# **Committee of the Parties**



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

Report of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 17 December 2024

IC-CP(2024)RAP17

Adopted by written procedure with amendments

# Table of contents

Agenda item 1.	Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda
Agenda item 2.	Administrative and budgetary information
Agenda item 3.	State of signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention3
Agenda item 4.	Discussion on draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the
	Committee of the Parties, as regards voting, following the
	accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention4
Agenda item 5.	Election of Bureau members6
Agenda item 7.	Supervising the implementation of conclusions issued by the
	Committee of the Parties7
Agenda item 9:	Date of the next meeting
Agenda item 10.	Other business
Agenda item 11.	Adoption of the list of decisions taken
Appendix I:	Agenda9
Appendix II:	List of participants

# Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to, respectively, as "the Committee" and "the convention") held its 17th meeting on 17 December 2024 in Strasbourg. It adopted the draft agenda of the meeting as it appears in document IC-CP(2024)OJ17prov, which is set out in Appendix I.

2. The Chair welcomed the members of the Committee and other participants to the meeting, particularly those of the Czech Republic, as signatory of the convention, and Mexico, as an observer. She also offered a warm welcome to the representatives of the in-coming EU Presidency of Poland and thanked the representatives of the out-going EU Presidency of Hungary for the fruitful co-operation The Chair further informed the Committee that participants from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands will be attending the thematic discussion, scheduled for the afternoon, with Dr. Marie Claude Hofner on the topic of integrating the health sector in the national response to violence against women.

# Agenda item 2. Administrative and budgetary information

3. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that the budget had been fully executed, with ten evaluation visits carried out by GREVIO in 2024 as planned. GREVIO had also adopted eight reports as part of its new thematic evaluation procedure dedicated to the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice", with all but one published before the meeting. On the whole, the reports show progress on many issues, including in particular in the areas of law and provision of services. A new feature of these reports was the section on trends, which was used to highlight either positive or negative trends in relation to violence against women in all the Parties evaluated.

4. Moreover, the Executive Secretary drew the Committee's attention to the fact that GREVIO's 5<sup>th</sup> Report on its General Activities had been published in the fall and that the President of GREVIO, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou had presented it to the Committee of Ministers in November. Its focus section highlighted the need for robust risk assessment by police and other statutory agencies where a woman or girl is under threat of violence. The report described the findings GREVIO had made over the years in this area, which showed that the type and quality of risk assessment procedures varied significantly across the Convention's parties and that shortcomings in terms of their quality and their systematic use remained.

5. Lastly, the Executive Secretary informed the Committee that the Violence against Women Division had completed the recruitment of an additional B grade staff member, Danilo Leal, who was already working in a twofold role, ensuring administrative support and support on the communications aspect of the division's work.

# Agenda item 3. State of signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention

a) Action taken by member States of the Council of Europe towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention – tour de table

6. The Chair invited the representative of Czechia to share information on progress towards ratification, who informed the Committee that a bill of ratification had been presented

to parliament but that no formal decision on the matter had been taken in 2024. It was still a possibility for it to be transmitted to the Chamber of Deputies for further discussion, but there were currently no new developments to report on.

b) Action taken by non-member States of the Council of Europe – tour de table

7. The Chair invited the representative of Mexico, who informed the Committee about the recent election of the country's first-ever woman president, who is instituting a feminist foreign policy, and is expected to put issues of gender equality in the focus of her work, which was much needed, as violence against women was a serious concern in Mexico.

8. The Chair welcomed these positive developments, confirmed that the Committee and the Council of Europe as such will continue their support to these and other countries which wish to ratify or accede.

#### c) Declarations and reservations

9. As regards reservations, the Executive Secretary reported on several developments regarding the partial lifting and expiry of some reservations. She informed the Committee that since its last meeting, Monaco had lifted its reservation on Article 30 paragraph 2 of the convention. It however, maintained its reservation on Article 44 paragraphs 1.e, 3, and 4, and Article 59.

10. The Executive Secretary further informed the Committee that Switzerland had withdrawn its reservation on Article 59 but maintained its reservations on Articles 44 paragraphs 1.e and 3, and Articles 36, Art. 39, and Article 55 paragraph 1 in respect of Art. 35 (minor offences).

11. In addition, the reservations lodged by Denmark expired in August of 2024, same as those lodged by France and Malta (November 2024).

