

**Group of Experts on Action against Violence
against Women and Domestic Violence
(GREVIO)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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**Report submitted by North Macedonia
pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1
of the Council of Europe Convention
on preventing and combating violence
against women and domestic violence
(First thematic evaluation round)**

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Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth

(in coordination with the competent institutions)

RESPONSE TO THE GREVIO QUESTIONNAIRE

for the **First Thematic Evaluation Round** on the implementation of the
Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and
domestic violence

(Istanbul Convention)

Theme:

“Building trust through the provision of support, protection and justice”

Skopje, 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been prepared as a response to the GREVIO Questionnaire within the framework of the First Thematic Evaluation Round on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), in accordance with Article 68 of the Convention. The response covers developments, measures, and processes that have taken place following the completion of the baseline evaluation.

In the period following the baseline evaluation, the Republic of North Macedonia has undertaken a range of legislative, institutional, and practical measures aimed at strengthening the system of prevention, protection, support, and access to justice for victims of violence against women and domestic violence, within the scope of the theme defined for this thematic round – building trust through the provision of support, protection, and justice.

With regard to the legislative framework, significant amendments and supplements to the Criminal Code were adopted in 2023. These amendments introduced, for the first time, a clear definition of gender-based violence against women, broadened the concept of the victim, criminalised femicide as a qualified form of murder, and introduced other criminal offences relevant to protection against gender-based violence, including stalking, sexual harassment, and female genital mutilation. These amendments have strengthened the alignment of the national legal framework with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

At the strategic and policy level, a process has been initiated to develop a new national strategy for the prevention of and protection against gender-based violence and domestic violence, alongside activities to revise and improve existing action plans, with the aim of enhancing the coordination, continuity, and sustainability of measures. In parallel, activities have been implemented to strengthen intersectoral co-operation and the capacities of relevant institutions and professionals.

In the field of education and prevention, legislative and by-law measures have been undertaken, as well as programme activities aimed at improving the safe school environment, preventing violence, and strengthening the mental health of children and young people, in accordance with the preventive obligations under the Convention.

With regard to financial measures, a system of monetary compensation for victims of violent criminal offences has been established as an instrument to strengthen access to justice and reduce secondary victimisation. At the same time, through state decisions and administrative agreements, financial resources are provided to support organisations that deliver services to victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

Regarding data collection and management, steps have been taken to standardise administrative data within public prosecutor's offices and courts, as well as to improve police records. Nevertheless, challenges remain related to data fragmentation, the limitations of existing information systems, and the capacity to track cases throughout all stages of proceedings.

In addition to the above measures, the response also points to emerging trends, including the increased prevalence of digital forms of gender-based violence, which pose additional challenges in terms of prevention, investigation, and evidentiary procedures.

This response aims to provide a comprehensive and factual overview of the measures undertaken and the current situation within the thematic focus of this evaluation round, serving as a basis for further analysis in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article 66, paragraph 1, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) monitors the implementation of the Convention by the States Parties.

Following the completion of the baseline evaluation procedure, which provides a comprehensive overview of the implementation of all provisions of the Convention, Article 68, paragraph 3, of the Convention and Rule 30 of the GREVIO Rules of Procedure provide for the conduct of subsequent evaluation procedures organised in thematic rounds. In accordance with Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure, at the beginning of each thematic round GREVIO submits to the States Parties a questionnaire defining the scope of the evaluation.

This document constitutes a response to the GREVIO Questionnaire within the framework of the First Thematic Evaluation Round, focused on the theme “Building trust through the provision of support, protection, and justice”, and covers the measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of North Macedonia following the completion of the baseline evaluation procedure.

In line with the structure of the GREVIO Questionnaire, the response is organised into four parts and covers the areas of comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, financing, data collection, prevention, protection and prosecution, emerging trends, as well as administrative and judicial statistical data.

The responses contained in this document are based on information provided by the competent institutions, relevant legal and strategic documents, administrative data and other official sources. In accordance with GREVIO requirements, the document also includes references to relevant legislation, by-laws, and other materials that substantiate the information presented.

Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, financing, and data collection in the field of violence against women and domestic violence

Article 7: Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies

- 1. Please provide information on any new policy developments following the adoption of the GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report for your country to ensure comprehensive policies covering the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution in relation to stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, thereby demonstrating further implementation of the Convention. Please indicate the measures taken, in particular with regard to those forms of violence against women that were not covered by previous policies, programmes, and services addressing the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention.*

Following the adoption of the GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report, the Republic of North Macedonia continued to undertake a range of specific legislative, by-law, institutional, and programme measures aimed at ensuring comprehensive and co-ordinated policies covering all areas of prevention, protection and prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence, including stalking, sexual harassment, domestic violence, their digital dimension, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, in line with the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention.

The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, within the framework of the implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, undertakes measures aimed at further strengthening the system of prevention, protection, support, and co-ordination.

The Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence is aligned with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and aims to expand the system of prevention and protection to cover all forms of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence. Pursuant to the Law, Article 3 covers: physical violence, psychological violence, stalking, economic violence, sexual violence and rape, sexual harassment, online sexual

harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, as well as coercive control over women. The Law encompasses new forms of violence introduced by the Convention, as well as definitions of certain concepts that had not previously been regulated, such as gender-based violence against women (violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or violence that affects women disproportionately and encompasses both the causes and consequences of unequal power relations between women and men), stalking, female genital mutilation, sexual violence, namely non-consensual sexual acts, and others, and it also defines categories of women in vulnerable situations, including: pregnant women, women with children and women with children with disabilities, single mothers, women with disabilities, women from rural areas, women who use drugs, sex workers, migrant women, refugee women, women seeking asylum, stateless women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, women living with HIV, homeless women, women victims of trafficking in human beings, older women, women without adequate material means, and others. The meaning of certain new terms covering forms of violence used in this Law is defined in Article 3 of the Law, as follows:

1) “Violence against women” is a violation of human rights, discrimination against women and means all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including direct and indirect threats and intimidation of such acts, coercion, arbitrary restriction and/or deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

2) “Gender-based violence against women” is violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or which disproportionately affects her. Gender-based violence against women encompasses the causes and consequences of unequal power relations between women and men as a result of a societal, rather than an individual, problem. Gender-based violence against women also refers to violence against women as defined in points 1) and 3).

3) “Domestic violence” means harassment, insult, endangerment of safety, bodily harm, sexual or other psychological, physical or economic violence that causes a feeling of insecurity, endangerment or fear, including threats of such actions, against a spouse, parents or children or other persons living in a marital or extramarital union or common household, as well as against a current or former spouse or extramarital partner or persons who have a child together or are in a close personal relationship, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim or not.

The Law specifies the actions and measures to be undertaken by the State for the purposes of prevention and protection, as well as for the reintegration of victims, through the provision of a support system, including measures for economic empowerment. The objective of this

Law is to achieve a significant improvement in institutional and comprehensive support for women victims of gender-based violence. Furthermore, one of the key elements of this Law is that, through a specific provision, it establishes the principle of due diligence in addressing the interests and needs of the victim by institutions when undertaking measures for the prevention and protection of women victims of violence against women and domestic violence. This is of particular importance, as one of the most serious problems is the underreporting of violence by victims, which most often results from a lack of trust in institutions, that is, from insufficient sensitisation of officials responsible for handling cases of violence.

Under the Law, the victim has the right to bring a civil action before a civil court to establish liability for failure by institutions to act with due diligence, with the costs not borne by the victim. In addition to the obligation to act with due diligence, the Law strengthens provisions on inter-institutional and inter-organisational co-ordination, the prohibition of victimisation, the collection of statistical data on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, as well as the reintegration of victims.

It is of key importance that the Law also recognises online sexual harassment, which is defined as unwanted verbal, non-verbal or other conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment, approach or practice, through electronic means of communication.

Through this Law, the media are also addressed, whereby, in the creation of content, they are obliged to take into account the need to raise awareness among the general public of all forms of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, to promote gender equality and to eliminate stereotypes related to gender roles. In this way, the media play an important role in the prevention of these phenomena, as well as in eliminating gender inequality and gender stereotypes.

With regard to policy co-ordination, in accordance with Article 12 of the Law, a legal obligation is established for all competent institutions to co-operate with one another to protect victims. For this purpose, the development of a protocol for inter-institutional co-operation is envisaged, which has already been adopted (2023).

For the purpose of effective enforcement and implementation of the Law, the following by-laws have been adopted by the competent institutions, as follows:

- Rulebook on the manner of conducting the risk assessment of serious danger to the life and physical and psychological integrity of the victim and the members of her

family, and of the risk of repeated violence, the appropriate risk management, the implementation and monitoring of protection measures for women victims of gender-based violence and victims of domestic violence, undertaken by the Centre for Social Work, as well as the necessary forms, adopted by the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth.

- Rulebook on the manner of implementation and monitoring of imposed temporary protection measures, adopted by the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth.
- Rulebook on the form, content and manner of keeping the Register of trained persons for the implementation of initial and continuous education on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, adopted by the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth.
- Rulebook on the manner of assessing the risk of serious danger to the life and physical and psychological integrity of the victim and members of her family, and the risk of repeated violence, the appropriate risk management, the template of the police report and the proposal for imposing an emergency protection measure – removal of the perpetrator from the home and a restraining order, adopted by the Ministry of Interior.
- Rulebook on the manner of execution of the imposed emergency protection measure of removal of the perpetrator from the home and a restraining order, as well as temporary protection measures, adopted by the Ministry of Interior.
- Rulebook on the manner of execution of the imposed temporary protection measure – mandatory treatment of the perpetrator if they use alcohol, drugs or other psychotropic substances, or have a mental disorder, adopted by the Ministry of Health.
- Rulebook on the content and manner of collection of data on gender-based violence against women and victims of domestic violence in public prosecutor's offices, adopted by the Ministry of Justice.
- Rulebook on the content and manner of collection of data on gender-based violence against women and victims of domestic violence in courts, adopted by the Ministry of Justice.

By-laws under development:

- Draft version of the Rulebook on the manner of granting approval to programmes of initial and continuous education on gender-based violence against women and

domestic violence implemented by the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Justice.

- Draft version of the Rulebook on the form, content and manner of integrated collection of statistical and administrative data on the situation of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence.

Adopted documents

- A Protocol on inter-institutional co-operation among competent entities for undertaking measures for the prevention, suppression and protection from violence against women and domestic violence has been adopted. This Protocol ensures a systematic and co-ordinated approach in the actions of all competent entities involved in the protection, assistance, and support of victims of violence against women and domestic violence.(2023)
- A Programme for the reintegration of victims of violence has been adopted. The aim of this Programme is to enable faster reintegration of women victims of violence through addressing individual needs by means of available services. The Programme identifies a comprehensive set of services based on the national legislation, established at national and local level, which enable the reintegration of women victims of violence (2024).
- An Evaluation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence of the Republic of Macedonia 2018–2023 has been prepared (2024), which serves as a basis for the development of the eight-year National Strategy for the prevention of and protection from violence against women and domestic violence 2026-2033, accompanied by an Action Plan, which is planned to be submitted to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia by the end of the year.
- With the support of the British Embassy Skopje and the UNFPA Office, in the period 2023-2025 the following analyses have also been prepared:
 - Gap analysis and recommendations for achieving minimum standards for services for gender-based violence against women and domestic violence.
 - Analysis of SOS helplines.
 - Ethical reporting on gender-based violence in the Republic of North Macedonia.
 - Gender-based Violence Information Management System.
 - Glossary of gender-based violence perpetrated through the (mis)use of technology.

Within the framework of the implementation of the Law, activities aimed at raising public awareness, recognising and reporting violence, as well as strengthening the capacities of professionals and their action with due diligence, have also been intensified. In the period 2023–2025, continuous national campaigns were implemented, including:

- “You Are Not Alone”
- “We Are With You – Together Against Violence against Women and Girls”
- “There Is Help for a Life Free from Violence”
- “Don’t Be a Silent Witness”

with the support of the UNFPA Office and financial support from the British Embassy.

In addition, the campaign “Loud and Brave” was implemented with the support of the UN Women Office, which included numerous panel discussions and workshops with different target groups of women, as well as the organisation of two conferences:

- “Women in Politics – Hate Speech, a Shadow That Discourages”, and
- the regional conference “Challenges Faced by Women and Girls in the Region on the Path towards the EU”.

