

## **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

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### **Reply by Estonia to the reporting form on the implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee of the Parties adopted on 6 December 2022**

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Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention  
on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 3 June 2025

IC-CP(2025)19

**Committee of the Parties  
Council of Europe Convention  
on Preventing and Combating  
Violence against Women  
and Domestic Violence  
(Istanbul Convention)**

**Reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to state parties**

Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

In accordance with Article 68, paragraph 12, of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Committee of the Parties adopts, on the basis of the report and conclusions of GREVIO, recommendations addressed to state parties concerning the measures to be taken to implement the conclusions of GREVIO.

The applicable procedure for issuing recommendations was settled by the Committee of the Parties at its 4th meeting and is described in document IC-CP(2018)6. In accordance with this procedure, the recommendations call upon state parties to implement all the proposals and suggestions set out in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report. However, the obligation to report on measures taken is limited to those specifically outlined in section A of the recommendation, namely: a) all the proposals and suggestions formulated by GREVIO throughout the report which require immediate action – these are qualified by the use of the verb “urge”, and b) the proposals and suggestions related to Chapters I and II of the convention which require taking remedial action in the near future and are qualified by the use of the expression “strongly encourage”. According to the agreed procedure, state parties are given a period of three years to implement the recommendations of the Committee of the Parties and report back to the Committee.

To facilitate this reporting, state parties are requested to use this questionnaire to report on the implementation of recommendations issued by the Committee of the Parties. Recommendations not issued in relation to Estonia do not need to be reported on. As a result, the Estonian authorities are not required to answer the following questions in the reporting form: 14, 16, 19 and 20.

The reporting deadline given to Estonia is set at **4 December 2025**. Information related to the monitoring of Estonia is available on the dedicated [country monitoring webpage](#).

<b>I. Fundamental rights, equality, and non-discrimination (Article 4)</b>			
1	Have your authorities taken <b>measures to ensure that the provisions of the Istanbul Convention are implemented without discrimination</b> on any grounds listed in Article 4, paragraph 3, of the convention, including in terms of the availability of services and the protection by law enforcement agencies?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	<p>If yes, please specify:</p> <p>In Estonia the prohibition of discrimination and the principle of equality are enshrined in the <a href="#">constitution</a>, which states that everyone is equal before the law and no one shall be discriminated against on the grounds of sex. The purpose of the <a href="#">Equal Treatment Act</a> is to ensure the protection of persons against discrimination on grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation.</p> <p>Estonian victim support is intended for all individuals regardless of their nationality, race, skin color, religion, beliefs, views, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc. The provision of services and assistance must be ensured for all those in need, including victims of violence and crime. In the new Victim Support Act, the definitions of victims of violence against women and domestic violence were established.</p>		

Also, the society is encouraged to report incidents to the police. Relevant notifications and awareness-raising campaigns are carried out in cooperation with partners through media, social media, and other channels. There are no linguistic or ethnic barriers — translation services are provided to everyone when needed. Cross-sectoral cooperation takes place, ensuring equal treatment for all.

Forced marriages are criminalized in Estonia as a human trafficking offense, and victims can receive extensive support through victim assistance services for human trafficking victims. The [Victim Support Act](#) (Section 24) provides a wide range of services to help those affected. Victims have access to immediate psychosocial assistance available 24/7, as well as an assessment of their needs to determine the necessary level of support. If long-term and comprehensive help is required for independent living, case management services are provided. Additionally, victims receive counseling and psychosocial support, along with safe temporary accommodation at any time of the day or night. Basic needs such as food and material assistance are covered, and access to necessary healthcare services is arranged. Psychological counseling or psychotherapy is also available. Furthermore, victims are entitled to legal assistance, and translation services are provided to ensure they can fully access all available support. With the new Victim Support Act, a regulation was adopted that established stricter educational requirements for individuals providing direct psychological assistance to victims. This ensures that those working with victims have a strong educational background, which helps demonstrate their readiness to support such a vulnerable target group as crime victims. Before the regulation was enacted, input was gathered from various professional associations related to psychology, most of which supported the stricter educational requirements.

Women's Support Center service in every Estonian county aims to help victims of gender based violence escape violence, increase their safety, and achieve independent coping. Service is provided by the NGOs and coordinated by the Social Insurance Board. The Women's Support Center service includes the following:

1. 24/7 availability of initial psychosocial support for the victim and their children;
2. Assessment of the victim's needs to determine the necessity and scope of the service;
3. Counseling and psychosocial support for the victim;
4. Case management when the victim requires long-term and diverse support to achieve independent coping;
5. Psychological counseling or psychotherapy;
6. Legal assistance;
7. Safe temporary accommodation for the victim and their children, available 24/7-up to 6 months.

Children who have witnessed violence between their parents are entitled to trauma recovery support under the new Victim Support Act (2023). The purpose of this support is to facilitate the victim's psychosocial recovery and reduce the likelihood or severity of psychological and behavioral disorders.

In Estonia there are sexual violence referral centres in four regions, located in hospitals. Sexual violence crisis centers provide comprehensive support, including counseling and psychological assistance. Medical examinations are conducted, along with the collection of forensic evidence, should the victim choose to report the incident to the police at a later stage. Support is also offered for pregnancy prevention, as well as testing for sexually transmitted infections and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV. Victims are assisted in reporting the crime to the police if they wish to do so. If necessary, referrals to psychologists, psychiatrists, or other specialized professionals are provided. All examinations and treatments are offered free of charge. Long-term support is available through the national victim assistance system, which provides access to both psychological and legal assistance, also accommodation if needed. Ongoing medical services can be obtained through the primary healthcare system. In Estonia, child victims of sexual abuse and their families are offered support at Barnahus. The Barnahuses are located in Tallinn, Tartu, Jõhvi, and Pärnu, but the service is accessible to all children in need across Estonia.

In addition, as mentioned above, from 1 April 2023, the Victim Support Act stipulates that a minor who is a victim of sexual violence has the right to receive mental health support aimed at facilitating trauma recovery. Such support is available to the minor regardless of whether the criminal proceedings were initiated and it is available until the need ceases. The purpose of this support is to promote the restoration of the victim's psychosocial balance and to reduce the likelihood or severity of mental and behavioural disorders. It includes psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance. The respective regulation is set forth in subchapter 10 of the Victim Support Act.

Domestic and sexual violence cases belong to the highest prioritisation group among criminal cases (there are three different levels according to the guide of prioritisation agreed on by both the Prosecutor's Office and the Police and Border Guard Board. The quality, speed, and oversight of proceedings are ensured. The Police and Border Guard Board monitors the proportion of domestic violence criminal proceedings resolved within 30 days.

The cooperation agreement between the Social Insurance Board and the Police and Border Guard Board is being updated to highlight key areas of cooperation, opportunities, and mutual expectations. In addition, cooperation seminars between the Police and Border Guard Board and Social Insurance Board is held in each four regions. There are a total of 21 MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) teams in Estonia. They are regular meetings of professionals who discuss how to help individuals who are most at risk of serious harm due to domestic violence and abuse. Take actions to safeguard your clients and others immediately. 97% of MARAC victims are women in Estonia. Each MARAC team always includes representatives from:

- National Victim Support,
- Police,
- Prosecutor's Office,
- Local government,
- Violence Cessation Counselor,
- Third-sector representative, such as a Women Support Centre.

In 2023, an impact study on the MARAC model was conducted in Estonia. The report is available in English here: [Evaluation of the impact of the MARAC networking model](#). Additionally, starting from April 31, 2025, a feedback form will be introduced for victims within the MARAC model.

In order to make sure the [Action Plan to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence for 2024-2027](#) is being implemented accordingly, we have an expert group on intimate partner violence, which brings together all the ministries and the implementing units under their responsibility. They meet once a month. In addition, a steering group on intimate partner violence, comprising deputy ministry chancellors and heads of departments that work under the ministries, meets twice a year. The aim is to oversee how the action plan is completed and give additional advice. Domestic violence touches on different areas and everyone has a role to play in preventing and reducing it, so it was jointly decided that the new action plan on the prevention of intimate partner violence will be managed on a rotating basis during this period.