# Agenda item 4. Discussion on draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties, as regards voting, following the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention

12. The Chair recalled the past exchanges that the Committee had had on the voting rules set out in its Rules of Procedure following the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention and the different proposals that were put to the Committee as part of those exchanges. These included a first exchange of views on this issue held at the Committee's meeting on 1 June 2023, followed by the circulation of information document IC-CP(2023)4, dated 28 August 2023, and an extraordinary meeting held on 26 September 2023. The information document (IC-CP(2023)4) prepared by the Secretariat contained a proposal for the amendment of the Rules of Procedure in respect of the voting rights, which Parties had been invited to comment on. The proposal was anchored around the adoption of two principles: non-additionality (no vote for the EU as a party in addition to the those of its member states) and double majority (a majority requiring a simple majority of the non-EU Parties in the Committee in addition to the majority already required to pass a decision in the Committee). The United Kingdom had availed itself of the opportunity to comment, offering proposals presented in document IC-CP(2023)22, dated 7 November 2023. The EU also submitted, on 22 April 2024, its proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure. Both proposals had been put before the Committee for discussion at its 16th meeting on 31 May 2024 and were presented jointly in document IC-CP(2024)7prov. In discussing these proposals at the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee, however,

concerns had emerged in relation to the EU's approach to the principle of double majority, as according to their proposal, it would not be immediately applicable, but only once the number of EU member states which are Parties to the Convention (and thereby members of the Committee), rose to a two-thirds majority in the Committee. The most likely scenario in which this condition was to apply was the accession to the EU of a number of existing Parties to the Istanbul Convention.

13. In her summary of the discussion held at its 16th meeting on this agenda item, the Chair had noted the concerns expressed around the issue of the quorum and the need for further discussion. She had thus proposed to enable such discussion by holding informal consultations. Reporting to the Committee on the outcome of these informal consultations, including an informal meeting of the Committee of the Parties with members represented by its Permanent Representations held in Strasbourg on 26 September 2024, the Chair shared the following observations.

14. First, she noted that there was consensus among the members that the European Union acceding to the Istanbul Convention was a positive step for preventing and combatting violence against women across Europe. Second, it emerged clearly that members of the Committee attach great importance to the Committee's practice of decision-making by consensus and wished to continue in this manner. Third, many members had emphasised the importance of considering attentively the issue of voting rights in rules of procedures governing Council of Europe treaty bodies in light of the EU's possible accession to such treaties. Lastly, the informal consultations had revealed persistent concerns over the proposal by the EU on voting rights and the quorum, making it impossible for the Committee to adopt it by consensus.

15. In view of these observations, the Chair had proposed the following: to include a clause codifying the use of consensus and another envisaging a review of the Rules of Procedure at a later point in time, presented in document IC-CP(2024)12 circulated ahead of the meeting. Before opening the floor for discussion of this new proposal, the Chair recalled that it reflected the option preferred by most members of the Committee. The other options were 1) to move towards adoption of the original Secretariat proposal with the EU amendments made as set out in IC-CP(2024)7prov, adding however a clause on the use of consensus in decisionmaking and a review clause, and 2) to maintain the principle of non-additionality, and include the clauses on consensus and review of the Rules (preferred by the chair). The Chair's third proposal was to include the consensus and review clauses in the Rules of Procedure and to decide to keep the current rules of procedure in light of the interest expressed by some members of the Committee to have a broader discussion on the procedural practices of EU accession to Council of Europe treaties before reaching a final view. The proposed text put before the Committee for discussion on behalf of the Chair (IC-CP(2024)12) reflected this last option.

16. In the ensuing discussion, several members expressed their agreement in principle with the proposal by the Chair. Several members also expressed the need of a broader discussion initiated at the appropriate level of the Organisation [(GR-J)] on the EU accession to Council of Europe conventions and implications for voting rules before a further decision could be reached. Several members also supported seeking an opinion from CAHDI in order to aid discussions. Others expressed reservations. Recalling the mandate of the Committee of the Parties, it was thus proposed that the Chair, acting in line with Rule 23 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure, would inform the Committee of Ministers of the lstanbul Convention. She expressed her commitment to doing so at the appropriate time after the meeting.

17. In the interim, the Committee agreed to move forward by preparing, for written procedure in 2025, the adoption of the proposal by the Chair to introduce a clause codifying the use of consensus and the principle of engaging in a review of the Rules of Procedure as set out in document <u>IC-CP(2024)12</u>, with a minor amendment as proposed by Norway. This would remove the text in square brackets in newly proposed paragraph 8 of Rule 20, and replace the text with "these rules".