Within the framework of the project “Prevention and Protection against Gender-Based Violence in North Macedonia”, supported by UNFPA and funded by the Embassy of the United Kingdom, activities were also implemented to strengthen the capacities of professionals through multisectoral co-operation. In this regard:

- two multisectoral trainings were conducted with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, the Ministry of Education, and civil society organisations;
- 33 professionals were certified;
- a training module was developed covering topics such as gender equality and gender roles, forms of violence against women, international instruments and the legal framework, prevention and detection, victim safety and protection, and multisectoral co-operation.

Furthermore, the following activities were implemented:

- a set of initial trainings for professionals from social work centres, health-care professionals, police officers, judges, public prosecutors, and representatives of civil society organisations;
- trainings for multisectoral teams dealing with cases of gender-based violence, covering all planning regions of the country;
- training for professionals on the psycho-social treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence, within which a Programme for psycho-social treatment and a Standard for working with perpetrators of domestic violence were developed.

The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, the Ministry of Interior, and the Equal Opportunities Commission of the Municipality of Kisela Voda initiated activities addressing the prevention of gender-based violence, targeting this issue through training for employees of primary schools and kindergartens in the territory of the Municipality of Kisela Voda. In September 2024, the implementation of the training began, delivered by certified trainers from the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth and the Ministry of Interior. The total number of participants was 155, of whom 146 were women and 9 were men. This activity, as a good practice within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, was published by the UN Women Action Coalition to End Violence against Women and is available at the link: “16 Impact Stories for 16 Days | UN Women Action Coalitions”.

In 2025, four regional trainings were implemented on the topic: Basic training on recognising and working with women victims of violence and domestic violence through a multisectoral approach, with a total of 107 trained professionals.

A Manual for recognising and working with women victims of violence and domestic violence, based on a multisectoral co-operation approach, was developed. On the basis of this manual, an e-learning training module was also prepared for professionals from centres for social work on recognising and working with women victims of violence and domestic violence through a multisectoral co-operation approach (<https://e-obuki.zsd.gov.mk>).

In June 2025, five one-day trainings were conducted on the topic: “Training for multisectoral teams for action in cases of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence”, across eight Planning Regions. These trainings were aimed at strengthening the knowledge and practical skills of members of multisectoral teams working on the prevention of, protection from and support to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, with the participation of representatives from the Sector for Internal Affairs (SIA), health-care

institutions, Social work centres, and non-governmental organisations. A total of 85 persons were trained.

In addition, a communication strategy was developed through communication products and local events targeting women and girls in vulnerable situations, with the aim of timely informing them about available support. An online module entitled “Recognising and working with women victims of violence and domestic violence – a multisectoral co-operation-based approach” was also developed and made available on the national e-learning platform for professionals from the social work centres.

With a view to implementing the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, efforts to address violence against women and domestic violence have been intensified through increasing the number of specialised services for women survivors of violence, raising public awareness on the recognition and reporting of violence, and strengthening the capacities of professionals and their action with due diligence in response to every reported case of violence.

In the period 2023–2025, the campaigns “We Are With You – Together Against Violence against Women and Girls” and “There Is Help for a Life Free from Violence” were implemented on a continuous basis, with the support of the UNFPA Office and financial support from the British Embassy, and a Communication Strategy was developed.

A social media campaign entitled “There Is Help for a Life Free from Violence” was implemented, through which posts, videos, and articles reached 1.67 million views and engaged 57,000 individual users, generated 330,000 video views on Facebook and reached 620,000 views on Instagram. This means that 455,000 individuals were engaged, reacted to and/or shared content from the campaign.

As part of the campaign, posters, leaflets, and stickers were produced containing information on reporting gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, as well as on available services, and were distributed to all police stations, 30 social work centres, health-care institutions, and general practitioners.

In 2025, the campaign continued on an ongoing basis with the development of new materials focused on recognition and reporting (“Don’t Be a Silent Witness”), including video materials, leaflets, and posters.

- Leaflets – print run: 5,000 in Macedonian, 3,000 in Albanian, 2,000 in Romani, and 1,000 in Turkish.
- Two types of posters – print run: 2,000 in Macedonian, 1,000 in Albanian, 1,000 in Romani, and 500 in Turkish.

- Four different video materials (in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, and Romani).
LINK:<https://www.youtube.com/@%D0%9C%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BF%D0%BE/videos>

According to data obtained from the Ministry of Justice, in February 2023, the Assembly adopted the Law Amending and Supplementing the Criminal Code (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 36/23).

The majority of the amendments and supplements to the Criminal Code relate to provisions implementing the Istanbul Convention. Accordingly, Article 122 defines domestic violence as mistreatment, insult, endangering of security, bodily harm, sexual or other psychological, physical or economic violence that causes a feeling of insecurity, threat or fear, including threats of such acts, against a spouse, parents or children, or other persons living in a marital or non-marital union or a joint household, as well as against a current or former spouse, non-marital partner, or persons who have a child together or are in close personal relationships, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.

In addition, the existing definition of a “victim of a criminal offence” is supplemented to include a victim of gender-based violence against women, which refers to any woman and girls under the age of 18 against whom a criminal offence has been committed under such circumstances.

For the first time, gender-based violence against women is also defined, meaning violence directed against a woman because she belongs to the female sex, which results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including direct or indirect threats and intimidation for such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Articles 123 (Murder), 125 (Momentary murder), 130 (Bodily injury), 131 (Grievous bodily injury), 140 (Unlawful deprivation of liberty), 144 (Endangering security) and 191 (Mediation in conducting prostitution) prescribe qualified forms of the respective criminal offences with more severe sanctions when they are committed as, or are a consequence of, gender-based violence against women.

A significant novelty is the introduction of femicide, namely the murder of a woman because she is a woman, as a qualified (aggravated) form of the offence. Accordingly, in Article 123 (Murder), paragraph (2), item 2 is amended to read as follows:

“2) whoever deprives another of life, namely a woman or a girl under the age of 18, in the course of committing domestic violence or gender-based violence against women.”

Furthermore, Article 129-a introduces a new criminal offence entitled “Female genital mutilation”. A term of imprisonment of six months to five years is prescribed for the basic form of the offence (paragraph 1). The same article also prescribes a fine or a term of imprisonment of six months to three years for anyone who incites or assists a female person to undergo the acts referred to in paragraph (1). Where the offence is committed out of hatred, or against a girl, or where grievous bodily injury is inflicted on the female person, the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment of one to ten years; where the offence results in the death of the woman or girl, the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment of one to ten years.

Article 144-a introduces a new criminal offence, “Stalking”, in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. For the basic form of the offence, a fine or a term of imprisonment of up to three years is prescribed for anyone who repeatedly and without authorisation follows, persecutes or otherwise interferes with another person’s private life, or establishes or attempts to establish unwanted contact with that person by moving within the space where that person is located, by misusing personal data, by using the media or other means of communication, or otherwise psychologically abuses, harasses or intimidates the person, thereby causing a feeling of insecurity, disturbance or fear for their safety or the safety of a person close to them. Where the offence is committed against a person with whom the perpetrator is or was in an intimate relationship, or against a child, a term of imprisonment of six months to five years is prescribed.

Some of the most significant novelties related to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention concern Articles 186, 187, 188, 189, 190-a and 191 of the Criminal Code. Article 186 introduces a single criminal offence of “Sexual assault and rape”, in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. For the purpose to ensure compliance with international standards, amendments were also made to the criminal offences of “Sexual intercourse with a helpless person” and “Sexual assault against a child under the age of 15”.

In the context of alignment with the Istanbul Convention, Article 190-a introduces the new criminal offence of “Sexual harassment”. A fine or a term of imprisonment of up to one year is prescribed for anyone who, through verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct, as well as through the use of electronic means of communication, with conduct that has a direct or indirect, actual or symbolic meaning of solicitation, indecent offer, enticement, expression of sexual desire or other conduct clearly reminiscent of sexual intercourse or other comparable sexual acts, violates the dignity of another person, thereby causing feelings of discomfort, offence, humiliation or fear.

According to the Ministry of Interior, following the baseline evaluation of the State, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) undertook several policy and operational measures to align police practice with the prevention, protection and prosecution pillars of the Istanbul Convention. Of particular importance is that the MoI participated in the implementation of the national Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which establishes the obligations of the police with regard to emergency protection measures, and developed internal police guidelines (a manual) to support gender-sensitive policing responses.

The MoI issued operational telegrams and internal instructions to police units aimed at prioritising and standardising interventions in incidents of domestic violence.

Furthermore, for the purpose of preparing the National Strategy for the Prevention of and Protection from Gender-based Violence against Women 2026–2033, primary quantitative and qualitative data were collected on the measures undertaken at the level of the Public Security Bureau and the Sectors for Internal Affairs. At the strategic level, expert interviews were conducted and data were collected with regard to the planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies.

At the operational level, statistical and qualitative data were collected from all Sectors for Internal Affairs through the completion of a semi-structured questionnaire, covering specific aspects of police action: prevention, investigation and criminal proceedings, action in relation to emergency protection measures and temporary protection measures (TPMs).

- Police officers from the computer crime units within the Sectors for Internal Affairs provided data on action taken in cases related to digital forms of gender-based violence against women.
- Forty police officers (uniformed police officers and inspectors) participated in seven practitioner forums organised in Skopje, Bitola, Veles, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Strumica, and Ohrid, with the participation of practitioners from the police, social work centres, the judiciary, health-care institutions, local self-government units and civil society organisations.

Police officers provided qualitative data on the manner of exercising their statutory powers and the challenges encountered in day-to-day practice in cases related to violence against women and domestic violence, as well as proposals for overcoming challenges at the individual level and at the level of inter-institutional co-operation with Social work centres, Public Prosecutor's Offices, courts and other actors within the system.

These activities were carried out in April and May 2025 and were co-ordinated by the Department for General Affairs – Human Resources Management. The data collected were

integrated into the situation analysis, which forms an integral part of the National Strategy and the strategic framework (including objectives, results, and indicators), and were also used for the development of the first National Action Plan for the period 2026-2033.

A Memorandum of Co-operation was concluded between the MoI, the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (No. 1312-46243/1 of 24 April 2025), regulating the mutual rights and obligations for the implementation of activities within the project “Femicide Observatory: Prevention and Monitoring of Femicides and Attempts of Femicide in North Macedonia”. The main objective is to strengthen the capacities for systematic monitoring, analysis, and prevention of femicides and attempts of femicide through the establishment of a functional platform/observatory and the establishment of a multisectoral body for monitoring and co-ordination. The MoI participates in the multisectoral body with a member and a deputy member, who also took part in the first co-ordination meeting.

In the context of the new criminal offences related to violence against women (female genital mutilation, stalking, and sexual harassment), it has been noted that the criminal offence of stalking may also be committed through the use of media or other means of communication; however, in its digital form it is often difficult to prove due to the need to establish repetition and continuity of the acts. It is particularly important for the victim to recognise and report such conduct in a timely manner, as the evidence is electronic and may be deleted.

As with any criminal offence, it is envisaged that any victim may report the offence:

- at the nearest police station with general jurisdiction,
- at the computer crime units within the Sectors for Internal Affairs,
- at the Sector for Computer Crime, via the official address cybercrime@moi.gov.mk,
- as well as through the online platform “Red Button” available on the website of the Ministry of Interior.

The Sector for Computer Crime acts upon reports submitted by citizens and undertakes measures in co-ordination with, and upon instructions from, the Public Prosecutor’s Office Skopje (PPO Skopje), and in cases where the perpetrators are foreign nationals, it co-operates with the Sector for International Police Co-operation. Most frequently, action is taken following reports from women in cases where their photograph or video with compromising content has been used, a fake profile has been created on social media (for example, containing claims about “sexual services”), a telephone number has been posted in a specific group, as well as cases of blackmail involving explicit videos by unknown

persons with whom the victims had previously communicated via social media, for the purpose of extorting money.

The investigations are facing challenges relating to the fact that certain social media platforms do not provide user data except through the mechanism of international legal assistance. In some cases, where no other appropriate legal provision exists, proceedings are conducted under Article 149 of the Criminal Code (“Misuse of personal data”).

The Ministry of Education and Science reviewed the submitted questions and provided information within its competence.

The Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on Primary Education was adopted (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 3 of 03.01.2025), regulating that primary schools shall also implement programmes for:

- protection against violence, abuse, and neglect of students with and without disabilities;
- prevention of discrimination,
- prevention of alcohol and tobacco abuse,
- prevention of the abuse of drugs and other psychotropic substances,
- prevention of participation in games of chance and juvenile delinquency.

The amendments provide for the adoption of a new Rulebook on the manner of reporting and protection of a student victim of any form of violence, abuse, or neglect. On this basis, a new Rulebook on the manner of reporting and protection of a student victim in primary education was adopted (No. 18-9670/2 of 07.07.2025), thereby terminating the application of the previous Instruction on procedure.

The Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on Secondary Education was also adopted (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 132 of 01.07.2025), regulating that schools shall also implement programmes for:

- protection against violence, abuse, and neglect of students,
- prevention of discrimination,
- prevention of alcohol and tobacco abuse, participation in games of chance,
- abuse of drugs and other psychotropic substances,
- juvenile delinquency.

For the first time, a Rulebook on the manner of reporting and protection of a student victim in secondary education was adopted (No. 18-10074/2 of 17 July 2025). A Rulebook on the content and manner of implementation of self-protection training in educational institutions was also adopted (No. 18-6656/3 of 03.07.2025; Official Gazette No. 139 of 10.07.2025).

A Declaration on the fight against violence against young women and girls was adopted, signed by the Minister of Education and Science and by multiple stakeholders and institutions, including: the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, Secondary School “Dr Panche Karagjov” Skopje, ASUC “Boro Petrushevski” Skopje, both unions of secondary schools, the National Youth Council, the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Stella Network, the Centre for Equal Opportunities “Molekukja” (Bubamara), and the OSCE Mission to Skopje.

A Memorandum of Co-operation was concluded between the Ministry of Education and Science, the Coalition of Youth Organisations “Sega” and the “Pestaloci” Children’s Foundation for the implementation of the project “Promotion of a Safe School Environment” in 26 primary and 24 secondary schools. One of the objectives is to strengthen the capacities of schools for the prevention and response to violence. Within the framework of the project, each school developed a “Map of institutions and school teams for the prevention of violence”. In addition, a “Guide on the role of parents in the prevention and response to violence in schools” and a digital educational manual for teachers, containing practical exercises and resources for positive communication and addressing all forms of violence, were prepared.

Schools implement activities in accordance with the guidelines and materials of the Bureau for Development of Education, published on its website and distributed to schools (guidelines for the 2024/2025 school year on strengthening mental health, prevention and protection against violence, bullying, etc., including workshops and activities). These activities are also planned within the annual work programmes of schools.

In the context of the assessment of textbooks and teaching materials from the perspective of equality and non-discrimination, a Methodology for the assessment of textbooks was adopted (No. 18-5577/1 of 10.04.2025), developed at the proposal of the Bureau for Development of Education and the Centre for Secondary Vocational Education.

In reference with programmes for supporting teachers by the professional staff in schools (stress management, peaceful conflict resolution, etc.), a working group composed of relevant stakeholders continued the work on amendments and supplements to the Law on Teachers and Professional Associates in Primary and Secondary Schools.

A Memorandum of Co-operation was also signed between the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for Development of Education, the Red Cross and the Chamber of Psychologists for the implementation of activities and programmes in the field of mental health, psychosocial support and psychological first aid for students, teachers, professional associates and parents (No. 08-9636/1 of 07.07.2025).

Article 7 – Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies

- 2. If relevant, please provide information on any measures taken to ensure that all definitions of domestic violence and violence against women in national legislation or policy documents are aligned with those set out in Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention, and provide the relevant applicable provisions in English or French.*

The Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence is aligned with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and aims to expand the system of prevention and protection to cover all forms of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence. Pursuant to the Law, Article 3 covers: physical violence, psychological violence, stalking, economic violence, sexual violence and rape, sexual harassment, online sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, as well as coercive control over women. The Law covers new forms of violence introduced by the Convention, as well as definitions of certain concepts that had not previously been regulated, such as gender-based violence against women (violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or violence that affects women disproportionately and encompasses both the causes and consequences of unequal power relations between women and men), stalking, female genital mutilation, sexual violence, namely non-consensual sexual acts, etc., as well as defining categories of women in vulnerable situations, including: pregnant women, women with children and women with children with disabilities, single mothers, women with disabilities, women from rural areas, women who use drugs, sex workers, migrant women, refugee women, women seeking asylum, stateless women, lesbians, bisexual women and transgender persons, women living with HIV, homeless women, women victims of trafficking in human beings, older women, women without adequate material means, and others. The meaning of certain new terms covering forms of violence used in this Law is defined in Article 3 of the Law, as follows:

1. “Violence against women” is a violation of human rights, discrimination against women and means all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including direct and indirect threats and intimidation of such acts, coercion, arbitrary restriction and/or deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.
2. “Gender-based violence against women” is violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or which disproportionately affects her. Gender-based violence against women encompasses the causes and consequences of unequal power relations between women and men as a result of a societal, rather than an individual, problem. Gender-based violence against women also refers to violence against women as defined in points 1) and 3).
3. “Domestic violence” means harassment, insult, endangerment of safety, bodily harm, sexual or other psychological, physical or economic violence that causes a feeling of insecurity, endangerment or fear, including threats of such actions, against a spouse, parents or children or other persons living in a marital or extramarital union or common household, as well as against a current or former spouse or extramarital partner or persons who have a child together or are in a close personal relationship, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim or not.
4. “Close personal relationships” are personal relationships between persons who are or have been in a partnership relationship, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim or not;
5. “Intimate partner violence” is the behavior of a current or former spouse or partner that causes physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence;
6. “Sex” means the physical characteristics of an individual (reproductive system, chromosomes, hormones) according to which the sex assigned to individuals at birth is determined, based on a combination of physical characteristics and internal reproductive organs;
7. “Gender” means the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men;
8. “Transgender person” is a person who does not identify with the gender assigned at birth;
9. “Victim” is any natural person who is exposed to violence referred to in points 1), 2), 3) and 5) of this Article, on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia;

10. “Perpetrator” is any natural or legal person who has committed or failed to commit any of the acts referred to in points 1), 2), 3) and 5 of this Article;
11. „“Woman” includes girls under the age of 18;
12. „“Non-refoulement” is a principle based on which a state undertakes not to expel or in any way return women and children seeking asylum, persons with refugee status or persons under subsidiary protection to the borders of a state in which there is an imminent danger to their life and body, from violence against women or domestic violence, or their freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or where they would be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
13. “Child” is any person under the age of 18;
14. “Physical violence” is any act of physical force or act that violates the health and physical and mental integrity of the victim.
15. "Psychological violence" is any behavior using coercion, intimidation or threat, which causes a feeling of fear, endangerment, anxiety or violation of the dignity and psychological integrity of the victim;
16. "Stalking" is any intentional behavior of repeated threats directed at another person that causes the person to fear for his or her safety;
17. “Economic violence” is any act of restriction or prevention in the realization and/or disposal of personal income and financial resources, for the maintenance of the joint household and for the care of the child, which causes the victim’s economic dependence;
18. “Sexual violence and rape” is any act of a sexual nature, with any body part or object, on the body of another person without his/her consent. Sexual violence also exists when another person is induced or forced to engage in acts of a sexual nature with a third person without his/her consent. Consent must be expressed voluntarily as a result of the person’s free will, assessed in the context of the circumstances;
19. “Sexual harassment” is any verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when it creates a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment;
20. “Online sexual harassment” means any verbal, non-verbal or other conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity or creating an

intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment, approach or practice, through electronic means of communication;

21. "Forced marriage" means coercing, luring, misleading, threatening or otherwise compelling an adult or a child to enter into marriage or an extramarital union;
22. "Female genital mutilation" means the removal, infibulation or any other mutilation of all or part of the labia majora, labia minora or clitoris of a woman;
23. "Forced abortion and forced sterilization" means the termination of a pregnancy on a woman without her prior information and written consent, as well as performing an operation on a woman without her prior information and written consent, i.e. understanding of the procedure the purpose or consequence of which is to terminate her ability to reproduce naturally;
24. "Trafficking in women" is an act by which, through force, serious threats, the victim is led into delusions or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, by abusing her position or the state of pregnancy, powerlessness or physical or mental incapacity of another or by giving or receiving money or other benefits to obtain the consent of a person who has control over another person or in any other way recruits, transports, transfers, buys, sells, harbors or receives persons for the purpose of exploitation by means of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, pornography, forced labor or servitude, slavery, forced marriages, forced pregnancy, illegal adoption or similar relationships, begging or exploitation for an activity prohibited by law or unauthorized transplantation of parts of the human body and
25. "Forcible control over women" is the abuse of power, use of threats, force or other forms of coercion, fraud or misrepresentation to control the behavior and life of the women.

Article 7 – Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies

3. *Please provide information on how your authorities ensure that policies on violence against women and domestic violence place women's rights and empowerment at the centre, and on any measures taken to improve the intersectoral linkage of such policies, in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Convention.*

With the aim of improving intersectoral linkage, a Protocol on inter-institutional co-operation among competent entities for undertaking measures for the prevention, suppression and protection from violence against women and domestic violence was developed. All competent institutions and civil society organisations participated in the development of this document, which was adopted in 2023. Trainings were also carried out to support its implementation.

Article 8 – Financial resources

- 4. Please provide information on any new developments since the adoption of the GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report for your country with regard to the allocation of adequate and sustainable financial and human resources for the implementation of integrated policies, measures and programmes to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.*

The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, on an annual basis, ensures the allocation of financial and human resources for the implementation of integrated policies, measures, and programmes aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. These resources are provided through:

- the Budget Programme for Social Protection;
- the Programme of the Sector for Equal Opportunities;
- budgetary funds allocated in accordance with the Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment Games.

With a view to strengthening the system of support and protection for victims and ensuring adequate and sustainable financial mechanisms, the Law on the Payment of Monetary Compensation to Victims of Violent Criminal Offences was adopted on 16 November 2022 (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 247/22).

This Law aligns the national legislation with the Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 relating to compensation to crime victims and represents a significant step forward in ensuring improved protection of the human rights of victims of violent criminal offences, in line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.

The purpose of the Law is to provide monetary compensation as a form of state assistance to victims of criminal offences committed with violence, based on the principle of social solidarity, thereby contributing to the reduction of the risk of victimisation and secondary

victimisation, namely additional suffering that victims may experience as a result of the actions of competent institutions.

The exercise of the right to monetary compensation under this Law does not exclude the victim's right to claim damages or to pursue other claims under another law before a competent court.

The victim is entitled to monetary compensation regardless of whether the perpetrator of the criminal offence is known, as well as regardless of whether criminal proceedings have been initiated, or whether factual or legal obstacles exist to conducting such proceedings. A precondition for exercising this right is that the criminal offence has been recorded or reported to the police or the public prosecutor's office.

For the purposes of this Law, a "violent criminal offence" means:

- a criminal offence committed intentionally through the use of physical force or other acts resulting in serious impairment of health, including gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, criminal offences related to establishing a slavery relationship and transporting persons under a slavery relationship, trafficking in human beings and trafficking in children, in accordance with the Criminal Code;
- a criminal offence violating sexual integrity;
- a criminal offence which, through an act posing a general danger, means or instrument, endangers the life or property of a person and results in death, grievous bodily injury or serious impairment of the physical or psychological health of one or more persons, and which is prescribed as a qualified form in the Criminal Code.

For the purpose of institutional implementation of this Law, in February 2024, a Commission for Compensation of Victims of Violent Criminal Offences in the Republic of North Macedonia was established. The Commission is composed of:

- a judge of the Supreme Court,
- a public prosecutor,
- a psychiatrist,
- a representative of the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth,
- a representative of the civil society organisation "Open Gate",

with a mandate of four years.

On 29 July 2025, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia reviewed the Annual Report on the work of the Commission for 2024. During 2024, a total of three applications for the payment of monetary compensation were submitted, and the Commission did not award any monetary compensation.

With a view to informing victims and facilitating access to the right to compensation, the Commission developed informational materials, including:

- brochures,
- a template for the form and content of the application,
- the possibility for electronic submission of applications,

which are publicly available on the Commission's website.