The aim of the [Violence Prevention Agreement \(VEKO\) 2021-2025](#) is to continue developing anti-violence policies through cooperation between different sectors and on the basis of precisely targeted objectives and specific agreements. According to the development strategy "[Estonia 2035](#)", in order to achieve one of the strategic goals – sustainability, health, and social protection of the population – it is necessary to support mental health and reduce mental and physical violence. To this end, an early detection system will be developed, the role of families and communities in responding to violence will be increased, prevention and social programs will be expanded, and network-based assistance for victims of violence and measures

	to help prevent the recurrence of violence will be developed. Mental and physical health are also supported by the strategic objectives "Healthy People," "Safe Living Environment," and "Caring Society." The strategic objective "Healthy People" aims to ensure that the population has access to high-quality health care services and that the health of the population is monitored and improved. When drafting the new violence prevention agreement for the next period, we can also draw on the recommendations made to Estonia by GREVIO.		
1.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
2	Have your authorities taken measures contributing to prevent and combat violence against women who are or might be exposed to intersectional discrimination?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.1	If yes, please specify:  See previous answer p 1.1! Universal services and prevention are offered to all in need of assistance. Victim support is universal for everyone, anyone can contact the police or helplines. Various training programs help to raise awareness among specialists. Victim support assesses the needs of each individual separately and offers assistance tailored specifically to the person's needs.		
2.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
3	In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Article 4, which were not covered by the questions above, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]:		
<b>II. Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies implemented under the responsibility of an adequately mandated and resourced co-ordinating body (Articles 7 and 10)</b>			
4	Have your authorities developed a long-term plan/strategy to prevent and combat violence against women?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>  N/A (a plan/strategy was already developed at the time of GREVIO's baseline evaluation) <input type="checkbox"/>
4.1	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
5	Which forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention are addressed by the plan/strategy? Please offer a brief description specifically indicating the forms of violence not previously addressed in plans or strategies at national level.		

In Estonia the goals and actions aimed at preventing violence against women and other forms of violence are consolidated in the [Violence Prevention Agreement 2021-2025](#). It is a cross-sectoral agreement signed by different ministries in cooperation with civil society partners and organizations. The violence prevention agreement encompasses the prevention and suppression of various types of interpersonal violence. Particular emphasis is placed on violence against children, while new focus areas include violence against the elderly and psychological violence. Additionally, hate crimes, which have received less attention so far, are also addressed to some extent. The agreement sets out 14 measures for violence prevention. The agreement does not include a complete list of violence prevention activities. The focus is on problems that still need more attention or have so far been overshadowed or where the expected progress has not been made. The measures cover activities at different levels of prevention:

1. Changing attitudes and norms on violence;
2. Violence prevention in educational institutions, youth work, and hobby education and recreational activities;
3. Supporting children and young people who have problems with violence;
4. Prevention and reduction of domestic violence;
5. Prevention of violence against the elderly;
6. Prevention of violence in the digital world;
7. Prevention of trafficking in human beings;
8. Prevention of sexual violence;
9. Awareness of violence and the intervention skills of specialists;
10. Victim-friendly proceedings;
11. Better protection and support for victims of violence;
12. Supporting the work of perpetrators to stop violent behaviour;
13. Greater role of health care and social service providers in preventing violence;
14. Analysing the impact of violence prevention policies.

In 2026 the Violence Prevention Agreement will be renewed.

At the national level, an intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group has been established, consisting of officials from the relevant ministries (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Education and Research) and their respective agencies (Social Insurance Board, Police and Border Guard Board, and the Prosecutor's Office). This expert group meets regularly to ensure a shared information space and to exchange best practices in combating intimate partner violence. The IPV steering group is a high-level body that brings together deputy secretaries-general, the Prosecutor General, representatives of the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities, and the judiciary. The primary tasks of the steering group include supporting and monitoring the implementation of current Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Action Plan related tasks. Additionally, the group coordinates the activities of various ministries and state agencies in reducing intimate partner violence to enhance synergy and effectiveness. The planning of activities for the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention Action Plan for 2024–2027 took into account the recommendations from the evaluation report of the Istanbul Convention's monitoring committee (GREVIO). The Action Plan has two main objectives:

1. Recognising and condemning domestic violence.
2. People affected by domestic violence are systematically assisted on a needsbased basis.

The Ministry of Education and Research has officially joined the new action plan from 2024, which is a major step forward in preventing violence, as the role of kindergartens and schools in detecting intimate partner violence and supporting children is critical. To ensure that all parties involved in the intimate partner violence action plan share a sense of collective responsibility, it was decided that the expert group would be led on a rotating basis.

	In 2024, the process was led by the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs is currently in charge, and next year, the Ministry of the Interior will take on the leadership role.		
6	Was specific attention given to place the rights of women victims at the centre of all measures planned?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.1	<p>If yes, please specify how:</p> <p>In the <a href="#">Violence Prevention Agreement 2021-2025</a> specific attention is given to the prevention and reduction of different types of violence, where women constitute the majority of victims: for example domestic violence, sexual violence, violence against the elderly and the violence in the digital world. Violence against women is widespread. Women and men have different experiences of violence. Estonian women (64%) are significantly more likely to be victims of physical violence at home than the European average (35%). Perpetrators of violence against women are often close to the victim, and incidents are rarely witnessed by others. In Estonia, violence against women is most often perpetrated by family members: 58% of cases, which is significantly higher than the European average. According to the Violence Prevention Agreement gender equality, which is one of the prerequisites for preventing violence against women, will be promoted and the knowledge of specialists involved in the prevention and combating of violence in the field of gender equality will be improved, and the consideration and promotion of gender aspects and the principles of gender equality in prevention and combating activities will be encouraged. International recommendations for the prevention and reduction of violence against children and women, domestic violence, hate crimes, radicalization, and human trafficking are analyzed and implemented.</p>		
6.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
7	Do the plan/strategy and the measures contained therein involve all relevant actors, such as government agencies, the national, regional and local parliaments and authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.1	<p>Please specify the actors involved:</p> <p>At the national level, an intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group consists officials from the relevant ministries (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Education and Research) and their respective agencies (Social Insurance Board, Police and Border Guard Board, and the Prosecutor's Office).</p> <p>In 2026 the Violence Prevention Agreement will be renewed. To this end, preparatory meetings were held in 2025, attended by representatives of various institutions: in addition to the aforementioned state authorities also NGOs, healthcare sector, universities, local governments, the Office of the Chancellor of Justice as an NHRI, etc.</p>		
7.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
8	Have the authorities assigned the role of co-ordinating body to one or more fully institutionalised entities?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>  N/A (a co-ordinating body was already established)

			at the time of GREVIO's baseline evaluation) <input type="checkbox"/>
8.1	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
9	<p>Please specify the mandate, powers, and competences, as well as the composition, of the co-ordinating body/bodies:</p> <p>At the national level, an intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group has been established, consisting of officials from the relevant ministries (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Education and Research) and their respective agencies (Social Insurance Board, Police and Border Guard Board, and the Prosecutor's Office).</p> <p>This expert group meets regularly to ensure a shared information space and to exchange best practices in combating intimate partner violence. The IPV steering group is a high-level body that brings together deputy secretaries-general, the Prosecutor General, representatives of the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities, and the judiciary. The primary tasks of the steering group include supporting and monitoring the implementation of current Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Action Plan related tasks. Additionally, the group coordinates the activities of various ministries and state agencies in reducing intimate partner violence to enhance synergy and effectiveness.</p> <p>To ensure that all parties involved in the intimate partner violence action plan share a sense of collective responsibility, it was decided that the expert group would be led on a rotating basis. In 2024, the process was led by the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs is currently in charge, and next year, the Ministry of the Interior will take on the leadership role.</p> <p>In 2022, GREVIO recommended that Estonia consider involving an independent separate institution that would perform the functions of a nationally independent monitoring body. Due to limited resources, no separate body has been established to date, as the role of such a body is fulfilled by the IPV steering group and expert group on the coordination side and by the Chancellor of Justice and the Commissioner for Gender Equality and Equal Treatment on the monitoring side. In addition to the independent monitoring carried out by GREVIO and the close coordination between national institutions through the IPV expert group, the independent monitoring of gender-based violence and related prevention policies is carried out by the Chancellor of Justice as the national human rights institution (NHRI) and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, who, as an independent expert, monitors compliance with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act in accordance with the Equal Treatment Act and publishes reports on the implementation of the principles of gender equality and equal treatment. In addition to the role of a national human rights institution, the Chancellor of Justice also has the duties of an ombudsman, i.e. he or she protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals in their relations with public authorities, the competence of a children's ombudsman, the role of the national preventive mechanism (NPM), and the promotion, protection, and monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. By combining all of the above with constitutional review, the Chancellor of Justice can also monitor policies for the prevention of gender-based violence. As the national human rights institution, the Chancellor of Justice submitted its summary assessment of violence against women and domestic violence to GREVIO in September 2025. NGOs did the same. The Gender Equality Commissioner also makes recommendations for improving the situation of gender equality in Estonia, monitors</p>		