18. The European Union representative informed the Committee that they were not yet in a position to offer their view on the issue but would ensure their internal position in time for the written procedure.

19. The Committee further decided that the text of the Chair's proposal shall be revised in line with today's exchanges and submitted for approval by written procedure, once the EU's position is communicated.

# Agenda item 5. Election of Bureau members

20. The Executive Secretary chaired this agenda item and recalled that the current Bureau's mandate expired on 31 January 2025, which was its first full one-year mandate, having previously also served as the Bureau for four months. In 2023, the Secretariat had consulted the Legal Service about the possibility for the current Bureau to run for re-election again, for a subsequent mandate starting on 1 February 2025, and had received a positive answer as reflected in the report of the Committee's 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

21. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary proposed that the dates of the mandate for the Bureau be aligned with the calendar year in the future, which would mean that the Bureau's next mandate would begin on 1 February 2025, but last until 31 December 2025. The Executive Secretary recalled that the current Chair, first Vice-Chair and second Vice-Chair of the Committee wished to stand for re-election, as it had been communicated to Parties by e-mail. She proposed that the re-election be held by acclamation, instead of secret ballot, as there was only one candidate for each of the three Bureau posts. No objection was raised to any of these proposals by the Committee.

22. The Committee proceeded to re-elect Ambassadors Tanja Gonggrijp, Gilberto Jerónimo and Daniela Cujbã as Chair, first Vice-Chair and second Vice-Chair of the Committee, respectively, for a term of office from 1 February 2025 to 31 December 2025.

# Agenda item 6. Decision on the recommendations to be adopted by the Committee of the Parties in light of GREVIO's reports adopted as part of its first thematic round of evaluation

23. The Committee adopted the decision on the recommendations to be adopted by the Committee of the Parties in light of GREVIO's reports adopted as part of its first thematic round of evaluation as outlined in document <u>IC-CP(2024)10 rev.</u> It decided to continue its practice of issuing recommendations focussing on all pressing concerns as identified by GREVIO, agreeing to adopt recommendations corresponding to the findings made by GREVIO which should be remedied with particular urgency ("urges") and those which should be remedied in the near future ("strongly encourages"), concerning all chapters of the convention addressed in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation reports on the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice". Equally, the Committee decided to supervise the implementation of its recommendations issued by requesting that Parties submit a written

report within three years of the adoption of its recommendations, of which it would take note. As regards the preparation of such draft recommendations, it decided to proceed on the basis of the template included in Appendix I of document <u>IC-CP(2024)10 rev.</u>

# Agenda item 7. Supervising the implementation of conclusions issued by the Committee of the Parties

24. The Chair informed the Committee that three Parties (Montenegro, Portugal and Sweden) had submitted implementation reports regarding the Committee's Conclusions on the implementation of its recommendations adopted under baseline evaluation procedure in respect of these Parties. The Chair then invited the representatives of these three Parties to take the floor and present the progress made.

25. The Committee took note of these implementation reports submitted by Montenegro, Portugal, and Sweden, as set out in documents, IC-CP/Inf(2024)8, IC-CP/Inf(2024)7 and IC-CP/Inf(2024)6, respectively, noting the important progress made, and thus concluding the baseline evaluation procedure in respect of Montenegro, Portugal and Sweden.

# Agenda item 8. Thematic discussion: Integrating the health sector in national responses to violence against women in line with Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention

26. For this part of the agenda the Chair invited representatives of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to join and participate in the ensuing presentation and discussion. The Chair then invited Marie Claude Hofner, medical doctor and serving GREVIO member in respect of Switzerland to take the floor and discuss the importance of integrating the health care sector in the national response to violence against women. Marie Claude Hofner gave a presentation explaining both the need for a full integration of the health sector and the benefits of such an approach in line with the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention, which sparked a debate among the Committee. At the Chair's initiative, the Committee then split into four working groups, anchored along the four pillars of the convention, to discuss specific issues arising from the need to better integrate the health sector in the initiatives under the respective pillars and collect issues to bring back to the plenary.

27. After holding separate discussions, the four groups reported back to the Committee's plenary. Each group offered a select set of issues to consider in relation to the following themes: (1) Integrating healthcare in the prevention of violence against women; (2) Protecting victims: the essential role played by healthcare in the detection and treatment; (3) the role of healthcare services in the prosecution of violence against women; and (4) Integrated policies: the place of healthcare in providing a holistic response to violence against women.