With financial support from the OSCE Mission to the Republic of North Macedonia, the official website of the Commission for Monetary Compensation of Victims of Violent Criminal Offences was also developed and is available at: <https://komisijazanadomestoknazrtvi.mk/>

The approved budget for the work of the Commission for 2024 amounts to MKD 1,200,000.00, representing a concrete financial commitment by the State to the establishment and functioning of this mechanism.

The Ministry of Interior provides human and operational resources for the implementation of emergency and court-ordered protection measures for victims of violence against women and domestic violence, in accordance with the national legislation and the obligations stemming from the Istanbul Convention.

In this regard, the Ministry continuously allocates resources for:

- the execution of emergency protection measures,
- the enforcement of court-ordered protection measures, including the removal of perpetrators from the home,
- the service of court orders,
- monitoring the implementation of imposed measures and orders.

In addition to regular financing and the engagement of its own human and material capacities, the Ministry of Interior has also provided support for the financing of certain specialised activities and services through project-based co-operation with international partners, including international donors, United Nations agencies, and the OSCE Mission.

This co-operation was aimed at:

- strengthening the capacities of the police to act in cases of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence,
- improving referral mechanisms and inter-institutional co-ordination with social work centres, health-care institutions, judicial authorities and civil society organisations.

Article 8 – Financial resources

5. *Please provide information on any developments regarding the provision of adequate and sustainable financial and human resources for women’s rights organisations providing specialised victim support services, including those assisting migrant women and girls.*

In the Republic of North Macedonia, no separate financial resources are earmarked exclusively for migrant women and girls. Within the framework of support programmes, all victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence are covered, regardless of their belonging to a specific category of women in vulnerable situations, including migrant women, refugee women, women seeking asylum, and stateless women.

On an annual basis, financial resources are allocated for specialised services for women victims of violence and domestic violence through the conclusion of administrative contracts, in accordance with the Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment Games, with women’s rights organisations and civil society organisations providing specialised victim support services.

Financing of measures and services for the prevention and protection from violence against women and domestic violence in the Republic of North Macedonia is ensured through the State Budget, the budgets of local self-government units, as well as through other sources of funding, including funds provided through the Public Institution State Lottery.

In this context, in accordance with the adopted Decisions on the allocation of funds from games of chance, in 2024 and 2025, financial resources were allocated to support activities and programmes of public interest, including programmes related to social protection, gender equality, and support for vulnerable categories of citizens.

Funds from the State Lottery constitute an additional source of financing that enables support for civil society organisations and institutions implementing activities aimed at the prevention of violence, protection and support of victims, as well as raising public awareness.

At the same time, this financing model requires continuous improvement of transparency, predictability, and sustainability to ensure long-term support for specialised services for women victims of violence, in accordance with Article 8 of the Istanbul Convention=.

In 2023, three administrative contracts were concluded, with a total amount of MKD 4,000,000.00, with the following organisations:

- Organisation of Women of the City of Skopje – OWS
- National Council for Gender Equality – NCGE
- Crisis Centre “Hope”

In 2024, four administrative contracts were concluded, with a total amount of MKD 6,000,000.00, with the following organisations:

- Organisation of Women of the City of Skopje – OWS
- National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – “Voice against Violence”
- National Council for Gender Equality – NCGE
- Crisis Centre “Hope”

In 2025, five administrative contracts were concluded, with a total amount of MKD 4,600,000.00, with the following organisations:

- Organisation of Women of the City of Skopje – OWS
- National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – “Voice against Violence”
- National Council for Gender Equality – NCGE
- Crisis Centre “Hope”
- Civil Society Association “Poddrshka” (Support)

Article 10 – Data collection and research

- 6. Please provide information on any new developments since the adoption of the GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report for your country with regard to the introduction of data collection categories such as the type of violence, the sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between them and the place where the violence occurred, for administrative data relevant to the field of violence against women and domestic violence originating from law enforcement agencies, the judicial sector, social services, and the public health sector.*

At present, a new integrated software system for the administration of social cash benefits and social services is being established in the social work centres. With the introduction of this system, a new software solution will be put into use, enabling the integration of measures and services in the field of social protection, including the migration of existing data into a single system that will integrate social protection benefits and services.

Following the full establishment of the system, it is planned to adopt a Rulebook on the form, content and manner of integrated collection of statistical and administrative data on the situation of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, which will enable systematic and standardised collection of data relevant to the field of violence against women and domestic violence.

In 2023, the Ministry, in co-operation with UNFPA and the British Embassy in Skopje, developed and implemented an integrated multi-institutional model for data collection on violence against women and domestic violence. The model represents a significant step towards establishing a systematic and standardised approach to data management, through the integration of data from multiple institutions and sources in a single system.

The model enables the collection and integration of data on:

- type of violence,
- sex and age of victims,
- victim–perpetrator relationship,
- administrative data on services and institutional responses.

This integration enhances the co-ordination and information exchange among institutions, with the aim of more effective prevention, protection and support, as well as the development of evidence-based policies.

Within the development of the model, the use of the SWISS system (Social Welfare Information System and Services) was introduced as a digital platform for the systematic and standardised collection, storage and processing of data on violence against women and domestic violence. SWISS provides:

- a centralised database;
- data on types of violence, victims (sex and age groups), perpetrator–victim relationship and location;
- the possibility to monitor and analyse cases, services and the effectiveness of institutional responses;
- support for informed decision-making and policy development through comprehensive and up-to-date data.

These rulebooks enable the collection and processing of relevant administrative data that are important for monitoring the institutional response, policy planning, and the provision of services in the field of violence against women and domestic violence.

The Ministry of Interior is engaged in improving the collection of administrative data related to domestic violence and has committed to establishing and using registers/databases on perpetrators and on protection measures/orders.

The MoI is responsible for operational data related to:

- reports and recording of incidents,
- proposals for the imposition of emergency protection measures,
- measures taken for enforcement (execution of measures/orders and monitoring).

In the context of improving practice, progress has been noted with regard to the more rapid submission of police proposals for emergency protection to the courts, which is significant for the effectiveness of the protection system.

The Basic Civil Court Skopje pointed “to the need to upgrade the ACMIS system to ensure more detailed and structured data on cases related to domestic violence”.¹

At the initiative of the Working Body for the Management of the Movement of Cases within the Court (No. SU-07-449/23-2 of 26.06.2023), the Court addressed the Working Body for the

¹ For the purposes of preparing the responses, data were requested from the courts in the Republic of North Macedonia, and further in the text reference is made to the Report from the courts.

Standardisation of Court Procedures at the Supreme Court of the Republic of North Macedonia with a request to introduce additional fields in the ACMIS system for:

- victims (children/adults, gender/sex),
- perpetrators (status/relationship),
- imposed measures (type and duration).

The Court emphasised that, when preparing reports, data are required not only on the number of cases, but also on victims, perpetrators and measures, while at present such data are collected through manual searches, as ACMIS does not provide options for systematic tagging or filtering. As of the date of submission of the response, the Court has not received any feedback or action in response to the request.

The Basic Court Kavadarci indicated that cases related to domestic violence in courts are registered in the VPP2 register (non-contentious proceedings). Proceedings are most often initiated on the basis of applications/proposals submitted by competent institutions, in particular the Centre for Social Work and the Mol, following a prior report by the victim and the submission of a proposal for a temporary protection measure.

The most frequently imposed temporary protection measures are as follows:

- prohibition of harassment/disturbance/contact and other forms of communication;
- prohibition of approaching the residence/school/workplace or a specified location;
- mandatory treatment (alcohol/psychotropic substances or other condition).

According to official records, the most common form is violence against a woman perpetrated by a spouse, while children who are present during the violence and parents living in the same household also frequently appear as victims. The most common place where violence occurs is the family home. The court further indicates that a proposal for a temporary protection measure may be submitted independently of the conduct of criminal proceedings, and that criminal cases may be conducted in parallel (most commonly under Articles 130 and 144 of the Criminal Code).

According to the Basic Court Kriva Palanka, proceedings are conducted in accordance with the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 24 of 29.01.2021). According to the data from the ACMIS system:

- in 2023, there were 6 proceedings,
- in 2024, there were 12 proceedings for the imposition of protection measures.

The most common form is violence within a marital union, whereby in the majority of cases the victim is the woman–spouse and the perpetrator is the man–spouse, with the exception of one case in which the victim was a man and the perpetrator a woman. Violence most often occurs in the shared home. In some cases, minor children also appear as victims; cases have also been recorded involving a mother as the victim and a son as the perpetrator, as well as an adult daughter as the victim and a father as the perpetrator. In two cases, the proposal was withdrawn by the applicant.

The Basic Court Negotino provided data on criminal proceedings and proceedings for emergency/temporary protection measures from 01.01.2023 to the present date.

Criminal proceedings:

- “Bodily injury” (Article 130 paragraph 2 in conjunction with paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code): 19 proceedings initiated, 10 convictions;
- “Grievous bodily injury” (Article 131 paragraph 2 in conjunction with paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code): 1 proceeding initiated, with established guilt and a sentence imposed;
- “Coercion” (Article 139 paragraph 2 in conjunction with paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code): 1 proceeding initiated, resulting in a conviction;
- “Endangering security” (Article 144 paragraph 3 in conjunction with paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code): 14 proceedings initiated, 13 convictions;
- “Violence against a child” (Article 201-a of the Criminal Code): 8 proceedings initiated, with guilt established in all cases, and in one case the imposition of a security measure.

Emergency protection measures proposed by the MoI (Article 57 of the Law):

- 2023: 17 proceedings initiated; perpetrators were men in all cases; victims were women (wives/cohabiting partners) in 16 cases, and a minor child in 1 case;
- 2024: 27 proceedings initiated; the perpetrator was a man in 26 cases and a woman in 1 case; victims included 12 women, 5 minor children and 10 parents of the perpetrator.

Temporary protection measures proposed by the Public Institution Centre for Social Work Negotino (Article 58 of the Law):

- 2023: 6 proceedings initiated; perpetrators were men; victims were women in 4 cases, and women and minor children in 2 cases;

- 2024: 15 proceedings initiated; the perpetrator was a man in 14 cases and a woman in 1 case; victims included 9 women, women and minor children in 2 cases, only a minor child in 1 case, and parents of the perpetrator in 3 cases.

The Basic Court Kratovo reports that all cases, including those related to violence against women and domestic violence, are recorded in the ACMIS system. For cases where domestic violence is present, the judge has the option to select the relevant field, thereby ensuring that such cases are recorded accordingly. In addition, through examination of case files, data can be collected on the type of violence, the sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between them, and the place where the incident occurred.

At the Basic Court Radovish, cases concerning protection against domestic violence are conducted in non-contentious proceedings (VPP2) and contain structured information relevant for administrative monitoring, including: the sex and age/year of birth of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between them, the place where the incident occurred, as well as the type and duration of the imposed temporary protection measures.

In 2023, a total of 28 proposals were registered for initiating proceedings for the imposition of temporary protection measures pursuant to Article 58 of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (most often submitted by the Public Institution Centre for Social Work Radovish). The most prevalent cases concern violence within a marital or non-marital union (husband–wife/partners), while cases of violence within broader family relationships were also recorded (mother–son, mother–daughter, father–son, grandfather–granddaughter, father-in-law–daughter-in-law, as well as combinations involving multiple victims within the same case). The place of occurrence is predominantly the family house/shared home, while in certain cases a public place is indicated, including areas in front of a police station, as well as situations involving elements of harassment through communication.

In 2023, the Court imposed measures most frequently including:

- prohibition of threatening to commit domestic violence;
- prohibition of harassment/disturbance and communication (direct or indirect);
- restraining order (in several cases with a specified distance, e.g. 100 metres) the residence or places frequented by the victim;

- mandatory treatment in a psychiatric hospital (e.g. Psychiatric Hospital Negorci) for varying durations (from 3–6 months up to 1 year), depending on the assessed risk and circumstances.

Procedural outcomes were also recorded, such as withdrawal of proposals by the applicant/victim and cases in which the court declared itself not competent, which is significant for a realistic interpretation of statistics and the dynamics of protection.

In 2024, a total of eight proposals were registered on the same legal basis (Article 58). In that year as well, cases of violence between spouses/partners predominated, as did cases of violence in father–son and grandfather–granddaughter relationships. The home again prevailed as the primary location of violence, whereas the measures imposed largely comprised the same set: prohibitions on threats, prohibitions on contact/communication, restraining orders with a specified distance, with a duration ranging from three months to one year, as well as cases in which the proposal was withdrawn due to the victim’s withdrawal.