	<p>compliance with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act and the Equal Treatment Act, and exercises oversight in both the public and private sectors. Thus, gender equality and equal treatment policies are monitored by several parties independent of politics. Also, according to Article 70 of the Convention, national parliaments are invited to participate in monitoring the measures taken to implement the Convention. The parties to the Convention submit GREVIO reports to their national parliaments. According to a statement published by GREVIO, GREVIO intends to publish its first thematic evaluation report on Estonia in the fall of 2026. It is important that the content of this report is also discussed by the parliament.</p>		
9.1	<p>In particular, please indicate whether the co-ordinating body/bodies is/are responsible for:</p>		
	<p>- Co-ordination of policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  The co-ordination body responsible is: Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs with an intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group</p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>- Implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  The co-ordination body responsible is: each party of the intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group within its administrative area and within the limits of its competence</p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>- Monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  The co-ordination body responsible is: intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group, also Chancellor of Justice as the national human rights institution (NHRI) and the Gender Equality</p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

		and Equal Treatment Comissioner	
	- Co-ordination of the collection of data, analysis and dissemination of its results	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The co-ordination body responsible is: Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs with an intimate partner violence (IPV) expert group within their administrative competence.	No <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Please specify the human and financial resources allocated to the co-ordinating body/bodies: Officials from the relevant ministries (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Education and Research) and their respective agencies (Social Insurance Board, Police and Border Guard Board, and the Prosecutor's Office) who participate in the work of the expert group during their working hours. Working in the expert group is not separately funded.		
11	In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Articles 7 and 10, which were not covered by the questions above, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]:		
<b>III. Financial resources (Article 8)</b>			
12	Have your authorities allocated specific funds at the		
	- national	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- and/or regional	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- and/or local	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
12.1	levels of government for activities to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention?  The Action Plan for the prevention of intimate partner violence does not have a separate budget and all the activities are done within various organisations' own budgets.  Support services for victims of violence against women are provided by women's NGOs. They receive funding from the government (via the Ministry of Social Affairs/Social Insurance Board). Funding is provided through procurement. Women's support centers offer primary psychosocial crisis support		

24/7 both by phone and on site at the support center, psychological counseling or psychotherapy, legal advice, safe temporary accommodation (with children if necessary).

According to Victims Support Act victims of domestic and sexual violence can receive mental health support for trauma recovery (services of psychologists, psychotherapists) even without criminal proceedings, whereas previously, initiating proceedings was a requirement. Victim support services are funded by the state and provided by the staff of the Victim Support Department of the Social Insurance Board in all Estonian counties and are usually located in the same building as the police. Victim support workers are located in all major Estonian cities. The victim support crisis helpline offers support 24/7 calling is free and offer advise in Estonian, Russian and English.

The Victim Support Act defines the victim support services, which are provided and coordinated by the Social Insurance Board. The victim support services are:

1. Basic victim support service. Is provided by the staff of the Victim Support Department of the Social Insurance Board in all Estonian counties and are usually located in the same building as the police. Victim support offices are open on weekdays. To arrange an appointment, one must contact a victim support worker by phone or e-mail or via Victim Support Crisis Line 116006 which offers support for the people who have experienced violence, loss, etc. Crisis helpline counselors listen, share information about help options and, if necessary, connect the victim with the right specialists.

2. Psychosocial support in crisis situations;

3. Women's support center services offer help for the victims of violence against women. The service is funded by the state, coordinated by the Social Insurance Board but provided by the NGOs. The service is available 24/7 and is free of charge in every county of Estonia. The service includes counseling and safe temporary accommodation for a victim and their children.

4. Sexual violence crisis support. The goal of sexual violence crisis support is to ensure that victims of sexual violence receive the necessary medical assistance and initial psychosocial support, contributing to the victim's physical and psychosocial recovery. Sexual violence crisis support centers are located in four regions of Estonia, and the service is provided by healthcare institutions that are partners of the Social Insurance Board under contract. Victims are examined and treated for free, but also supported if they want to contact the police. They also collect and lodge evidence during examination in case the victim should want to contact the police later on. If necessary, the victim will be offered a referral to a psychologist, psychiatrist or other specialist (e.g. victim support)..

5. Services for victims of human trafficking;

6. Restorative justice services;

7. Violence cessation support. The goal of violence cessation support is to contribute to the prevention and reduction of violence through interventions directed at the perpetrator. The Social Insurance Board has a team of 5 counselors who provide counseling to perpetrators of violence in four regions of Estonia.

8. Mental health support for trauma recovery. The goal of mental health support for trauma recovery is to promote the victim's psychosocial balance and reduce the likelihood or intensity of psychological and behavioral disorders. This support includes psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance.

Mental health support for trauma recovery is available to:

Crime victims, for whom a criminal procedure has been initiated;

Victims of domestic violence or sexual violence;

The victim's child, grandchild, parent, or any other person raising the child, as well as grandparents, siblings, or someone who is or has been in a marriage or cohabitation with the victim;

Persons participating as witnesses in criminal proceedings.

	<p>The Estonian Barnahus, a public service of the Social Insurance Board, is a child-friendly, multidisciplinary service that supports children who have experienced sexual abuse or display harmful sexual behaviour. In Estonia Barnahus is regulated by § 29<sup>1</sup> of the Child Protection Act. This legal framework defines the responsibilities and tasks of Barnahus in providing assistance and support to children of the target group.</p> <p>In 2024, a two-year IMPACT project was launched (running from 2024 to 2026) to develop victim support systems in three countries: Estonia, Malta, and Portugal. In Estonia, this project serves as a continuation of the Protection of Crime Victims in Estonia (AREV) project, which aimed to improve the identification of crime victims, the documentation of their injuries, and their referral to support services within the healthcare sector.</p> <p>Key objectives of the IMPACT project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing national strategies and tools to improve victim support systems in Estonia, Malta, and Portugal;</li> <li>• Enhancing the accessibility of support for crime victims and reducing re-victimization through innovative referral systems, training programs, and communication tools;</li> <li>• Empowering victims and stakeholders by promoting collaboration and increasing awareness of rights and available resources.</li> </ul> <p>Objectives of the IMPACT project in Estonia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the implementation of the Victim Support Act adopted in 2023;</li> <li>• Developing and piloting tools for assessing crime victims' needs, facilitating referrals between services, and improving access to information;</li> <li>• Strengthening cooperation with the healthcare sector, including expanding the use of the body map for documenting abuse;</li> <li>• Training (healthcare) professionals to better understand the needs of crime victims and reduce re-victimization; Raising public and stakeholder knowledge and awareness. The project is funded by the European Union's Technical Support Instrument, which focuses on implementing reforms in member states. The total budget for the IMPACT project is €1.6 million, of which approximately €400,000 is allocated to Estonia.</li> </ul> <p>According to the <a href="#">explanatory memorandum</a> to the state budget 2025, the provision of services to victims and perpetrators of violence and the corresponding budgetary resources are within the administrative area of the Social Insurance Board. The aim is to provide victims and perpetrators of violence with various victim support services arising from the Victim Support Act, including basic victim support services, various target group-specific services (e.g., women's support center services, services for victims of human trafficking, etc.) and psychosocial services. In addition, compensation is paid to victims of crime who have fallen victim to violent crime on the territory of the Republic of Estonia and have therefore suffered serious damage to their health and property. Restorative justice services are also offered. The budget for these activities is €9.1 million (including €0.2 million in external funds), of which €6.9 million is spent by the Social Insurance Board and €2.2 million by TEHIK (Health and Welfare Information Systems Centre). Of the services covered by the program, the largest volume is basic victim support services at €3.2 million (including €0.05 million in broad-based national defense funds), followed by support services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence at €1.5 million, psychosocial assistance in crisis situations at €1.3 million (including broad-based national defense funds of €0.45 million), and mental health assistance to support recovery from trauma at €1.3 million.</p>			
12.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:			
13	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%; padding: 5px;">Have these funds increased since the publication of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report?</td> <td style="width: 15%; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 15%; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Have these funds increased since the publication of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have these funds increased since the publication of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		

	<p>According to the <a href="#">explanatory memorandum</a> to the state budget 2023 the operating budget of €8.7 million covers the costs of the Social Insurance Board and TEHIK. The services with the largest budget allocations under the program are support services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence (€1.6 million), basic victim support services (€1.6 million), psychological support services (€1.8 million), psychosocial crisis assistance services (€1 million). The program's budget was increased by €1.3 million in additional funding to ensure amendments to the Victim Support Act, making assistance more accessible to a larger number of victims of crime and violence.</p> <p>According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, direct costs for victim support services were €4.31 million in 2024, €4.98 million in 2025, and €5 million in 2026.</p>	If yes, by what amount:	
14	<del>Have your authorities taken measures to foster long-term and sustainable financial support for non-governmental organisations working to support victims and prevent violence?</del>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
14.1	<del>If yes, please specify:</del>		
14.2	<del>[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:</del>		
15	In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Article 8, which were not covered by the questions above, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]		
<b>IV. Non-governmental organisations and civil society (Article 9)</b>			
16	<del>Have your authorities taken measures contributing to further recognise, encourage and support the work of relevant non-governmental organisations and of civil society active in combating all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including in terms of funding and co-operation?</del>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
16.1	<del>If yes, please specify:</del>		
16.2	<del>[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:</del>		
<b>V. Data collection and research (Article 11)</b>			
17	In implementation of the recommendation addressed to your authorities, have new sectors of the administration started the collection of data in accordance with the requirements of Article 11, paragraph 1?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
17.1	If yes, please specify which sectors: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) was mandated to set up a coordination mechanism to develop a harmonized system for administrative data collection across EU Member States for implementing Article 44 of the Directive (EU) 2024/1385. To facilitate the successful execution of this		