28. The Chair summarised the discussion and pointed to the need to invest further efforts and resources under each of the four pillars of the convention to better integrate the health sector, in view of its pivotal role. She further suggested that a short summary could be produced to collect some of the pointers from the discussions in order to benefit the discussions of the Committee in the future. Last, she suggested that the next thematic debate of the Committee could be held on the topic of the importance of data protection in the context of support and protection of women from violence, a topic which could also be linked with the use of artificial intelligence and the treaties and other rules that govern its use.

# Agenda item 9: Date of the next meeting

29. The Committee decided to hold its next meeting on 5 and 6 June 2025, with the opening of the meeting set at 3pm on 5 June 2025.

# Agenda item 10. Other business

30. No other business was raised.

# Agenda item 11. Adoption of the list of decisions taken

31. The Committee adopted the list of decisions as set out in document IC-CP(2024)LD17.

# Appendix I: Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda (9:30 am)
- 2. Administrative and budgetary information
- 3. State of signatures and ratifications of the Istanbul Convention
  - a) Action taken by member States of the Council of Europe towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention: *tour de table*
  - b) Action taken by non-member States of the Council of Europe to accede to the Istanbul Convention
  - c) Declarations and reservations
- 4. Discussion on draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties, as regards voting, following the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention [IC-CP(2024)12]
- 5. Election of Bureau members
- 6. Decision on the recommendations to be adopted by the Committee of the Parties in light of GREVIO's reports adopted as part of its first thematic round of evaluation

IC-CP(2024)10 rev

#### Baseline evaluation round

- 7. Supervising the implementation of conclusions issued by the Committee of the Parties
  - Portugal
    - Implementation report on conclusions [IC-CP/Inf(2024)7]
  - Montenegro
    - Implementation report on conclusions [IC-CP/Inf(2024)8]
  - Sweden
    - Implementation report on conclusions [IC-CP/Inf(2024)6]
- 8. Thematic discussion: Integrating the health sector in national responses to violence against women in line with Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention
- 9. Date of the next meeting
- 10. Other business
- 11. Adoption of the list of decisions taken

# Appendix II: List of participants

#### 17<sup>th</sup> CoP meeting

#### **BUREAU**

17 December 2024

Ms Tanja GONGGRIJP Chair Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Council of Europe

Mr Gilberto JERÓNIMO First Vice-Chair Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Portugal to the Council of Europe

Ms Daniela CUJBĂ Second Vice-Chair Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of The Republic of Moldova to the Council of Europe

#### **MEMBERS / MEMBRES**

## **ALBANIA / ALBANIE**

Ms Brunilda KOÇO Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Albania to the Council of Europe

#### **ANDORRA / ANDORRE**

Mr Andreu JORDI Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Andorra to the Council of Europe

Ms Olimpia TORRES BARROS Deputy Permanent Representative of Andorra to the Council of Europe

#### **AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE**

Ms Marie-Theres PRANTNER Head of National Coordination Unit of the Istanbul-Convention Federal Chancellery, Directorate General for Women and Equality Department III/4 -Prevention of and Protection from Violence

Ms Katharina ENZESBERGER Deputy to the Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Austria to the Council of Europe

# **BELGIUM / BELGIQUE**

Ms Marijke WEEWAUTERS Senior strategic policy advisor Institute for Equality between Women and Men

#### **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE**

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# **CROATIA / CROATIE**

Mr Toma GALLI Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Croatia to the Council of Europe

Mr Ivan BUŠIĆ Deputy to the Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Croatia to the Council of Europe

Ms Sandra BATLAK Head of Service for Childrens and Family Policies, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy

Ms Gordana KUČAN ŠARFI Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy

# **CYPRUS / CHYPRE**

Mr George S. YIANGOU Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the Council of Europe

Mr Kostas PSEVDIOTIS Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the Council of Europe

# **DENMARK / DANEMARK**

Ms Clara KRUSE SCHLEEF Intern Permanent Representation of Denmark to the Council of Europe

#### **ESTONIA / ESTONIE**

Ms Anne KRUUSEMENT Adviser Penal Law and Procedure Division, Criminal Policy Department Ministry of Justice of Estonia

#### **EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPEENNE**

Ms Katja LENZING Deputy Head of Unit - Gender Equality European Commission Directorate General Justice and Consumers

Ms Lisa COLLSTE Legal officer – Gender Equality Unit European Commission Directorate General Justice and Consumers

Ms Dora SCHAFFRIN Legal Adviser Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe

#### FINLAND / FINLANDE

Ms Marjatta HIEKKA Legal Counsellor Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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# **REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA**