Through this form of record-keeping, the Basic Court Radovish provides administrative data that enable monitoring of the key categories required by the Convention: characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator, their relationship, the location of the violence and the measures applied, as well as information on the outcome of the proceedings.

The Basic Court Vinica provided data on proceedings as follows:

- 2023: 6 cases,
- 2024: 6 cases, with specification of: victim/perpetrator (as a rule, woman as victim and man as perpetrator), relationship (spouses, non-marital partners, former partners), location (home, public place, home and via social media/telephone), and imposed measures (prohibitions on threats, communication and approaching; mandatory treatment in certain cases), as well as cases in which the proposal was dismissed.

Article 10 – Data collection and research

7. *If relevant, please provide information on any new developments since the adoption of the GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report for your country that enable the collection of disaggregated data: a) on the number of emergency restraining and protection orders and the number of violations and sanctions resulting from them; b) on the*

number of instances in which custody decisions resulted in the restriction or withdrawal of parental rights due to violence committed by one parent against the other.

With regard to the collection of disaggregated data on emergency restraining and protection orders, as well as data on violations and imposed sanctions, and data related to custody decisions that resulted in the restriction or withdrawal of parental rights due to violence committed by one parent against the other, the collection of relevant information from the competent institutions is currently under way.

In this context, the submission of an official response and data from the Institute for Social Activities is expected, after which the information will be included in the final version of the State report, in accordance with the requirements of the questionnaire and the GREVIO methodology.

Article 10 – Data collection and research

8. *Please provide information on the measures taken to enable cases of violence against women and domestic violence to be tracked from reporting to conviction, across all stages of law enforcement and judicial proceedings.*

As a means to enable the tracking of cases of violence against women and domestic violence throughout all stages of the procedure – from reporting, through institutional action, to the imposition of measures and judicial decisions – the competent institutions collect and maintain administrative and statistical data that allow insight into the scope, characteristics, and dynamics of cases.

In this regard, disaggregated data have been ensured by ethnic affiliation, sex and age of victims, forms of violence, as well as data on temporary protection measures proposed by social work centres and imposed by courts, for the period 2022–2024, as follows:

Ethnic affiliation

Ethnic affiliation	2022	2023	2024
Macedonian	1148	1209	1444
Albanian	186	218	167

Romani	156	112	142
Other	53	62	83
TOTAL	1543	1601	1836

Sex and age structure

Sex and age	2022	2023	2024
Adults – male	252	249	278
Adults – female	1074	1113	1332
Minors – male	111	86	102
Minors – female	106	153	124
TOTAL	1543	1601	1836

Forms of violence

Form of violence	2022	2023	2024
Physical violence	846	944	951
Psychological violence	1051	1445	1492
Sexual violence	6	15	12
Economic violence	25	33	36

Temporary protection measures (Article 11)

	Proposed by Social work centres		Imposed by courts			
Year	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
TOTAL	2125	1855	1270	1826	1512	1008

These data enable quantitative monitoring of reported cases, identification of the most prevalent forms of violence, as well as monitoring of the application of emergency and temporary protection measures, as key instruments for the protection of victims and the prevention of further violence. The collection and processing of data constitute a basis for the further strengthening of institutional coordination and the traceability of cases throughout the system.

The available data indicate a continuous increase in the number of recorded cases of violence against women and domestic violence, which may be associated with increased visibility of the problem, improved reporting and more intensive institutional action. The total number of recorded cases increased from 1,543 in 2022, to 1,601 in 2023, and to 1,836 in 2024.

Data disaggregated by sex and age show that adult women victims dominate the overall structure of reported cases in all three years, which is consistent with the gendered nature of violence addressed by the Istanbul Convention. At the same time, the presence of minor victims, both male and female, indicates the need for continuous strengthening of mechanisms for the protection of children who are witnesses and victims of domestic violence.

With regard to the forms of violence, the data show that psychological and physical violence are the most prevalent in all years, with a noticeable increase in psychological violence in 2023 and 2024. This indicates increased recognition and reporting of non-material forms of violence, which are traditionally more difficult to detect. The number of recorded cases of sexual and economic violence remains relatively low, which may point to challenges in reporting and proving these forms of violence.

Data on temporary protection measures indicate a significant number of measures proposed by social work centres, as well as a high number of measures imposed by courts, reflecting the active role of social services and the judiciary in the provision of urgent protection to victims. At the same time, the decrease in the overall number of proposed and imposed measures in 2024 requires further monitoring and analysis in the context of institutional practices and reporting dynamics.

Overall, the available administrative data constitute an important basis for tracking cases throughout the institutional system, while further improvement of integrated systems for data collection and linkage will contribute to more comprehensive monitoring of cases from reporting to final judicial decision, in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.

At the social work centres, the establishment of a new integrated software system for the administration of social cash benefits and social services is under way. Once put into

operation, this system will enable the integration of measures and services within the social protection system, as well as the migration of existing data to a single platform. Upon completion of this process, the establishment of integrated collection and processing of data relevant to gender-based violence against women and domestic violence will commence.

The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth keeps internal statistics on the situation of victims of domestic violence on the basis of data from 30 social work centres, which cover the entire territory of the country. For the period January–September 2025, the situation is as follows:

Newly recorded victims of domestic violence (total): 1.260

- Women: 92
- Men: 173
- Children (as secondary victims): 155

Total number of perpetrators: 672

- Men: 626
- Women: 46

Type of violence (according to case/victim records):

- Physical violence: 447 victims
- Psychological violence: 670 victims
- Sexual violence: 13 victims
- Economic violence: 30 victims

Protection measures taken:

- Psychosocial support: 1.210 victims
- Legal assistance and representation: 954 victims
- Accommodation in a shelter: 31 victims (together with their children)
- Exercising social protection rights: 56 victims

Temporary protection measures:

- Proposed temporary protection measures submitted to courts by social work centres: 817
- Temporary protection measures imposed by courts: 642

Furthermore, in the course of handling cases of domestic violence, the following have been recorded:

- Criminal complaints submitted by social work centres (SWC) for non-compliance with a court decision (temporary measure): 66
- Written/oral notifications to the Mol regarding the existence of weapons held by persons perpetrating domestic violence: 38
- Written notifications to an institution/legal entity where the perpetrator handles or has access to official firearms: 5

The tracking of cases of violence against women and domestic violence (gender-based violence and domestic violence) from reporting to conviction in the Republic of North Macedonia is ensured through an institutional, multisectoral and urgent response system, established by the Law on Prevention and Protection against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (LPPVWDV) and the relevant procedural laws. In practice, the system enables continuity of the case through the linkage of: Mol → SWC → court (emergency/temporary protection measures) → enforcement and monitoring (Mol/SWC/MH) → notification of breach → Public Prosecutor's Office → criminal proceedings/conviction, with the possibility of parallel civil (measures) and criminal proceedings for the same incident, in accordance with the law.

1) Entry point and case initiation: reporting, risk assessment and activation of the system

Most commonly, a case is initiated by a report from the victim (or another report) to the Mol and/or through a SWC, following which procedures are initiated for:

- emergency protection measures (Article 57 of the LPPVWDV) – generally upon a proposal by the Mol, where there is an immediate and serious risk;
- temporary protection measures (Article 58 of the LPPVWDV) – most often upon a proposal by a SWC (Public Institution Inter-Municipal Centre for Social Work), and in some cases upon a proposal by the victim, in accordance with the statutory conditions.

This mechanism effectively ensures that cases are formalised through court proceedings (most often registered under the VPP2 register, non-contentious proceedings), thereby creating a basis for systematic tracking across institutions.

2) Urgency and prioritisation in courts: rapid allocation, deadlines and operational measures to accelerate proceedings

Courts emphasise that cases of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence are urgent and priority matters. As an example of concrete organisational measures, the Basic Civil Court Skopje notes that:²

- cases are allocated to a judge immediately upon receipt through the Automated Court Case Management Information System (ACMIS), without waiting for standard allocation procedures;
- the judge acts immediately, usually commencing action on the same or the following working day, starting with service to the opposing party;
- although there is a statutory deadline for decision-making, in practice challenges may arise due to the mandatory holding of a hearing for measures under Article 58 and the need for proper service;
- in order to overcome delays, the court applies expedited service through court officials, rather than postal service (in these cases), with a view to shortening the time from proposal to decision;
- for emergency measures (Article 57), a decision is issued immediately/on the same day without a hearing, as the legal framework expressly allows this due to the urgency and the risk involved.

These internal measures are significant because they enhance traceability: the system is able to track the timeline (receipt → allocation → decision → service → enforcement).

3) Judicial decision as the “core” of tracking: service to competent institutions and clear roles for enforcement

The key moment for tracking is the adoption of a court decision imposing emergency or temporary protection measures, after which courts consistently indicate that:

- the decision is served to the parties (the applicant and the respondent), as well as to the institutions competent for the enforcement of the measures;

² According to notifications from the courts

- in accordance with the law, the enforcement of measures, depending on their type, falls under the competence of the MoI, the Ministry of Health (for mandatory treatment), and the SWC (monitoring/support/coordination);
- the court may request information from the competent authorities on the enforcement of the measures.

This creates an institutional “trail” – the case does not remain solely within the court, but is “distributed” across the system for enforcement and monitoring.

4) Mechanisms for monitoring the enforcement of measures: the role of SWC and reporting to the court

Several courts state that SWC has a central role in monitoring the enforcement of temporary protection measures, and that such monitoring is operationalised through:

- regular reports submitted to the court on the progress and effects of the implementation of measures;
- activities such as interviews with the victim, home visits, professional counselling, support for rehabilitation and reintegration, and assessments of the need to extend, amend, or terminate the measures.

This is explicitly stated by the Basic Court Radovish and the Basic Court Vinica, which emphasise that monitoring is possible only through an institutional and multisectoral approach and, in practice, is carried out precisely through reports/notifications from SWC on the implementation and effects of the measures.

Similarly, the Basic Court Veles highlights the statutory mechanism: SWC monitors the enforcement of the measures and informs the court; upon a proposal, the court may extend, revoke or amend a measure; and decisions are served to the relevant institutions responsible for enforcement.

5) Linking with the criminal justice system: non-compliance with measures, notification and submission of criminal complaints

In order to ensure tracking “through to conviction”, it is particularly important that the system contains an embedded bridge between civil protection measures and criminal prosecution:

- The Basic Court Kriva Palanka indicates that the victim notifies SWC of non-compliance/breach of the measures, and that SWC has an obligation to submit a criminal complaint against the perpetrator for non-compliance with a court decision imposing a measure.

- In the response from the Basic Court Shtip (covering questions 8 and 54), it is explained that, following a notification from SWC that the measures are not being complied with or have been breached, the court immediately informs the Public Prosecutor’s Office, bearing in mind that in civil proceedings the court has no competence to act ex officio without a proposal, while criminal prosecution falls within the competence of the prosecution service.
- In practice, where a new act of violence occurs during the validity of existing measures, a new proposal for protection measures may follow alongside parallel criminal proceedings, which enables continuous monitoring of repetition and escalation.

This constitutes a core mechanism for the purposes of the GREVIO question: it ensures that the system does not end with the imposition of a measure alone, but also provides a pathway towards criminal accountability where necessary.

6) Coordination and division of competences (practical approach by courts)

Several courts explicitly state that tracking from reporting to conviction is distributed according to institutional competences:

- The Basic Court Kavadarci and the Basic Court Kichevo emphasise that tracking through all stages is primarily within the competence of SWC and the MoI, which are often also the entities proposing the protection measures, while the Ministry of Health is involved in the implementation of certain measures.
- The Basic Court Negotino states that decisions imposing sanctions on perpetrators are delivered to the MoI and SWC, which facilitates institutional tracking and coordination for further action.
- The Basic Court Kratovo provides an important systemic observation: the court keeps records of cases initiated on the basis of indictments and publishes final decisions (anonymised), but it is not an authority that can independently ensure tracking of the “entire pathway” without inter-institutional exchange – which indirectly points to the need for stronger integrated mechanisms and interoperability.