	<p>assignment, 2025 EIGE established a Task Force, comprising a network of National Focal Points, data provider representatives, statistics specialists ect. In Estonia, the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs is the member of the Task Force.</p> <p>Also, cooperation with the police is ongoing in Estonia to improve data quality and accessibility, including data in accordance with Article 11 paragraph 1 of the Convention.</p> <p>Data on victim support services has been collected in the social services and benefits <a href="#">database STAR</a>.</p>		
17.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
18	In implementation of the recommendation addressed to your authorities, have sectors of the administration improved their data collection?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
18.1	<p>If yes, please specify which sectors and how, in particular whether new data categories were added:</p> <p>Developments in data collection go hand in hand with changes in law. In addition, data publication systems have also been improved. The Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs publishes the statistics and interactive dashboards relating to criminal justice and the results of annual victim surveys. For example, in 2025, statistics were published on the <a href="#">new webpage</a>. Producing criminal statistics helps prevent offences, respond to them effectively, and reduce the resulting harm through collaboration across different sector.</p>		
18.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
19	<p><del>Does statistical data collection by law enforcement agencies and the judiciary enable cases of violence against women to be tracked in order to indicate:</del></p> <p><del>— Conviction rates</del></p> <p><del>— Types of sentences</del></p> <p><del>— Attrition rates</del></p> <p><del>— Time-barred proceedings</del></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p>
20	<del>As regards population-based surveys, please indicate any survey conducted since the publication of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, while specifying the forms of violence covered:</del>		
21	In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Article 11, which were not covered by the questions above, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]:		
<p><b>VI. Custody, visitation rights and safety (Article 31)</b></p>			

22	Have your authorities taken measures contributing to ensure that incidents of violence covered by the scope of the Istanbul Convention are taken into account in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children, notably by judicial authorities?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
22.1	<p>If yes, please specify how this has been done (by legislative amendments or other means)</p> <p>Estonian <a href="#">Family Law Act</a> mandates that the best interests of the child are paramount in matters concerning the child taking into account all the circumstances and the legitimate interest of the relevant persons. While the Act doesn't explicitly list domestic violence as a criterion, the consideration of the child's well-being inherently involves assessing any history of violence. In practice, courts evaluate all factors affecting the child's safety and development, including any incidents of domestic violence.</p> <p><a href="#">Code of Civil Procedure</a> also states that when the court applies an measure of interim relief under the rules for interim protection measures, it takes into consideration whether one parent has used violence in respect of the child or of the other parent. When making arrangements for hearing the child, the court takes into consideration whether one parent has used violence in respect of the child or the other parent – the same principle applies when hearing the parents. Mediation or conciliation proceedings are not required to be undertaken as a prerequisite for approaching the court for assistance where one parent has used violence in respect of the child or the other parent.</p> <p><a href="#">Child Protection Act</a> emphasizes the child's right to life, health, development, and well-being. The risks threatening the well-being and development of the child must be prevented. Prevention includes the perception of situations and events which threaten the child as early as possible and the reaction thereto, including the identification of the child's development and behaviour problems, problems occurring in the family environment, identification of abuse and the increase of protective measures promoting the child's well-being and development. Although it doesn't specifically mention the psychological impact of witnessing domestic violence, the Act's broad protections encompass safeguarding children from environments where such violence occurs. State and local government agencies shall, according to their possibilities, develop measures in order to prevent the child's need for assistance and to decrease the existing problems.</p> <p>Estonian law prioritizes the child's right to be raised by their parents (i.e. Child Protection Act states that the natural environment for the development and growth of the child is the family; Family Law Act states that parents have the obligation and right to care for their underage child; A court may separate a child from the parents only if damage to the interests of the child cannot be prevented by other supporting measures applied in the relationship between the parents and the child). In cases where one parent is violent, authorities aim to place the child with the non-violent parent, provided it's in the child's best interest. Foster care is considered a last resort when neither parent can ensure the child's safety and well-being.</p> <p>§ 27 of the <a href="#">Constitution</a> guarantees the protection of children at the constitutional level. According to the Child Protection Act, the Family Law Act, as well as Estonia's international obligations, the best interests of the child must always be taken into account when resolving matters related to children and making decisions related to children.</p> <p>Child Protection Act § 2 provides the aim of the Act:  <b>„§ 2. Purpose of Act</b>  This Act shall be established in order to form behaviour and way of life which value and promote the development of children in the society, to create a supporting environment for children, to set the best interests of children as primary consideration, to improve the quality of life of children, to support</p>		

the comprehensive development of children and to ensure the necessary assistance and care in a timely manner for children whose health and well-being is in danger in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the optional protocols thereto (hereinafter the convention) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and other relevant legislation.”

The consideration of the child's best interests is regulated also in § 21 of the Child Protection Act:

**„§ 21. Setting best interests of child as primary consideration**

(1) Upon the adoption of or deciding not to adopt decisions affecting a child and choosing between different options upon planning a decision (hereinafter deciding together), the best interests of the child shall be ascertained and they shall be based on as the primary consideration upon the making of decisions.

(2) In order to ascertain the best interests of the child, it is necessary:

1) to ascertain all the relevant circumstances concerning the situation and person of the child and other information which is necessary to evaluate the effect of the decision on the child's rights and well-being;

2) to explain the content and reasons of the planned decision to the child, to hear the child in a manner taking account of his or her age and development and to account for his or her opinion based on the child's age and development as one of the circumstances upon ascertaining the best interests of the child;

3) assessing all the relevant circumstances in aggregate, to form a reasoned opinion concerning the best interests of the child with regard to the planned decision.

(3) If the best interests of a child differ from the child's opinion or if a decision which does not coincide with the child's opinion is made on other grounds, the reasons for not taking the child's opinion into account must be explained to the child.”

The consideration of the child's best interests is emphasized also in the Family Act:

**“§ 123. Following child's interests**

(1) Upon hearing any matter concerning a child and regulated in this Chapter, a court shall make a decision primarily in the interests of the child, taking into account all the circumstances and the legitimate interest of the relevant persons.

(2) A court shall amend a decision made earlier if this is required due to significant circumstances which affect permanently the well-being of a child.

**118. Exercise of parental legal custody**

[...]

(2) If it is not possible for the parents to exercise legal custody, a court shall apply the relevant measures in the interests of the child. If necessary, a court shall commence proceedings for appointment of a guardian with respect to the child.

**§ 123<sup>1</sup>. Restoration of parent's legal custody**

(1) In the case of variation of legal custody, a parent's legal custody shall be restored on the basis of a parent's application if restoration of the parent's legal custody corresponds to the interests of the child.

(2) In the case of restriction of legal custody, application of measures restricting the legal custody shall be terminated and a parent's legal custody shall be restored on the basis of a parent's application if the interests of the child are no longer in danger.

[...]

**§ 135. Separation of child from family and deprivation of legal custody in full**

(1) A court may separate a child from the parents only if damage to the interests of the child cannot be prevented by other supporting measures applied in the relationship between the parents and the child.

(2) A court may deprive a parent of legal custody in full only if other measures have not yielded any results or if there is reason to presume that the application of the measures is not sufficient to prevent danger.

(3) Upon hearing a matter concerning substantial restriction of legal custody or deprivation of legal custody in full, a court shall involve a rural municipality or city government in the proceedings for the purpose of hearing its opinion.

(4) If leaving a child in his or her family endangers the health or life of the child, a rural municipality government or city government or the Social Insurance Board may separate the child from the family before a court ruling is made. In such case the rural municipality government or city government shall promptly submit a petition to a court for restriction of the parent's legal custody with respect to the child.

**§ 137. Termination of joint legal custody**

(1) If parents who have joint legal custody live permanently apart or do not wish to exercise the right of joint legal custody any further for any other reason, each parent has the right to request from a court in proceedings on petition that the legal custody of the child be partially or fully transferred to him or her. A court may resolve a dispute concerning the legal custody also in the proceedings concerning the divorce.

(2) A petition shall be dismissed if:

1) a child who has attained at least 14 years of age objects to the transfer of legal custody, or

2) if there is reason to believe that termination of the joint legal custody and granting sole legal custody to the petitioner does not correspond to the interests of the child.

(3) In the case of termination of the joint legal custody, a court shall decide on the grant of legal custody to one parent on the basis of the interests of the child and shall take into account, inter alia, the mental and financial readiness of each parent to raise the child, emotional relationship with the child and current commitment to caring for the child and the future living conditions of the child.

**§ 138. Transfer of legal custody**

(1) If legal custody belongs to only one parent, the other parent may request from a court that legal custody of the child be partially or fully transferred to him or her. A petition is satisfied if transfer of legal custody corresponds to the interests of the child, a child who has attained at least 14 years of age does not object to it and the parent requesting transfer of the right is suitable and able to exercise legal custody. If legal custody belongs to only one parent on the basis of a court decision, the other parent may request transfer of legal custody if the circumstances on the basis of which the court decision was made have changed significantly, or he or she may request restoration of joint legal custody.

(2) If a parent with sole legal custody has died or has been deprived of legal custody in full, a court shall grant legal custody to the other parent unless it is in conflict with the interests of the child.