Ms Viorica ŢÎMBALARI General director National Agency for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

#### MONACO

M. Gabriel REVEL Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire Représentation Permanente de Monaco auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Margaux GIRARDIN Adjointe au Représentant Permanent

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Ms Jovana RADIFKOVIC Senior Adviser III Directorate for Social Welfare and Children Protection Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

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#### **NETHERLANDS / PAYS-BAS**

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Ms Nina DEN HEYER

Ms Elisabeth VELDBLOEM

Ms Maideline MARTIJN

Ms Miosotis ROSARIO-YEARWOOD

Ms Josine MARGARETHA

**M Eviton HEYLIGER** 

Ms Ramona BERKEL

Mr Reuben MERKMAN

Ms Carol JACK

Ms Ereina HUNT-GORDEN

Ms Joy ARNELL

Ms Chantale GROENEVELDT-GEORGE

Ms Malayka MARLIN

Ms Miriam DEEKMAN – UITENWERF

Ms Farida TELGT

Ms Carmen GREFTE

Ms Jantine HOMAN

Ms Ganna VAN BIJLEVELD

Ms Vangelise MILS

Ms Lisette KUYPER

Ms Marja STROOTMAN

Ms Marloes POLLEMANS

Mr Steven TJALSMA

#### NORTH MACEDONIA / MACEDOINE DU NORD

Ms Svetlana GELEVA Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the Council of Europe

Ms Sanja MITROVSKA Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the Council of Europe

#### **NORWAY / NORVEGE**

Mr Helge SELAND Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Norway to the Council of Europe Ms Hilde Marit KNOTTEN Senior Advisor Ministry of Justice and Public Security Police Department Ms Kari H. RIISØEN Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Norway to the Council of Europe

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Ms Anna MAZURCZAK Director of the Equal Treatment Department Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

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#### **ROMANIA / ROUMANIE**

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#### **SPAIN / ESPAGNE**

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# SWEDEN / SUÈDE

Ms Frida HANSSON Deputy Director Division for Gender Equality Ministry of Employment

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Mme Sophie HEEGAARD-SCHROETER Adjointe au Représentant Permanent Représentation Permanente de la Suisse auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

# UKRAINE

Mr Viktor NIKITIUK Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of Ukraine to the Council of Europe

# **UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI**

Mr Sandy MOSS Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe

Ms Nadia HASHMI Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe

Mr Daniel BREGER Legal Counsellor Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe

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# **PARTICIPANTS**

# STATES WHICH HAVE SIGNED BUT NOT YET RATIFIED THE CONVENTION

# **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Ms Kornélie GATICA GRONSKÁ

Deputy to the Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe

#### \*\*\* OTHER

#### **MEXICO / MEXIQUE**

Ms Eva Pizano CEJKA Deputy to the Permanent Observer Permanent Representation of Mexico to the Council of Europe

#### **EU PRESINDENCY**

Ms Katalin SZILAS FREMP Co-Chair Fundamental Rights Counsellor

#### **INCOMING EU PRESIDENCY**

Ms Urszula POTURNIAK Policy Officer (FREMP) Justice and Home Affairs Section Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

Mr Kazimierz UJAZDOWSKI Justice Coordinator Justice and Home Affairs Section Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

#### **SPEAKERS**

Ms Marie-Claude HOFNER, medical doctor (retired), GREVIO member

#### \*\*\*

# **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

Mr Roberto OLLA, Head of Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Ms Gisella GORI, GR-EXT, Committee of Ministers

Mr Jorg POLAKIEWICZ, Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law, Secretariat General

#### \*\*\*

# **SECRETARIAT**

Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence / Secrétariat du mécanisme de suivi de la Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur la prévention et la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et la violence domestique

Ms Johanna NELLES Executive Secretary / Secrétaire exécutive Head of the Violence against Women Division / Cheffe de la Division Violence à l'égard des femmes

Ms Françoise KEMPF Administrator

Ms Francesca MONTAGNA Administrator

Ms Elif SARIAYDIN Administrator

Ms Sabrina WITTMANN Administrator

Mr Mihail STOJANOSKI Administrator

Ms Severina SPASSOVA Administrator

Ms Ioana VOELKEL Principal administrative assistant

Ms Zsuzsanna MOLNAR Management support assistant

Ms Joanna SZELEZNIAK Administrative support assistant

Mr Danilo LEAL Management support assistant

#### **INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES**

Ms Sally BAILEY-RAVET Mr Luke TILDEN