

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

IC-CP(2025)2

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 Albania on 4 February 2013;

Having regard to the baseline evaluation report adopted by GREVIO concerning the implementation of the Convention by Albania, 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 Albania adopted by GREVIO at its 33rd meeting (18-21 June 2024), as well as the comments of the Government received on 17 September 2024;

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

- the further expansion of the legislative and policy framework to prevent and combat violence against women including the amendments to the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations in 2018 and 2020 and to the Criminal Code made in 2020, as well as the introduction of new benefits for women victims in the fields of social assistance and social housing;
- the advances made in the field of data collection, including the collection of data by the Ministry of Justice disaggregated by the victim’s sex, age, social status, education and the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim and the reforms undertaken by the State statistical agency INSTAT which has become the focal point for reports in the field of violence against women coming from the police, judiciary, prisons and other relevant bodies;
- the rollout of a co-ordinated referral mechanism as a response to domestic violence in all 61 municipalities of the country, and the specialised training organised to increase the skills and knowledge of the referral mechanism’s co-ordinators at the municipal level;

- the increase in number of police officers specialising in domestic violence and violence against minors, and the improvements to the facilities in police stations for the reception of women victims of violence;
- the introduction of the institution of victim co-ordinators attached to prosecution offices across the country, which has a positive impact on victims' trust in the work of the prosecution;
- the adoption of a standardised risk assessment tool and a corresponding manual, outlining the protocol to be followed by law enforcement in cases of domestic violence and the reform allowing for law enforcement officers to issue emergency barring orders, thereby closing a significant gap in protection for victims;

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

1. ensure that policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women are underpinned by sufficient and sustainable funding, and provide opportunities for women's rights organisations to secure such funding in transparent procedures free of unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles (Article 8);
2. promote, on a regular basis and at all levels, awareness-raising campaigns or programmes to increase awareness among the general public of the different manifestations concerning all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and of the gendered nature of such violence; ensure that such efforts include primary prevention measures that cater to the specificities of the different population groups and work towards deconstructing patriarchal attitudes; and regularly carry out impact assessments of these awareness-raising campaigns and primary prevention measures (Article 12);
3. ensure the provision of systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training on identifying and responding to all forms of violence against women, including their digital dimension, for professionals working in the judicial system, as well as for healthcare and education professionals; and take measures to address the reasons behind reduced effectiveness of such training, including staff turnover (Article 15);
4. expand the existing perpetrator programmes and introduce programmes aimed specifically at perpetrators of sexual violence (Article 16);
5. increase the funding and the number of available services for women victims of violence, including social services, with a particular focus on housing, especially taking into account the specific needs of Roma and Egyptian women and women with disabilities (Article 20);
6. ensure that all women and girl victims of violence have access to comprehensive healthcare services, with a particular focus on the needs of victims with mental health issues including by means of implementing standardised care paths in the healthcare sector on the basis of a gender-sensitive approach; develop and implement adequate procedures to ensure that informed consent is sought from victims of violence for the reporting of a suspicion of a criminal act; (Article 20);

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

7. ensure adequate specialist support services offering immediate, short and long-term support to all women victims and their children, with particular attention to the specific needs of victims with disabilities and/or mental health issues, including through increasing the number and improving the geographical distribution of emergency and long-term shelters and ensuring that women victims and their children, have access such shelters irrespective of the age of their children or their will to report the violence; and ensure that the national helpline and legal counselling services are supported through sufficient and sustainable financing (Article 22);
8. take measures to ensure that victims of sexual violence have access to a forensic examination free of charge, not conditional on their willingness to report the crime, and to ensure that forensic evidence is stored to allow for victims to report the crime at a later point in time (Article 25);
9. take legal or other measures to abolish mandatory conciliation in all criminal cases concerning violence against women, in particular those concerning rape, sexual abuse and forced marriage, and abolish mandatory conciliation in parental separation proceedings in relationships marred with violence (Article 48);
10. enhance the capacity and knowledge of law-enforcement officers in order to achieve a timely and victim-sensitive response to reports of violence against women and improve the case-building and evidence collection skills of law enforcement, in particular in cases brought by women victims faced with intersectional discrimination, and improve law enforcement's response to such cases; ensure that police officers who have failed in their duties to protect women victims or violated the rules of processing cases of violence against women be held accountable; take measures to improve reporting by women victims and ensure a victim-centred and gender - sensitive response to such cases; take measures to address attrition of cases of violence at the judicial chain, in particular when it comes to cases of sexual violence; and re-examine the rules allowing for the discontinuation of the investigation in cases where women victims withdraw their statements (Articles 49 and 50);
11. ensure that risk assessment and risk management procedures are applied in cases concerning all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and are conducted in co-ordination with all relevant agencies and entities that provide services to victims and their children; and introduce a system of retrospective review of cases of gender-based killings and gender-based violence-related suicides of women (Article 51);
12. step up efforts to make greater use of emergency barring orders including for the protection of child witnesses, systematically monitor and enforce such orders and ensure that emergency barring orders are used as a tool to ensure the physical safety of victims on the basis of primary-aggressor analysis; and discourage the practice of evicting a perpetrator from parts of the dwelling shared with the victim only (Article 52);
13. ensure that protection orders are available and accessible to victims of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention and step up measures to enforce and monitor such orders, including by ensuring the application of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for perpetrators breaching these orders; ensure that judges apply the provisions relating to the automatic inclusion of children subjected to or having witnessed violence in the proceedings for issuing protection orders in a harmonised way across the country; analyse the reasons behind the low number of victims who seek protection orders once they have obtained an emergency barring order and take appropriate measures to ensure that victims' inability to attend

court hearings concerning protection orders is not detrimental to the outcome of the case (Article 53);

14. evaluate the implementation of the existing protection measures for women victims of gender-based violence and ensure their practical application and alignment with the requirements of Article 56 of the Istanbul Convention, particularly taking into consideration the needs of victims faced with intersectional discrimination (Article 56);
- B. Requests the Government of Albania 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 Albania take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report.
 - D. Invites the Government of Albania to continue the dialogue in progress with GREVIO.