**§ 140. Suspension of parent's legal custody**

[...]

(4) If parents have joint legal custody and the legal custody of one parent is suspended, the other parent shall exercise legal custody alone. If sole legal custody of a child granted to a parent on the basis of law or a court decision is suspended and there is no reason to expect that the grounds for suspension cease to exist, a court shall grant legal custody to the other parent if it corresponds to the interests of the child."

When performing and organizing procedural actions, the court takes into account whether the parent has been violent towards the child or the other parent (Code of Civil Procedure § 551 (3), § 552<sup>1</sup> (1), § 558 (1), § 560<sup>1</sup> (2), (5), § 561 (1)).

It is important to note that matters concerning the procedure for determining a parent's rights in respect of the child and regulating access to the child are resolved in a in action-by-petition proceedings (CCP § 550), which means that the court applies the principle of investigation and collects evidence on its own initiative (CCP § 477 (5), (6), (7)), the court essentially has the obligation to establish the truth.

Estonian law has been designed in such a way that in general, before filing a case in court on determining a parent's rights in respect of the child or regulating access to the child, parents should participate in out-of-court mediation procedure. Family mediation in Social Insurance Board is a state-funded service, participation in a state-funded mediation service is free. The purpose of the service is to conclude a parenting plan on issues related to the child at the earliest possible stage in order to avoid conflicts and escalation of conflicts. The service and the procedure are regulated by Act on State-Funded Family Mediation Services. Family mediators are specially trained for this purpose. If the application submitted to the court is not accompanied by a certificate of the unsuccessful mediation but the party to the proceedings indicates or it is apparent from the circumstances that there has been domestic violence in the family against the child or the other parent, the court does not direct the parents to participate in family mediation proceedings. The court has the discretion not to direct the parents to participate in family mediation proceedings, for example, in cases where the court is aware of domestic violence. To prevent the risk of revictimization, the victim does not have to prove domestic violence. When resolving a civil dispute related to a child the court proceeds from the victim's statement, case's circumstances and the court's knowledge. Where, based on the petition, one parent has used violence in respect of the child or of the other parent, the court explains to the parents the possibility of recourse to the Social Insurance Board in order to undertake the mediation procedure provided for by the [Act on State-funded Family Mediation Services](#). In this case, mediation will only take place if the victim so wishes. Specially trained mediators work with the family.

The court proceedings in matters of determining a parent's rights in respect of the child and regulating access to the child are regulated by Chapter 56, Section 3 (§ 558-5632 ) of the CCP. Matters concerning the procedure for determining a parent's rights in respect of the child and regulating access to the child are resolved in a in action-by-petition proceedings (CCP § 550), which means that the court applies the principle of investigation and collects evidence on its own initiative (CCP § 477 (5)-(7), the court essentially has the obligation to establish the truth. The court shall involve the local government (child protection officers, social workers) in resolving a matter related to a child (CCP § 551 (2), § 552).

#### **§ 551. Granting interim protection**

[...] (2) Before applying interim protection measures in relation to a minor, the court must – unless it is manifest that the resulting delay would harm the interests of the minor – invite the executive of the municipality in which the minor has their residence to provide its opinion in the matter. If the measure is applied without such an opinion having been provided, the opinion must be obtained at the earliest opportunity. [...]

#### **§ 552. Cooperation with the municipal executive**

(1) Where, by law, proceedings require participation of the municipal executive, the court notifies the executive of the proceedings. Unless otherwise provided by law, the court also informs the executive of the proceedings and of the circumstances connected to the same in other situations where it is manifest that the executive needs to be aware of those circumstances in order to perform its duties.

(2) In proceedings that concern a minor or the legal guardianship, the court invites the municipal executive to state its view and sends the executive copies of the orders by which it concludes such proceedings.

In accordance with Family Law Act § 135, upon hearing a matter concerning substantial restriction of legal custody or deprivation of legal custody in full, a court shall involve a rural municipality or city government in the proceedings for the purpose of hearing its opinion (3). If leaving a child in his or her family endangers the health or life of the child, a rural municipality government or city government or the Social Insurance Board may separate the child from the family before a court ruling is made. In such case the rural municipality government or city government shall promptly submit a petition to a court for restriction of the parent's legal custody with respect to the child.

A website that provides relevant information on conducting child-friendly court proceedings is available to help both the court and all participants in proceedings involving children: <https://lapsesobralikmenetus.just.ee/et>. The website is managed by the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs.

Courts may impose supervised visitation or restrict the abusive parent's access to the child. To prevent the risk to abused parent, visitation exchanges can be organized so that the parents are not in any direct contact. Courts may impose supervised visitation or restrict the abusive parent's access to the child.

Estonian legislation allows for the restriction of parent's legal custody rights if it's determined that the child's best interests and safety cannot be ensured otherwise. The Family Law Act states that if the physical, mental or emotional well-being or the property of a child is endangered by abuse of the parent's legal custody, neglecting the child, inability of the parents to perform their obligations or conduct of a third person and the parents do not wish or are unable to prevent danger, a court shall apply necessary measures for the prevention of danger.

Measures applied may be that a court may make decisions arising from legal custody in lieu of a parent, issue warnings and precepts and impose prohibitions and require the parents to observe the instructions of the agency specified by the court. A court may restrict physical custody or property guardianship by prohibiting the performance of certain acts or certain type of acts. A court may separate a child from the parents only if damage to the interests of the child cannot be prevented by other supporting measures applied in the relationship between the parents and the child. A court may deprive a parent of legal custody in full only if other measures have not yielded any results or if there is reason to presume that the application of the measures is not sufficient to prevent danger. If leaving a child in his or her family endangers the health or life of the child, a rural municipality government or city government or the Social Insurance Board may separate the child from the family before a court ruling is made. In such case the rural municipality government or city government shall promptly submit a petition to a court for restriction of the parent's legal custody with respect to the child.

The training of attorneys focuses on protecting the rights and interests of children. The Estonian Bar Association has established mandatory trainings for attorneys providing state legal aid to minors and has developed guidelines for lawyers providing state legal aid regarding the representation of children in civil court proceedings. The training that attorneys are required to undergo covers various stages of child development, interviewing children and the psychology of children in conflict relationships with parents.

In spring 2024, the Ministry of Social Affairs organised a roundtable on parental alienation for representatives of child protection specialists, legal professionals, psychologists and other related specialists. One of the two key presentations at the round table gave a short introduction to the social science research on the subject, incl. the controversial views among the researchers. As a follow-up, at the end of 2024 the Ministry of Social Affairs commissioned research on "Identifying intra-family child abuse and assessing its impact in child protection work and civil proceedings concerning children", which among other things includes research questions on whether and how the concept of parental alienation is used in civil proceedings concerning children.

In 2023, it was made mandatory for lawyers representing children to complete six training courses, with the requirement to have completed all six courses taking effect from 01.01.2025. These training courses are as follows:

1. Child developmental psychology (including brain development, developmental stages, attachment theory, etc.)
2. Interviewing children
3. Children's rights

	<p>4. Child psychology in conflicted parental relationships in court proceedings (as per the board decision of 28.05.2024, this replaces the previously mandatory training on "A Specific Form of Violence – Parental Alienation.")</p> <p>5. Practical workshop on the guidelines for representing minors</p> <p>6. Child-friendly communication skills</p> <p>Various training events, including a 2022 lecture on parental alienation and its lack of academic validation have been organised. This issue was also highlighted during a 2024 roundtable discussion between judges from the Supreme Court of Estonia, as well as the Tartu and Tallinn Circuit Courts.</p> <p>Also, two two-day seminars were held in 2023, "Interviewing Minors in Practice," provided specialized knowledge on effective communication with minors. On the first day, participants were introduced to different types of memory and cognitive processes, the principles of child interviewing, and approaches tailored to a child's age, mental maturity, and special needs. The second day focused on the practical application of this theoretical knowledge, allowing participants to practice assessing the interview environment and conducting preparatory and procedural stages of interviewing minors under the guidance of professionals. Additionally, emphasis was placed on common mistakes to avoid when communicating with minors. To ensure personalized feedback and facilitate skill acquisition, training sessions were conducted in small groups of up to fifteen participants. In 2024 follow-up seminar, "Advanced Interviewing of Minors," provided judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys—who had previously completed basic training in interviewing minors— with a more in-depth understanding of the impact of trauma on memory processes. This was followed by practical exercises on interview preparation, execution, and management, with particular attention to avoiding common errors in communication with minors. The training also addressed the assessment of a child's best interests. In the fall of 2025, a roundtable discussion on custody and child access arrangements will take place, with a primary focus on the issue of domestic violence.</p>		
22.2	<p>If yes, please specify how the above obligation is implemented in practice, including by providing data indicating to what extent judicial authorities consider all issues related to violence against women in their decisions on custody and visitation rights:</p> <p>See answer to the p 22.1.</p>		
22.3	<p>[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:</p>		
23	<p>Have your authorities taken measures contributing to ensure that visitation rights do not jeopardise the rights and safety of the victim or children?</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
23.1	<p>If yes, please specify: See answer to the p 22.1.</p>		
23.2	<p>[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:</p>		
24	<p>In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Article 31, which were not covered by the questions above, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]:</p>		
<p><b>VII. Immediate response, prevention, and protection (Article 50)</b></p>			