7) Practical traceability in court administration: cases, registers and documented trail

Although not all courts have the same technical capacities, the majority emphasise that cases are registered in information systems (most often ACMIS) and registers (VPP2), which creates an administrative trail for:

- receipt of a proposal and its allocation;

- hearings and procedural actions;
- adoption, service and finality of the decision;
- imposed measures and their duration;
- communication with institutions competent for enforcement and monitoring (Mol/SWC/Ministry of Health);
- notifications of breaches and linking with the prosecution service.

8) Concluding remarks (tone of the response to GREVIO)

In summary, the system ensures the tracking of cases through a dual pathway:

1. a protective pathway (emergency/temporary protection measures) – through urgent court proceedings, mandatory service of decisions, enforcement by the competent institutions and monitoring by SWC; and
2. a punitive pathway (criminal prosecution/conviction) – through mechanisms for notification and submission of criminal complaints in cases of breach of measures or repeated violence, with the involvement of the PPO and the criminal justice system.

In this way, a basis is created for cases to be tracked from reporting, through judicial intervention and enforcement of measures, to further prosecution and conviction, in line with the principles of the Istanbul Convention.

With a view to addressing existing challenges related to the fragmentation and lack of harmonisation of administrative data, and with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a process was carried out to map the existing systems for data collection on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, as well as to develop a Model for integrated data collection and analysis. The proposed model defines common indicators, institutional entry points and a minimum dataset to be collected by the police, social work centres, health institutions, public prosecutor's offices and courts. The model was reviewed and endorsed by the National Coordinating Body for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and represents a basis for the further institutionalisation of an integrated data system, in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention.

PART II: Information on the implementation of selected provisions in priority areas in the fields of prevention, protection and prosecution

Following the identification of horizontal developments and systemic measures in Part I of this report, Part II presents more detailed information on the implementation of selected provisions of the Istanbul Convention in the priority areas of prevention, protection and prosecution, in line with the focus of GREVIO's First Thematic Evaluation Round – "*Building trust through the provision of support, protection and justice*".

This part provides a more in-depth insight into the specific measures, activities and institutional practices undertaken by the competent authorities, with particular emphasis on how they contribute to:

- the prevention of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence,
- the strengthening of protection and support for victims,
- ensuring effective prosecution and sanctioning of perpetrators, in accordance with the principles of due diligence, gender equality, and human rights.

Within Part II, the responses are structured according to the relevant articles of the Convention and are based on information provided by the competent institutions, including the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, the Ministry of Justice, the courts, and other relevant stakeholders. Particular attention is given to practical implementation, intersectoral cooperation and measures that have a direct impact on prevention, protection and access to justice for women and girls.

Article 12: General obligations

9. *Please provide information on all primary prevention measures aimed at changing mindsets and attitudes regarding violence against women and reducing women's exposure to gender-based violence through:*
 - a. addressing harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices, customs and traditions based on the idea of women's inferiority;*
 - b. addressing the increased exposure to gender-based violence of women and girls who are at risk of intersectional discrimination;*
 - c. encouraging all members of society, including men and boys, to actively contribute to the prevention of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention and promoting the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of life, in particular their participation in politics at all levels and in the labour market.*

In accordance with Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention, the Republic of North Macedonia, through the Ministry of Interior (Mol), implements continuous, systematic and multi-layered primary prevention measures aimed at changing societal attitudes, mindsets and patterns of behaviour that contribute to violence against women, as well as to reducing the exposure of women and girls to gender-based violence.

The preventive role of the Mol represents an integral part of the integrated approach to combating gender-based violence and is implemented through:

- public awareness-raising and information campaigns,
- community policing,
- integration of preventive and gender-sensitive content into the initial and continuous training of police officers,
- partnership-based cooperation with other institutions, units of local self-government and civil society organisations.

The organisational prevention units within all Sectors for Internal Affairs continuously plan and implement preventive measures and project activities, within their annual programmes and monthly work plans, in cooperation with other institutions, organisations and other relevant stakeholders at local level, including ministries, units of local self-government, non-governmental organisations, and social work centres.

The following priority themes have been identified for the implementation of preventive activities:

- domestic violence,
- sexual harassment and violence in public spaces,
- violence in educational processes and in employment,
- trafficking in women and girls.

In this context, numerous and diverse preventive activities have been implemented, including:

- The pilot project “Right to the City for All”, which focuses on the prevention of violence against women and girls and on opening the issue of equal and safe access to public spaces. The aim of the project is to reduce gender inequalities in the use of public spaces, to establish comprehensive policies through participatory decision-making, to revitalise public spaces and to enhance safety in the urban environment.

Within the framework of the project, a safety audit walk was conducted as part of a broader study analysing the extent and different dimensions of violence against women in public spaces, with a focus on women's perceptions of their safety, the impact on their daily lives, the forms of violence they encounter, and the strategies they develop to cope with violence. This activity forms part of the global campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence".

- Panels and public discussions on recognising violence against women and girls, encouraging reporting and seeking help, as well as informing about the legal responsibility for this type of violence. The target groups included young people in schools, as well as citizens of all age groups, implemented in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and social work centres.
- Educational lectures on the topic of "Trafficking in Human Beings", targeted at secondary school students, with a focus on raising awareness of the methods used by traffickers, the risks faced by young people, and ways to protect themselves from becoming victims of these criminal activities.
- Theatrical performance "Before It's Too Late", aimed at highlighting the importance of timely recognition of violence and the prevention of its long-term consequences for children and the family.
- Meetings with citizens (community meetings), during which discussions are held on protection against violence against women, compliance with human rights, and the promotion of gender equality.
- Participation of police officers in trainings and workshops aimed at strengthening capacities for acting in cases of violence against women and girls, with particular emphasis on a gender-sensitive approach and appropriate treatment and support for victims.
- Preparation and distribution of flyers and posters to raise public awareness and inform citizens about protection against violence against women and domestic violence, as well as about available reporting and support mechanisms.

Article 14: Education

10. *Please provide several examples of promising programmes, materials or initiatives for teaching or prevention to be used in formal education (from pre-school to higher education) that:*

- a. educate children and young people about equality between women and men, the right to personal integrity, mutual respect and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, including the concept of freely given consent;*
- b. address some or all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls covered by the Istanbul Convention;*
- c. promote the inclusion of digital literacy and online safety in formal curricula, as envisaged in GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women;*
- d. ensure that teaching materials used in schools do not convey negative gender stereotypes about women and men of all ages;*
- e. offer tailored interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence and empowering all girls, including those at risk of intersectional discrimination.*

In accordance with Article 14 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), the Republic of North Macedonia undertakes continuous and systematic measures within formal education – from pre-school, primary and secondary education to higher education – with the aim to:

- educate children and young people about equality between women and men, the right to personal integrity, mutual respect and the non-violent resolution of conflicts in interpersonal relationships, including the concept of freely given and informed consent;
- address the various forms of gender-based violence against women and girls covered by the Istanbul Convention;
- promote digital literacy and online safety as an integral part of curricula, in line with GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women;
- ensure that teaching materials used in schools do not convey negative, discriminatory or stereotypical representations of gender roles;
- offer tailored and inclusive interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence and empowering girls, including those at risk of intersectional discrimination.

The Ministry of Interior, through the Police Training Centre, provides specialised educational modules for cadets and police officers covering topics related to gender equality, victim-

oriented approaches, protection of human rights and digital safety. These modules are aimed at strengthening the professional competences of police officers for recognising, preventing, and appropriately responding to cases of gender-based violence, including violence in the digital sphere.

In addition to internal training, the Ministry of Interior cooperates with educational institutions through participation in educational seminars and activities in schools, with the aim of raising awareness among students about non-violent behaviour, mutual respect, gender equality, and the safe use of the internet and digital tools.

In the period 2024–2025 (up to September 2025), the Ministry of Education and Science implemented a range of significant activities aimed at integrating the principles of equality, non-discrimination, violence prevention, and the strengthening of mental health within formal education.

In this regard:

- New curricula were developed for primary education, in particular for grades VII and VIII, based on the principles of equality, inclusiveness, and interculturality, in line with the revised Concept for Primary Education.
- New curricula were developed for the first year of general secondary (gymnasium) education, incorporating the same value-based principles and promoting respect for diversity, non-violent communication, and social responsibility.
- A new Law on Textbooks in Primary and Secondary Education was adopted, with the aim of improving the quality of textbooks, including from the perspective of gender equality and the elimination of stereotypes.
- On the basis of the new law, a new Methodology for the Evaluation of Textbooks (No. 18-5577/1 of 10.4.2025) was adopted, developed upon the proposal of the Bureau for Development of Education and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, incorporating criteria for equality and non-discrimination.
- Completely new textbooks were developed for grade VII of primary education and the first year of general secondary (gymnasium) education, and the procedure for the development of new textbooks for grade VIII has been initiated.
- Activities were implemented to sensitise teachers and parents on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), as well as training for teachers for the delivery of the CSE programme as an optional elective subject in grade IX.

- All professional associates from primary and secondary schools were trained on the topic “Strengthening students’ mental health”, with the aim of reinforcing the existing support network and violence prevention mechanisms.
- In cooperation with the World Health Organization, the curriculum for the optional elective subject “Learning about My Health” for grades IV and V was revised; a new curriculum was developed for grades VI and VII; and a teachers’ manual was prepared for grade VII.

Through these curricular contents, students are educated on topics such as mental health, emotional literacy, coping with stress, mutual respect, personal boundaries, digital safety and violence prevention, thereby enabling the education system to contribute to long-term primary prevention of gender-based violence.

Article 15: Training of professionals

11. Please complete Tables I and II included in the Annex to provide a comprehensive overview of the professional groups receiving initial and in-service professional training on the various forms of violence against women and domestic violence. Please indicate the frequency, duration, and whether the training is mandatory.

In accordance with the Annual Plan of the Sector for Equal Opportunities, the Department for the Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, with technical support from the British Embassy and the UNFPA Office, and organised by the Public Institution Institute for Social Activities, implemented four three-day basic training sessions during 2025 on working with women survivors of violence and domestic violence through a multisectoral approach, intended for professionals from social work centres.

Implemented basic training sessions

1. Ohrid – “Belvi” Hotel (24–26 February 2025)

Professionals from eight social work centres participated: Ohrid, Struga, Bitola, Gostivar, Tetovo, Kichevo, Resen, and Debar.

Professional profile:

- 15 social workers
- 5 psychologists
- 4 pedagogues

- 3 lawyers

A total of 27 participants (18 women and 9 men).

2. “Glorius” Hotel (10–12 March 2025)

Professionals from nine social work centres participated: Skopje, Tetovo, Sveti Nikole, Krushevo, Kumanovo, Demir Hisar, Kavadarci, Negotino, and Vinica.

Professional profile:

- 12 social workers
- 2 psychologists
- 3 pedagogues
- 1 special education teacher
- 5 lawyers
- 2 special educators
- 1 economist

A total of 26 participants (23 women and 3 men).

3. Veles – “Glorius” Hotel (7–9 April 2025)

Professionals from seven social work centres participated: Skopje, Veles, Bitola, Makedonski Brod, Kratovo, Kumanovo, and Kriva Palanka.

Professional profile:

- 14 social workers
- 2 psychologists
- 2 pedagogues
- 6 lawyers
- 1 special educator
- 1 sociologist

A total of 26 participants (21 women and 5 men).

4. Strumica – “Sirius” Hotel (19–21 May 2025)

Professionals from nine social work centres participated: Probishtip, Kochani, Radovish, Strumica, Gevgelija, Valandovo, Delchevo, Berovo, and Shtip.

Professional profile:

- 13 social workers
- 3 psychologists
- 2 pedagogues
- 8 lawyers
- 1 special educator

A total of 27 participants (14 women and 13 men).

Overall coverage – four basic trainings

A total of 106 professionals were covered, as follows:

- 55 social workers (45 women, 10 men)
- 12 psychologists (10 women, 2 men)
- 10 pedagogues (6 women, 4 men)
- 22 lawyers (12 women, 10 men)
- 4 special educators (4 women)
- 1 economist (1 woman)
- 1 special education teacher (1 woman)
- 1 sociologist (1 woman)

Total: 80 women and 26 men.

Trainings for multi-sectoral teams

In addition to the basic trainings, trainings for multi-sectoral teams were also delivered, composed of professionals from social work centres, police officers, health professionals, and civil society organisations.

