategies targeting certain communities, developing more targeted measures within the action plan and taking policy measures to prevent violence from occurring in youth homes; regularly carry out an independent evaluation of strategies in order to assess their impact; and ensure policies and their practical implementation apply a gendered understanding of violence against women, including those addressing violence in the name of so-called honour (Articles 3 and 7);
 2. ensure sustainable funding levels for women's rights organisations that run specialist support services for women victims of all forms of violence, including those providing psycho-social counselling and trauma support to victims of sexual violence on the basis of dedicated, long-term grants based on transparent and clear procurement procedures that give due weight to professional and technical experience, including a comprehensive understanding of violence against women as a gendered phenomenon (Article 8);
 3. harmonise the collection of data on all forms of violence against women and domestic violence between law-enforcement agencies, prosecution and the judiciary; ensure that such data are disaggregated by sex of both the victim and the perpetrator, the age, the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and the geographical location; ensure the collection of disaggregated data related to violence against women in the healthcare sector, by social services and by specialist support service providers, including those managed privately (Article 11);
 4. ensure wider preventive measures for all forms of violence against women, addressing it as a pervasive phenomenon affecting all pockets of society including, in particular, women and girls with disabilities, Sami women and other women at risk of intersectional discrimination; regularly carry out impact assessments of any primary prevention measures taken (Article 12);
 5. ensure that the compulsory school curriculum provides a comprehensive overview of all forms of violence against women and that the topics and principles listed in Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention are taught in practice (Article 14);

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

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6. introduce systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training on all forms of violence covered, including its digital dimensions, and on the cultural specificities of women belonging to vulnerable groups for all social services staff, law-enforcement agencies, judges, healthcare providers and teachers, supported by standardised protocols and an evaluation of such programmes; ensure that the mandatory training of judges presiding over cases involving custody and visitation address the negative effects that witnessing violence against women has on children and the need to take such circumstances into account when taking decisions (Article 15).
 7. develop minimum standards for perpetrator programmes in line with the principles of the Istanbul Convention; ensure that such programmes are widely attended, including by incorporating them into the criminal justice system as a tool to reduce recidivism; and ensure their external evaluation in order to assess whether the programmes serve their intended preventive aims (Article 16);
 8. adopt mechanisms of co-ordination and co-operation among the different governmental and non-governmental agencies that provide support and protection to victims of violence against women, including by developing formal protocols, introducing multi-agency risk-assessment conferences (MARACs) and ensuring that support services are made available as far as possible on the same premises, based on a gendered understanding of violence against women (Article 18);
 9. ensure that social services adequately provide support and assistance to victims of all forms of violence against women, in particular to those from Sami and Roma communities and embed such assistance with financial, housing and employment support; ensure that access to health-care in relation to experiences of violence against women is provided without discrimination on any ground and that standardised care paths in the public and private healthcare sectors are in place and implemented (Article 20);
 10. increase the availability of and ensure access to appropriate specialist shelters to all victims and their children, irrespective of their residence status and place of residence and including through self-referrals; ensure that minimum quality standards include expertise in the provision of victim-centred support to victims of violence against women, underpinned by a gendered understanding of violence against women (Article 22);
 11. ensure a sufficient number of rape crisis and/or sexual violence centres throughout the country offering medical care, forensic examination and immediate, short and long-term trauma counselling; and that the obligation to share a forensic certificate with the police is contingent, as far as possible, on the prior consent of the victim, unless the victim is a child or is unable to protect her/himself because of disabilities (Article 25);
 12. systematically screen all pending cases on custody and visitation for instances of domestic violence consulting with all relevant bodies and requesting the disclosure of any risk assessment drawn up; ensure that all relevant professionals are aware of the lack of a scientific basis for so-called “parental alienation syndrome” and similar concepts, banning its use by courts; provide safe premises where supervised visits can take place with trained professionals; ensure that any voluntary mediation procedure

incorporates safeguards that ensure the full and free consent of the victim and a risk-assessment procedure (Articles 31 and 48);

13. reinforce the capacity of the police to respond to and investigate all forms of violence against women, including digital manifestations of violence against women and domestic violence by increasing the number of trained investigators beyond the specialist units; take measures to encourage reporting of all forms of violence against women by women who are at risk of intersectional discrimination; redouble efforts to ensure that investigative guidelines on violence against women prescribing the systematic recording of interviews with the victim are systematically applied in practice; strengthen measures to increase conviction rates for all forms of violence against women (Articles 49 and 50);
 14. take legislative or other measures to ensure that risk assessments are systematically carried out for victims and their children in relation to all forms of violence against women using standardised, evidence-based risk-assessment tools in a co-ordinated manner involving all relevant stakeholders; consider including in the remit of the “fatalities review” instances of gender-based violence-related suicides (Article 51);
 15. take legislative or other measures to ensure that non-contact orders for the joint home are issued swiftly with immediate effect in situations of immediate danger, and that they are extended to children in need of protection; ensure that no gap in the protection of the victim and her children arises between the expiry of a non-contact order on the joint home and the imposition of another non-contact order; ensure that non-contact orders can be issued with respect to digital forms of violence against women and that there is effective monitoring of compliance with all types of non-contact orders and sanctions for any breaches thereof is enforced (Articles 52 and 53);
- B. Requests the Government of Sweden 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 Sweden take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO’s first thematic evaluation report.
 - D. Invites the Government of Sweden to continue the dialogue in progress with GREVIO.