25	Have your authorities taken measures contributing to improve the prompt and appropriate response of law enforcement agencies, in particular by:		
	- Enhancing training of law enforcement officials on the gendered nature of violence against women and its consequences	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Ensuring a sufficient number of female police officers	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Setting up premises designed to establish a relationship of trust between the victim and the law enforcement personnel	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Ensuring the efficient collection of evidence so that the reliance on the victim's testimony is lessened	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
25.1	<p>If yes, please specify:</p> <p>The victims have the right to make an application to be interviewed or examined by a person of their sex if the case concerns sexual violence, gender violence or a criminal offence committed in a close relationship – except if the interview is conducted by the prosecutor, or if the examination is conducted by the judge, or if this would interfere with the course of the proceedings. Security and privacy are ensured for all individuals in Police and Border Guard buildings. They are received by trained professionals, and the presence of a victim support worker is guaranteed at police stations, with immediate involvement if necessary.</p> <p>The Police and Border Guard Board has domestic violence investigation unit in north prefecture, sexual crime units and child protection units across Estonia in every prefecture. These units investigate crimes of the respective types and are trained to operate in these specific fields. The units are competent in all types of violence defined as criminal offenses under Estonian law. Domestic and sexual violence cases belong to the highest prioritisation group among criminal cases (there are three different levels according to the guide of prioritisation agreed on by both the Prosecutor's Office and the Police and Border Guard Board. The quality, speed, and oversight of proceedings are ensured. The Police and Border Guard Board monitors the proportion of domestic violence criminal proceedings resolved within 30 days.</p> <p>Proceedings are carried out in accordance with the law and internal guidelines. The Police and Border Guard Board has a guideline for responding to and resolving domestic violence cases. Police officers are trained in trauma-informed practices, as well as in interviewing victims of specific types of crimes and understanding their particular needs. Victim support specialists usually work in police stations so that the police can include them during the interrogation etc and “hand over” the victim to victim support. Prosecutors specializing in domestic violence operate in all regions of Estonia and have drawn up uniform practice agreements for criminal proceedings involving domestic violence.</p> <p>The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences confirmed in 2025 the compulsory training curriculum which is targeted at first responders in the police and the emergency services. Each target group will receive 16 academic hours of training. They focus on, among other things, networking and working together to complement the capabilities of the different actors, rather than pushing one agency onto another. Above all, the curriculum will help to raise awareness of the roles and capabilities of the different actors, which in turn will broaden and motivate everyone to take action to tackle the problem. Consequently, we will try to influence attitudes towards an understanding of domestic violence, and to challenge established and sometimes fossilised perceptions and myths about the causes and nature of domestic violence, including recurrence.</p>		

	<p>In October 2024, joint co-vision groups were piloted in all four Police prefectures, bringing together officials involved in handling domestic violence cases: Police and Border Guard Board (community police officers, investigators, patrol officers), Emergency Response Centre (dispatchers), and victim support workers from the Social Insurance Board. These groups include officials working at different stages of domestic violence cases, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the actions taken by their cooperation partners before and after their own involvement. This helps them comprehend the overall case resolution process, recognize patterns of recurrence, and appreciate the significance of their contribution.</p> <p>In the Victim Support Act, education and training requirements for specialists providing victim support services are established through regulations. This means that professionals working in women's support centers, sexual violence crisis centers, victim support services, and other victim support service providers must complete both basic and continuing training to be eligible to perform their duties.</p> <p>The Victim Support Department of the Social Insurance Board has developed several e-courses for specialists working with victims. These courses make additional training more accessible to a wider range of professionals, allowing them to complete the training more easily, revisit topics as needed, and refresh their knowledge. The e-courses are available on <a href="https://www.palunabi.ee/et/e-kursused">https://www.palunabi.ee/et/e-kursused</a>. E-courses: "Trauma-Informed Practice" and "Psychological First Aid in Supporting a Person in Crisis" are intended for everyone. The remaining e-courses are designed for specialists, for example, if you work with people, including vulnerable groups (possibly also victims), and wish to develop professionally. The e-course "Handling Cases of Violence" is designed to raise awareness among professionals working with victims about domestic violence—exploring its nature, introducing key principles of assistance, and providing guidelines on how to act in situations requiring prompt and decisive intervention. The trauma-informed e-course serves as a guide on how to better understand and address trauma-related needs both in daily work and at the organizational level. The Basic Victim Support E-Training is intended for those who encounter victims of crime, violence, or crisis situations in their work or who wish to learn more about the functioning of the victim support system and needs-based support for victims. The Restorative Justice E-Learning Course focuses on the principles and core beliefs of restorative justice, which guide building connections with people and understanding emerging situations. When professionals grasp these principles, it enables them to apply restorative justice methods in each case and feel confident in their role as facilitators.</p> <p>Newly appointed judges must complete a mandatory specialized training program. The term “newly appointed judge” refers to judges at the first instance or appellate level who have served in a judicial role for less than three years. Additionally, many judges in Estonia have prior experience within the Estonian court system, often working as law clerks or judicial clerks. As a result, they may have already participated in judicial training events organized by the Legal Information and Judicial Training Department at the Supreme Court of Estonia. The mandatory training program also includes free access to e-courses, such as the HELP Online course on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. Given that only a small number of new judges are appointed each year (ranging from 2 to 5), online courses offer an effective way to familiarize them with key topics, such as different forms of violence against women and domestic violence. The HELP course is available to all judges, and information about these courses is shared annually.</p>		
25.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
26	Have your authorities taken measures contributing to enable the identification and careful analysis of any failure of protection?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
26.1	If yes, please specify what kind of measures, and if further preventive measures were adopted to remedy this situation:		

According to the police cases of violence against women and domestic violence have been declared a priority and are monitored for compliance with the procedural deadlines. There are no known cases where proceedings take too long and are terminated as a result. Also, in Estonia all proceedings of criminal acts can be tracked from reporting to conviction. Since 2023 the Police and Border Guard Board and the Prosecutor's Office use the same database for collecting and saving data.

In 2023, the Ministry of the Interior commissioned a research on "Knowledge and attitudes related to intimate partner violence among rescue workers and police officers" with the aim of understanding the experiences, knowledge and attitudes related to intimate partner violence among rescue workers and police officers who are involved in intimate partner violence cases. The survey was an input for planning further activities to improve the awareness and skills of professionals. Some of the actions that followed up on the results of the research were: upgrading the curricula of police and emergency responders officers; covision and training (systematic) for police and emergency responders officers already in service.

In 2024, the Ministry of the Interior commissioned a case analysis: "The authorities' handling of fatal domestic violence cases". The aim of the study was to:

1. analyse the cases of intimate partner violence resulting in the death of the victim, focusing on the activities of the police, prosecution, victim support and local authorities in detecting, responding and processing the cases;
2. identify the bottlenecks in the response of the authorities and proposals for changes in the work processes. The results of the study will serve as input for the planning of future actions and for filling the gaps identified.

In 2024, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications funded the conduct of the study "Pre-trial Proceedings of Sexual Violence Cases" as part of the strategic partnership for supporting gender equality NGOs. The study focused on the pre-trial proceedings of sexual violence cases from the perspective of the police, prosecution, victim support, and health-care professionals. The study analyses the practices of pre-trial proceedings, including evidence collection, victim support mechanisms, and the institutional organization of the investigation of sexual violence. The study provides policy recommendations on how to enhance pre-trial proceedings by increasing professionals' awareness and skills and ensuring a stereotype-free, trauma-informed, and victim-centered approach to handling sexual violence cases. (<https://www.praxis.ee/uploads/2024/03/Seksuaalvagivalla-kohtueelne-uurimine.pdf>).

As a measure to increase public safety in the context of tragic incidents of violence, the current practices and procedural rules of all institutions (victim support, police, prosecutor's office, court, probation service) are being analyzed in cooperation with representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the prosecutor's office, victim support, probation services, and local governments, with the aim of mapping processes, areas of responsibility, and data protection issues.

Also, according to the [Code of Criminal Procedure](#) the victim has a right to contest the refusal to commence, or the termination of, criminal proceedings.

**§ 38. Rights and obligations of the victim**

(1) The victim has a right to:

- 1) contest the refusal to commence, or the termination of, criminal proceedings according to the rules provided by § 207 and 208 of this Code;

**§ 207. Contestation, before the Office of the Prosecutor General, of refusal to commence or of termination of criminal proceedings**

(1) The victim may file an appeal with the Prosecutor's Office against a decision refusing to commence criminal proceedings, made on the grounds provided by subsections 1 or 2 of § 199 of this Code.