There were a total of 85 participants, as follows:

- Shtip (12.06.2025) – 15 participants (12 women, 3 men) from Shtip, Probishtip, Delchevo, and Vinica
- Skopje (17.06.2025) – 17 participants (12 women, 5 men)

- Bitola (20.06.2025) – 26 participants (21 women, 5 men) from Bitola, Krivogashtani, Prilep, Struga, Kichevo, Ohrid, and Debar
- Kumanovo (23.06.2025) – 17 participants (9 women, 8 men) from Kumanovo, Kriva Palanka, Kratovo, and Tetovo
- Tetovo (24.06.2025) – 10 participants (7 women, 3 men) from Tetovo, Kichevo, and Gostivar

These trainings aimed to strengthen multi-sectoral cooperation and improve coordinated responses in cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

The Ministry of Interior institutionalises both initial and continuous professional training on violence against women and domestic violence. The trainings are delivered through the Police Academy and the Training Centre, in cooperation with UN Women, the OSCE Mission, academic institutions, and civil society organisations.

Initial training for police officer candidates

Within the curriculum for basic police officer training, instruction on handling cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence is mandatory for all candidates and includes:

- “Gender equality” – 4 hours
- “Taking measures and activities related to domestic violence (provision of gender-sensitive services)” – 12 hours

Additional training (generation 2024/2025)

Police officer candidates from the 2024/2025 generation additionally attended a one-day specialised training on handling reports of gender-based violence and domestic violence, with support from the OSCE (Vienna) and lecturers from the Faculty of Security, the police, as well as the association HOBBS.

The training covered topics related to:

- gender, equality and violence against women;
- forms of gender-based violence (physical, psychological, economic, sexual, and digital);
- dynamics of violence and the legal framework;
- victims’ experiences and a victim-oriented approach;

- risk assessment, secondary victimization, and planning of protection measures.

Continuous training (generation 2025/2026)

The generation of police officer candidates 2025/2026, which began training in August 2025, in addition to the regular curriculum, also attended an additional training on “Discrimination, hate speech and hate crime”, delivered within the framework of an EU-funded rule of law support project.

Development of specialised curricula

With the support of the OSCE Mission in Skopje, through an established working group, the Training Centre developed a curriculum on conducting interviews with vulnerable categories of victims, with a particular focus on women victims of domestic violence. A training of trainers was conducted, and following the adoption of the curriculum, its implementation will proceed through regular trainings.

In order to systematically strengthen the capacities of professionals dealing with cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the first national roster of certified trainers on gender-based violence and a multisectoral approach was established. In the period 2023–2024, through Training of Trainers programmes, 33 professionals from relevant institutions and civil society organisations were certified, including representatives from the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, social work centres, the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, and the civil society sector.

Subsequently, in 2024 and 2025, through cascade multisectoral trainings and institutionalised professional development programmes, more than 100 professionals from all social work centres, as well as members of multisectoral teams at local level, were trained. In addition, the training materials were integrated into the national e-learning platform of the Institute of Social Activities, thereby ensuring the sustainability and continuity of the trainings, in line with the obligations referred to in Article 15 of the Istanbul Convention.

Article 15: Training of professionals

12. Please indicate whether the expertise of women’s rights organisations or specialised support services is integrated into the design and/or implementation of the training.

The expertise of women's rights organisations and specialised support services is systematically integrated both in the design and in the implementation of training programmes for professionals working with women victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

In accordance with the Annual Plan of the Sector for Equal Opportunities, the Department for Prevention of and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, with technical support from the British Embassy and the UNFPA Office, and organised by the Public Institution Institute for Social Activities, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth organised four three-day basic trainings on working with women victims of violence and domestic violence through a multisectoral approach, envisaged for professionals from social work centres.

These trainings were delivered at:

- Hotel "Belvi", Ohrid (24–26 February 2025),
- Hotel "Glorious" (10–12 March 2025),
- Hotel "Glorious", Veles (7–9 April 2025),
- Hotel "Sirius", Strumica (19–21 May 2025).

Within these trainings, the content and methodology were developed and delivered with the active participation of experts from specialised organisations providing support to women victims of violence, incorporating:

- experience from direct work with victims,
- a victim-oriented approach,
- practical examples of intervention, risk assessment and protection planning,
- aspects related to secondary victimisation and respecting the dignity and autonomy of victims.

In addition, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, and with financial support from the British Embassy in Skopje, delivered five one-day trainings intended for members of multisectoral teams composed of:

- professionals from social work centres,
- police officers,
- health professionals,

- representatives of civil society organisations.

These trainings were delivered in Shtip, Skopje, Bitola, Kumanovo, and Tetovo and were aimed at:

- strengthening intersectoral cooperation,
- improving a shared understanding of the roles of institutions and the civil society sector,
- integrating the knowledge and practices of women’s organisations and specialised services into institutional responses.

Through this approach, the expertise of women’s rights organisations and specialised support services contributes to the quality, relevance and practical applicability of the trainings, as well as to strengthening a gender-sensitive and victim-oriented approach within the system for the prevention and protection against gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Article 16: Preventive intervention and treatment programmes

13. Please provide information on the measures taken to increase the number of available preventive intervention and treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence, for both voluntary and mandatory participation.

Article 16: Preventive intervention and treatment programmes

14. Please provide information on the measures taken to:
 - a. increase the number of men and boys attending programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence
 - b. ensure that perpetrator programmes apply best practice standards
 - c. ensure the safety of victims and cooperation with specialised support services
 - d. monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the programmes

Through court decisions, the activities of social work centres, and preventive interventions by the Ministry of the Interior, male perpetrators are systematically referred to treatment programmes. In addition, within preventive and educational activities, responsibility among men and boys for non-violent behaviour and constructive conflict resolution is actively promoted.

Treatment programmes are implemented in accordance with legally prescribed procedures, professional standards, and ethical principles. Their implementation involves qualified professionals (psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists) who work according to a clear methodology focused on:

- understanding the dynamics of violence,
- ensuring that the perpetrator assumes responsibility,
- preventing repeat victimisation.

The safety of victims is a priority in all interventions directed at perpetrators. Treatment programmes are implemented in parallel with and independently from victim support services, while social work centres and specialised services monitor risks and report any non-compliance with imposed measures.

The implementation and effects of imposed measures are monitored through:

- reports from social work centres,
- information from health-care institutions,
- notifications to the courts regarding compliance with or breaches of the measures.

These data constitute the basis for further decision-making, including the continuation, modification or termination of measures, as well as for improving systemic responses.

The Ministry of Interior actively participates in multi-agency protocols and cooperation mechanisms with the judiciary, the public prosecution service, social work centres, and civil society organisations. The police have a legally established role as a partner in the system for case management of gender-based violence and domestic violence, as well as in procedures for the imposition and enforcement of emergency protection measures.

Within these mechanisms, the police participate in:

- information exchange with the competent institutions,
- timely action upon reports of violence,
- submission of proposals for emergency protection measures,
- monitoring and enforcement of court decisions.

In addition, the Handbook for Police Action in Cases of Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence promotes a gender-sensitive and victim-oriented approach, with particular emphasis on:

- respecting the dignity and safety of victims,
- avoidance of secondary victimisation,
- recognition of risks and the dynamics of violence,
- ensuring a coordinated institutional response in cooperation with other competent entities.

This approach contributes to more effective protection of victims and to the alignment of police action with the standards set out in the Istanbul Convention.

Article 18: General obligations

15. Please provide information on all multi-agency cooperation mechanisms, structures or measures established to protect and support victims of any form of gender-based violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, a multisectoral and inter-institutional system has been established for the protection and support of victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

a. Involved state agencies

The functioning of these mechanisms involves:

- the Ministry of the Interior,
- the courts and the public prosecution service,
- social work centres,
- health-care institutions,
- the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth,
- the Ministry of Health,
- units of local self-government,
- educational institutions (in the field of prevention).

b. Inclusion of specialised services from the civil society sector

The cooperation mechanisms include specialised support services provided by civil society organisations, in particular women's rights organisations, which provide:

- psychosocial support,
- legal assistance,
- counselling,
- shelters and crisis intervention.

c. Gender-sensitive and victim-oriented approach

All mechanisms operate on the basis of a gender-sensitive approach, with a clearly defined priority on:

- the safety of women and girls,
- their empowerment and autonomy,
- a victim-oriented approach,
- avoidance of secondary victimisation.

d. Financial and human resources

Activities are financed through:

- the state budget,
- local self-government budgets,
- international donor support.

Human resources include trained professionals from different sectors, who regularly participate in training and capacity-building activities.

e. Evaluation of outcomes and impact

The effectiveness of the mechanisms is monitored through:

- institutional reports,
- judicial and administrative records,
- multisectoral meetings and analyses,
- reports prepared in cooperation with international organisations.

The Ministry of Interior actively participates, through its representatives, in the Coordinating Body for monitoring the Action Plan 2024–2026 for the implementation of the Programme for Sustainable Development and Decentralisation 2021–2026 of the Ministry of Local Self-Government. Through this body, interinstitutional coordination and alignment of policies and measures aimed at improving local services and protecting vulnerable groups are ensured, including victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Within the framework of the above-mentioned programme, the Ministry of Interior participates in the implementation of Activity 3.2.121, which relates to: *“Expansion of the network of specialised counselling centres for women victims of violence and domestic violence, and specialised counselling centres for psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence, in accordance with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.”*

This activity aims to contribute to:

- improving access to specialised and quality support services for victims,
- establishing and strengthening programmes for psychosocial treatment of perpetrators with the aim of preventing the recurrence of violence,
- ensuring an integrated and coordinated approach between institutions at national and local level.

According to the data presented at the latest working meeting of the Coordinating Body in 2024, a total of three (3) specialised counselling centres have been established in the Skopje region, namely:

- two (2) counselling centres for women victims of violence and domestic violence, and
- one (1) counselling centre for psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence.

The establishment of these counselling centres represents tangible progress in strengthening the local network of services and in fulfilling the State’s obligations under the Istanbul Convention, with an active role and contribution of the Ministry of Interior within the multisectoral approach.

Article 18: General obligations

16. Please indicate in detail whether such mechanisms or structures for cooperation established to provide support services for a specific form of violence covered by the

Istanbul Convention are based on a legal or policy document that promotes or requires such approaches.

As part of strengthening a coordinated and victim-centred response, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), an Intersectoral Cooperation Protocol for Action in Cases of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was developed and adopted in 2023. The process of drafting the Protocol was inclusive and participatory and involved more than 50 meetings of five thematic working groups, with the participation of all relevant institutions and civil society organisations. The Protocol defines the roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms among the police, social work centres, health institutions, public prosecutor's offices, courts, and organisations providing specialised services for victims, with the aim of ensuring timely protection, avoiding secondary victimisation, and guaranteeing continuity of support.

During the period 2023–2025, the Protocol was supported by intensive capacity-building activities for multisectoral teams through trainings and mentoring, during which more than 80 professionals from all relevant sectors were trained, contributing to the Protocol's practical implementation at both national and local levels.

Article 18: General obligations

17. Please explain whether all or some of the protection and support services offered to victims of the various forms of violence against women are provided on the basis of a “one-stop shop” approach.

In the context of strengthening effective multisectoral coordination and ensuring continuity of support for victims, with the support of UNFPA, an Intersectoral Cooperation Protocol for Action in Cases of Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (2023) was developed and adopted. The Protocol represents a systemic framework for coordinated action by all relevant institutions and organisations. It is the result of an inclusive process involving more than 50 working meetings and five thematic working groups, and it provides clearly defined roles, obligations, and referral and cooperation mechanisms among institutions.

Article 20: General support services

18. Please provide information on programmes and measures aimed at ensuring, through general services, the recovery of victims of violence, including in the areas of health and social services, financial assistance, education, training, assistance in finding employment, and access to affordable and long-term housing.

With a view to improving the availability of general support services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, with the support of UNFPA, the capacities of civil society organisations were strengthened to provide psychosocial support, legal assistance, and referrals to relevant institutions at the local level, with a particular focus on regions and communities that previously had limited access to such services.

19. Have concrete measures been taken to ensure that public health services (hospitals, health centres, and other services) respond to the safety and medical needs of women and girls who are victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, on the basis of national/regional standardised protocols?