(2) The victim may file an appeal with the Office of the Prosecutor General against termination of criminal proceedings or denial, by the Prosecutor's Office, of an appeal provided for by subsection 1 of this section.

[RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]

(3) An appeal mentioned in subsections 1 or 2 of this section may be filed within ten days following receipt of notification of the decision by which commencement of criminal proceedings is refused, of the order by which the Prosecutor's Office disposes of the appeal or a copy of a substantiated order by which criminal proceedings are terminated.

[RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]

(4) The Prosecutor's Office disposes of an appeal mentioned in subsection 1 of this section within fifteen days following its receipt. The Office of the Prosecutor General disposes of an appeal mentioned in subsection 2 of this section within one month following its receipt.

(5) The Prosecutor's Office or the Office of the Prosecutor General issues a substantiated order concerning denial of the appeal and sends a copy of the order to the appellant.

[RT I 2004, 46, 329 - entry into force 01.07.2004]

### **§ 208. Contestation, before the circuit court of appeal, of refusal to commence or of termination of criminal proceedings**

(1) Where an appeal mentioned in subsections 1 or 2 of § 207 of this Code or an application for termination of criminal proceedings on the grounds specified in § 205<sup>2</sup> of this Code is denied by an order of the Office of the Prosecutor General, the person who filed the appeal or application may, acting through an attorney, contest the order before the circuit court of appeal within one month following receipt of a copy of that order.

[RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]

(1<sup>1</sup>) Where, under Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939, the issue of not commencing, or terminating, criminal proceedings has been conclusively disposed of in the Prosecutor's Office, the relevant disposition may be contested by the victim, through an attorney, before the circuit court of appeal within one month following reception of that disposition.

[RT I, 29.12.2020, 1 - entry into force 08.01.2021]

(2) An appeal filed with the circuit court of appeal states:

- 1) the facts of the criminal offence;
- 2) the legal designation of the offence;
- 3) the items of evidence collected in the case that support the criminal suspicion;
- 4) where criminal proceedings have been terminated or their termination under § 205<sup>2</sup> of this Code has been refused, a short description of proceedings that have been conducted in the case;

[RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]

5) any procedural operations whose performance, in the appellant's view, was refused unfoundedly or the reasons why the appellant finds that their right to proceedings within a reasonable time has been violated.

[RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]

(3) When making arrangements for hearing an appeal mentioned in subsection 2 of this section, the circuit court of appeal follows the provisions of § 326 of this Code without prejudice to special rules provided by this section.

[RT I 2006, 21, 160 - entry into force 25.05.2006]

(4) An appeal mentioned in subsection 2 of this section is disposed of by a circuit court judge sitting alone within ten days following its receipt. Before rendering the decision, the judge has a right to:

- 1) require production of the materials of the criminal file;

	<p>2) issue instructions to the Office of the Prosecutor General to perform additional procedural operations. [RT I 2006, 21, 160 - entry into force 25.05.2006]</p> <p>(5) If the judge finds the commencement or continuation of criminal proceedings unjustified, the judge enters an order that states:</p> <p>1) the reasons for denying the appeal; 2) an order for the appellant to pay the costs. [RT I 2006, 21, 160 - entry into force 25.05.2006]</p> <p>(6) If the judge finds the commencement or continuation of criminal proceedings justified, the judge sets aside the order and directs the Office of the Prosecutor General to commence or continue criminal proceedings in the case. [RT I 2006, 21, 160 - entry into force 25.05.2006]</p> <p>(7) If the judge finds that the right of the suspect to proceedings within a reasonable time has been violated, the judge sets aside the order of the Office of the Prosecutor General and terminates criminal proceedings in the case. When terminating the proceedings, the judge observes the requirements of § 206 of this Code. [RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]</p> <p>(8) Where the circuit court of appeal sets aside an order of the Office of the Prosecutor General, the opinion stated in the court's disposition concerning the interpretation and application of legal rules is mandatory for the Prosecutor's Office in proceedings in which the disposition was rendered. [RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]</p> <p>(9) In a situation mentioned in subsection 5 of this section, the court may make an order by which it varies the order by which criminal proceedings were terminated. [RT I, 23.02.2011, 1 - entry into force 01.09.2011]</p>		
26.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
27	In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Article 50, which were not covered by the questions above, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]:		
<b>VIII. Emergency barring, restraining or protection orders (Articles 52 and 53)</b>			
28	As regards emergency barring orders, have your authorities taken measures contributing to ensure that the competent authorities are granted the power to order, in situations of immediate danger, a perpetrator of domestic violence to vacate the residence of the victim or person at risk, and to prohibit the perpetrator from entering the residence of or contacting the victim or person at risk.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
28.1	If yes, please indicate which authorities have the power to issue emergency barring orders:		

	<p>In the report of the GREVIO report published on 17 November 2023, it was brought out that Estonias current legislation on emergency barring orders is not in line with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, as it does not provide adequate protection to the victim. Since then an intention to draft an amendment to the relevant law (legislative intent) has been made. In order to identify best practices and solutions, we have organised various international meetings on this topic and sent a questionnaire to all EU Member States on the subject. The plan was to change the length of the barring order, extend the powers to extend the barring order and create mechanisms to ensure that a breach of the barring order has consequences for the offender. According to experts from the Council of Europe, Estonia's current 12-hour prohibition on stay is insufficient. The proposed amendment would extend the maximum period to 72 hours. In December 4 2025 the draft ammendment to the Law Enforcement Act was approved by the government. The draft will be forwarded to the parliament for further discussion.</p>		
28.2	<p>If yes, please indicate the length of time for which emergency barring orders may remain in force: See answer p 28.1.</p>		
28.3	<p>[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:</p>		
29	<p>Have your authorities taken measures contributing to ensure the availability of restraining or protection orders to victims of the following forms of violence against women?</p>		
	- Domestic violence	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Stalking	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Sexual violence	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Sexual harassment	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Forced marriage	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Female genital mutilation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	- Forced abortion	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Forced sterilization	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
29.1	<p>If yes, please specify: In Estonia, all victims of the aforementioned forms of violence against women are entitled to restraining or protection orders. Although restraining or protection orders have been issued in some cases of violence (for example domestic violence), not all aforementioned forms of violence (for example FGM) are registered in Estonia.</p> <p>According to the <a href="#">Code of Criminal Procedure</a>: <b>§ 141<sup>1</sup>. Temporary restraining order</b> (1) The suspect or accused in proceedings concerning a criminal offence against the person or a criminal offence against a minor may, in order to protect the privacy or other personal rights of a victim and on an application or motion of the Prosecutor's Office by order of the pre-trial investigation judge or of the court, be prohibited from attending any places determined by the court, from approaching any persons determined by the court or from communicating with such persons.</p>		

(1<sup>1</sup>) The court may, together with a temporary restraining order and with the consent of the suspect or accused, impose electronic monitoring as provided for by § 75<sup>1</sup> of the Penal Code.

(1<sup>2</sup>) In a situation of urgency, the restraining order provided for by subsection 1 of this section may be imposed by order of the Prosecutor's Office and regardless of the victim's consent. In such a situation, the Prosecutor's Office notifies the imposition of the restraining order to the court within two working days and the court, having regard to the victim's consent, decides on the permissibility of the order following the rules provided by subsections 1<sup>3</sup>–6 of this section.

(1<sup>3</sup>) The order which is mentioned in subsection 1 of this section and by which a temporary restraining order is imposed and the order which is mentioned in subsection 1<sup>2</sup> and by which a restraining order is declared permissible may be made as a note on the corresponding application, motion or order of the Prosecutor's Office.

(2) A temporary restraining order is imposed on the suspect or accused with the consent of the victim.

**§ 310<sup>1</sup>. Decision concerning a restraining order**

(1) On an application of the victim and for the protection of their private life or other personal rights, the court may, under § 1055 of the Law of Obligation Act, impose a restraining order for a period of up to three years on an offender convicted of a criminal offence against the person or against a minor.

(1<sup>1</sup>) The court may impose a restraining order together with the electronic monitoring provided for by § 75<sup>1</sup> of the Penal Code if the suspect or accused agrees to this. Electronic monitoring may be imposed for up to twelve months.

According to the [Law of Obligation Act](#) (within civil proceeding)

**§ 1055. Prohibition on performance of damaging acts**

(1) If unlawful damage is caused continually or a threat is made that unlawful damage will be caused, the victim or the person who is threatened has the right to demand that behaviour which causes damage be terminated or the making of threats with such behaviour be refrained from. In the case of bodily injury, damage to health, violation of inviolability of personal life or any other personality rights, it may be demanded, inter alia, that the tortfeasor be prohibited to approach other persons (restraining order), the use of housing or communication be regulated or other similar measures be applied.

According to the [Penal Code](#):

**§ 331<sup>2</sup>. Violation of restriction order**

Violation of a restriction order or other measure of protection of personality right imposed by a court decision, if this poses a danger to the life, health or property of persons, or repeated violation of a restriction order or other measure of protection of personality right is punishable by a pecuniary punishment or up to one year's imprisonment.

According to the Code of Criminal Procedure:

**§ 37<sup>2</sup>. Assessment of specific protection needs of an individual victim**

(1) The proceedings authority is obligated to assess whether any circumstances are present that amount to a reasonable cause to believe that the individual victim requires special treatment and protection – including victim support services – in the proceedings.

(2) The assessment takes into consideration the victim's personality, the gravity and nature of the criminal offence, who the suspect is, the circumstances in which the criminal offence was committed and the harm caused to the victim. Any minor victims are presumed to require special treatment and protection in criminal proceedings.

(3) As a result of the assessment, a decision is made concerning which of the means provided for by this Code for ensuring the safety of the victim it is possible to employ, as well as whether the interview with the victim should be conducted in premises adapted for their special needs or by, or with the participation of, a specialist trained to interview victims with special protection needs or, if possible, by the same person throughout the proceedings or whether a victim who has special needs may require victim support services.

**§ 38. Rights and obligations of the victim**

(1) The victim has a right to:

- 1) contest the refusal to commence, or the termination of, criminal proceedings according to the rules provided by §§ 207 and 208 of this Code;
- 2) file, through the investigative authority or the Prosecutor's Office, a civil court claim or statement of a public-law claim during the time limit provided by subsection 1 of § 225 or clause 4 of § 240 of this Code;
- 3) give statements or testimony, or refuse to give them, on the grounds provided by §§ 71–73 of this Code;
- 4) offer evidence;
- 5) file applications, motions and complaints;
- 6) acquaint themselves with the report of any procedural operation performed in the case and to make representations, which are to be included in the report, concerning the conditions, course, results and reports of the operation;
- 7) acquaint themselves with the materials of the criminal file following the rules provided by § 224 of this Code;
- 8) participate in the trial or hearing of the case;
- 9) consent to the use of the plea agreement procedure or refuse such consent, state their opinion concerning the charges and the sentence, as well as the quantum of harm mentioned in the charges and the civil court claim or statement of the public-law claim;
- 10) consent to the imposition of a temporary restraining order and apply for the imposition of a restraining order following the rules provided by § 310<sup>1</sup> of this Code;
- 11) make an application to be interviewed or examined by a person of their sex if the case concerns sexual violence, gender violence or a criminal offence committed in a close relationship – except if the interview is conducted by the prosecutor, or if the examination is conducted by the judge, or if this would interfere with the course of the proceedings.

(2) The victim is required to:

- 1) appear when summoned by the investigative authority, the Prosecutor's Office or the court;
- 2) participate in procedural operations and comply with the directions of the investigative authority, the Prosecutor's Office and the court.

(3) [Repealed – RT I, 06.01.2016, 5 – entry into force 01.01.2017]

(4) The investigative authority or the Prosecutor's Office explains to the victim their rights, the procedure for filing a civil court claim, the principal requirements that apply to such a claim, the time limit for filing the claim and the consequences of allowing such a time limit to expire, and the conditions and rules that govern the provision of State-funded legal aid.

(5) An individual victim has a right to:

- 1) receive information concerning the committal in custody of a person suspected of the criminal offence, to apply to be notified of the release of the person committed in custody, in the event this poses a threat – except if communication of such information would cause harm to the suspect;
- 2) apply to be notified of any premature release of the convicted offender or of their escape from the custodial institution, if the information may prevent a threat to the victim;
- 3) have one person chosen by themselves accompany them at any procedural operation, unless the proceedings authority has refused this, stating its reasons;
- 4) apply for an opportunity to state their opinion concerning a premature release on parole of the offender, provided the offence that was committed is a criminal offence of the first degree provided by Chapter 9 or 11 of the Penal Code;
- 5) state their opinion concerning the impact that the criminal offence had on them and concerning the perpetrator's taking of responsibility for the offence.

(6) The person to accompany the victim at a procedural operation under clause 3 of subsection 5 of this section is cautioned that they are not allowed to disclose any information concerning the proceedings or to intervene in the course of the operation.

According to the Code of Criminal Procedure § 37 (3) the provisions applicable to witnesses apply to the victim as well.

#### **§ 67. Ensuring the safety of a witness**

(1) Having regard to the gravity of the criminal offence or to any exceptional circumstances, the pre-trial investigation judge may, on an application of the Prosecutor's Office, by order, anonymise a witness in order to ensure their safety.

(2) To enter an order by which a witness is anonymised, the pre-trial investigation judge questions the witness in order to ascertain their reliability and their need for protection, and hears the relevant submissions of the prosecutor. Where this is needed, the pre-trial investigation judge acquaints themselves with the criminal file.

(3) The order by which a witness is anonymised assigns the witness a name to be used in procedural operations according to subsection 8 of § 146 of this Code.

(4) Information concerning the name, personal identification number (or, if the person does not possess such a number, their date of birth), citizenship, education, place of residence and position of employment or educational institution of a witness who has been anonymised is enclosed in an envelope bearing the number of the criminal case and the signature of the person conducting the proceedings. The envelope is sealed and kept separately from the criminal file. Only the proceedings authority may acquaint themselves with the information contained in the envelope; the authority is to re-seal and re-sign the envelope after having acquainted itself with the information.

(5) In judicial proceedings, a witness bearing an assigned name is examined by telephone according to the rules provided by clause 2 of subsection 2 of § 69 of this Code using voice changing equipment, if necessary. Questions may also be put to the witness in writing.

(6) To ensure the safety of the witness, regardless of whether or not they have been anonymised, the relevant provisions of the Witness Protection Act may be applied in their respect.

#### **§ 69. Distance interview or distance examination**

	<p>(1) The proceedings authority may arrange a distance interview or examination of a person if interviewing or examining the person first-hand is complicated or unreasonably burdensome or if the distance interview or examination is necessary for protecting the person's interests.</p> <p>(2) For the purposes of this Code, distance interview or examination means an interview or examination:</p> <p>1) by means of a technical solution as a result of which the statement or testimony of the person interviewed or examined is seen and heard directly via live streaming, and questions can be put to the person;</p> <p>2) by telephone, as a result of which the statement or testimony of the person interviewed or examined is heard directly by live streaming, and questions can be put to the person.</p> <p>(3) [Repealed – RT I, 06.05.2020, 1 – entry into force 07.05.2020]</p> <p>(4) A note is recorded in the report of the distance interview or examination regarding the cautioning of the witness against refusing to give a statement or testimony without a statutory basis and against making a knowingly false statement or giving knowingly false testimony.</p> <p>(5) Where the interviewing or examining of a person who is found in a foreign State requires the assistance of a judicial authority of the foreign State, the provisions of § 489<sup>41</sup> of this Code are followed if the interview or examination takes place under a cooperative arrangement between the Member States of the European Union, whereas the provisions of § 468 of this Code are followed in other situations.</p> <p>(6) The Minister in charge of the policy sector may enact more specific requirements for arranging distance interviews or distance examination.</p>		
29.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
30	Have your authorities taken measures contributing to ensure the effective enforcement of barring, restraining or protection orders?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
30.1	If yes, please specify: See the answer p 29.1.		
30.2	[Optional question: if not, please specify the reasons]:		
31	In case your authorities have taken further measures contributing to the implementation of recommendations in relation to Articles 52 and 53, which were not covered by the questions above, in particular in relation to the collection of data on the number of orders issued and their violations, please report on these measures [word limit: 1000 words]:		

### Specific recommendations

32	Please report on any measures taken by the authorities to reform all sexual offences contained in the Estonian Penal Code to fully incorporate the notion of freely given consent as required by Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention and to ensure appropriate sanctions for all sexual acts without the consent of the victim, including where the circumstances of the case preclude valid consent. (Recommendation A.13, IC-CP/Inf (2022)9).
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	<p>On September 18 2025, the government approved a draft amendment to the Penal Code, known as the <a href="#">consent law</a>, which stipulates that sexual activity requires the explicit consent of both parties. On December 2 2025, the draft passed its first reading in parliament. Before the second reading, in January 2026 a consultation meeting will be held in parliament to discuss issues related to the draft. The progress of the draft and the outcome are not known in advance.</p>
33	<p>Please report on measures taken to ensure that vulnerability, particularly related to sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence against women, is formally assessed and identified at the earliest possible opportunity within the asylum procedure to inform decisions relating to accommodation and support services and to ensure procedural fairness and gender sensitivity in the conduct of the asylum interview (Recommendation A.18, IC-CP/Inf (2022)9).</p> <p>The Police and Border Guard Board has a guideline for responding to and resolving domestic violence cases, which outlines all the necessary steps and actions for officials, as well as information exchange with cooperation partners and data entry procedures. Proceedings are carried out in accordance with the law and internal guidelines. The elements of criminal offenses are defined by law. The Police and Border Guard Board officers are trained in trauma-informed practices, as well as in interviewing victims of specific types of crimes and understanding their particular needs. In case the need for support is identified, applicants of international protection are entitled to get victim support service. Currently the internal guideline for applicants with special reception needs and procedural requirements is updated in accordance with the Pact on Migration and Asylum.</p>