As a significant step forward in ensuring general support services, in 2024, the first shelter centre in the Polog Region was opened, thereby addressing a long-standing gap in the territorial coverage of services for victims of violence, as also noted in the 2023 GREVIO Report.

The provision of general support services is systemically linked to the Multisectoral Protocol for action, thereby ensuring timely referral, coordination, and continuity of support among social work centres, health-care institutions, the police, and civil society organisations.

Particular attention is paid to ensuring access to general support services for women from vulnerable groups, including Roma women, women from rural areas, women from ethnic minorities and women with disabilities, through outreach activities, local support centres, and the provision of services in their mother tongue.

With a view to the long-term sustainability of general support services, technical assistance has been provided for the licensing of civil society organisations as service providers, enabling them to become part of the national protection system and to gain access to public funding and institutional oversight.

20. Please indicate whether such protocols detail procedures for:

- a) identifying victims through screening;*
- b) providing treatment for all medical needs of victims in a supportive manner;*
- c) collecting forensic evidence and documentation;*
- d) ensuring that a clear message of support is conveyed to the victim;*
- e) referral to appropriate specialised support services that are part of the multi-agency cooperation structure; and*

f) identifying children who may have been exposed to domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and who require additional support.

- 21. Please provide information on the procedures established for documentation and the collection of forensic evidence by actors in the public health sector in relation to victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual violence, including rape, and victims of female genital mutilation.*
- 22. Can all women victims of violence, irrespective of any of the grounds listed in Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Istanbul Convention, particularly women asylum seekers, women refugees, women migrants, women belonging to national or ethnic minorities, women with irregular residence status, women with disabilities and LGBTI women, benefit on an equal basis from existing health-care services? Please describe any measures taken to reduce legal or practical barriers to their access to regular health-care services.*
- 23. Please provide information on the measures taken to facilitate the identification and care of victims of violence against women in institutions for persons with disabilities and for older persons, as well as for persons in closed reception centres for asylum seekers, and to meet their safety and protection needs.*
- 24. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure that different groups of women and girls, inter alia, women with disabilities, Roma women, and other women belonging to national or ethnic minorities, women migrants and intersex persons, are fully informed, understand and freely give consent to procedures such as sterilisation and abortion.*

Article 22: Specialist support services

- 25. Please describe the types of specialist support services intended for women victims of the forms of gender-based violence covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g. stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced sterilisation, forced abortion), including those specialist support services that provide:*
 - a) shelters and/or other forms of safe accommodation;*
 - b) medical support;*
 - c) short-term and long-term psychological counselling;*
 - d) trauma care;*
 - e) legal counselling;*

- f) outreach services;*
- g) a telephone helpline;*
- h) other forms of support (e.g. socio-economic empowerment programmes, online support platforms, etc.).*

In the period following GREVIO's baseline evaluation, with the support of UNFPA, the availability of specialised services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence was significantly expanded, in particular in regions where such services had previously been lacking. As a direct response to GREVIO's observations regarding the lack of shelter capacity in the Polog Region, the first shelter centre in this region was opened in 2024, managed by the civil society organisation Etika – Gostivar, thereby ensuring more geographically balanced coverage of specialist support services.

In parallel, civil society organisations were supported to provide psychosocial support, shelter and free legal aid, as well as for their licensing and integration into the state system of services, which contributes to the sustainability and institutionalisation of specialist support.

With a view to the practical implementation of Article 18 of the Convention and the strengthening of coordinated support for victims, with the support of UNFPA, a Protocol for multisectoral cooperation for action in cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence (2023) was developed and adopted through an inclusive process that included more than 50 working meetings of five inter-ministerial working groups. The Protocol provides clear mechanisms for referral, information exchange, and coordination among the police, social work centres, health institutions, judicial authorities, and civil society organisations, with a focus on timely, continuous, and victim-oriented support.

In the period 2023–2025, with the support of UNFPA, multisectoral trainings and cascade training programmes were implemented, through which the first national roster of certified trainers for a multisectoral response was established, enabling institutionalised and sustainable capacity-building for the implementation of Article 18 of the Convention.

In the period 2023–2025, with the support of UNFPA, multisectoral trainings and cascade training programmes were implemented, through which the first national roster of certified trainers for a multisectoral response was established, enabling institutionalised and sustainable capacity-building for the implementation of Article 18 of the Convention.

With a view to improving the accessibility of general support services, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, with the support of UNFPA, a mapping of available services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence at local level was conducted,

including in rural and marginalised communities. This process enabled the identification of existing gaps in the system and served as a basis for planning the expansion and improvement of services within the framework of the new National Strategy 2026–2033.

In accordance with Article 22 of the Convention, with the support of UNFPA, specialist support services for victims of gender-based violence were strengthened and expanded, including the establishment of the first shelter centre in the Polog region in 2024, thereby addressing a long-standing structural gap in the geographical availability of such services.

In addition, through support to civil society organisations, specialist psychosocial and legal services for women from vulnerable groups were developed and enhanced, including Roma women, women from rural areas and women with disabilities, as well as services provided in the mother tongue, which directly contributes to meeting the requirements of accessibility and non-discrimination under Article 22.

The support also included capacity-building for SOS helpline operators through analysis, recommendations, and specialised trainings, thereby improving the quality and sustainability of specialist emergency support services.

26. What type of specialist support services include child psychologists or other professionals specialised in supporting children who have been exposed to domestic violence, including violence perpetrated by one parent against the other?

27. Are there specialist support services that address the specific needs of migrant women and girls or those belonging to national or ethnic minorities who are victims of violence against women, including women and girls seeking asylum and those who have been granted refugee status or international protection?

Article 25: Support for victims of sexual violence

28. Please indicate whether any of the following services are available in your territory:

a) sexual violence referral centres (e.g. specialist support services offering emergency medical assistance, forensic examination and crisis intervention for victims of sexual violence);

b) rape crisis centres (e.g. specialist support services offering long-term counselling, therapy, and support to victims of sexual violence, regardless of whether the sexual violence occurred recently or in the past);

c) any other specialised services offering short-term and/or long-term medical, forensic, and psychosocial support to victims of sexual violence.

With regard to support for victims of sexual violence, with the support of UNFPA, the capacities of existing services were strengthened through trainings for professionals from the social protection sector, the health sector, and civil society organisations, with a focus on a trauma-informed and victim-oriented approach.

Furthermore, through analyses and recommendations aimed at improving SOS helplines and referral mechanisms, coordination was enhanced among services providing emergency psychosocial support, legal assistance, and health services for victims of sexual violence, in line with the obligations under Article 25 of the Convention.

29. Please provide information on the number of such services and the number of women and girls supported annually.

30. Please describe the procedures and timeframes for the collection and storage of forensic evidence in cases of sexual violence (e.g. existence of protocols, use of rape kits) within the competent services.

The collection and securing of forensic evidence in cases of sexual violence is carried out in accordance with legally prescribed procedures and under the jurisdiction of the public prosecutor. Local and regional organisational units for forensic and criminalistics techniques act immediately upon becoming aware of the incident, that is, following an order issued by the competent public prosecutor, thereby ensuring the timely undertaking of all necessary investigative actions.

Crime scene investigations are conducted without delay, applying standard forensic and criminalistics methods for the detection, documentation, collection, and securing of traces and evidence relevant to the specific case. In the process of collecting forensic evidence, competent health institutions are involved where necessary, including clinics and forensic medicine services to ensure appropriate medical and forensic expertise.

The entire procedure for the collection, handling, processing, and storage of forensic evidence is led by the Public Prosecutor, who establishes the specific timeframes and instructions for action, in accordance with statutory powers. The Department for Forensic Examinations within the Ministry of Interior acts strictly within the prescribed deadlines and instructions, ensuring the integrity, continuity, and security of the evidentiary material until its use in subsequent proceedings.

31. Please describe all applicable access criteria for using these services (e.g. link to national health insurance, residence status, prior reporting of the case to the police, other).

In the Republic of North Macedonia, criminal offences related to sexual violence are regulated by the Criminal Code and are prosecuted ex officio. The actions of the competent authorities in cases of sexual violence are not conditional upon the fulfilment of any administrative, social, or status-related criteria by the victim.

Investigations and the taking of measures by the Ministry of Interior are carried out independently of:

- possession or non-possession of health insurance;
- regulated or irregular residence status in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- citizenship, national or ethnic affiliation;
- prior reporting of cases of violence to the police by the same victim;
- the age, disability or any other personal status of the victim.

Access to police protection, investigative actions and the collection of evidence is ensured for all victims of sexual violence on an equal basis, in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination and the obligations arising from the Istanbul Convention. Reporting of the criminal offence may be carried out by the victim herself, by another person or institution, and in certain cases ex officio, on the basis of information indicating that a criminal offence has been committed.

Furthermore, the taking of urgent protection measures, the securing of forensic evidence and referral to appropriate health and other competent institutions are not conditional upon a prior formal report, but are guided by risk assessment and the need to protect the victim.

Through this approach, it is ensured that all victims of sexual violence have timely, unhindered and equal access to protection and procedures, without additional victimisation and without administrative barriers.

Article 31: Custody, visitation rights and safety

32. Please indicate whether, under national legislation, incidents of violence covered by the Convention must be taken into account when determining custody and visitation rights of children. If so, please clarify to what extent these provisions:

- a. explicitly list domestic violence as a criterion to be taken into account when deciding on custody and/or visitation rights in the applicable legislation. If so, please clarify whether this criterion is applied/has been applied in practice when determining both custody and visitation rights;*
- b. recognise the harm caused to a child by witnessing violence committed by one parent against the other parent;*
- c. ensure that custody with the non-violent parent takes precedence over placement;*
- d. provide for the screening of civil proceedings relating to the determination of custody or visitation rights regarding the history of domestic violence between the parties;*
- e. provide that judges carry out risk assessments or request the disclosure of risk assessments prepared by law enforcement authorities or other competent stakeholders for victims of domestic violence, in order to take these into account and establish the best interests of the child in the context of custody and visitation decisions.*

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the Family Law does not contain an explicit provision establishing domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence as a mandatory criterion when deciding on custody and/or visitation rights.

Judicial jurisdiction for entrusting minor children exists only in divorce proceedings, while in cases involving children born out of wedlock the decision is taken by the social work centres (SWC). In all court proceedings for divorce involving minor children, the court is obliged to obtain an expert opinion from the SWC.

Out of a total of 10 basic courts that submitted responses to this question:

- 7 courts (Basic Civil Court Skopje, Basic Court Kavadarci, Basic Court Kriva Palanka, Basic Court Negotino, Basic Court Radovish, Basic Court Kichevo, and Basic Court Bitola) state that:
 - domestic violence is not an explicit statutory criterion,
 - but in practice it is taken into account through reports and opinions of the professional teams of SWC,
 - in particular where there are court decisions imposing protection measures or evidence of prior violence.
- 2 courts (Basic Court Veles and, partially, the Basic Civil Court Skopje) explicitly state that:
 - incidents of violence do not necessarily have to be taken into account,

- and in proceedings involving expert assessments of parental capacities, expert witnesses do not always take into account circumstances relating to domestic violence.
- 1 court (Basic Court Radovish) states that:
 - incidents of violence must be taken into account when deciding on custody and visitation rights, indicating the existence of a more advanced interpretative practice.

None of the courts report the existence of an explicit legal obligation to recognise the harm suffered by a child when witnessing violence between parents.

However:

- 6 courts (Skopje, Kavadarci, Kriva Palanka, Negotino, Kichevo, and Bitola) state that:
 - this circumstance may be taken into account indirectly through assessments conducted by the SWC,
 - as part of the assessment of the best interests of the child.

None of the courts indicate the existence of an automatic or mandatory priority for awarding custody to the non-violent parent.

In 5 courts (Skopje, Kavadarci, Negotino, Kichevo, and Bitola), it is stated that:

- the fact that one parent is a perpetrator of domestic violence
- may influence the final decision,
- but always within the framework of an individual assessment, without a formalised rule.

From the submitted responses:

- None of the courts indicate the existence of a mandatory, systematic ex officio screening of the history of domestic violence in all custody and visitation proceedings.
- In 8 courts, the assessment is carried out:

- through evidence submitted by the parties, and
- through reports of the SWC.
- In cases where a parental agreement exists, several courts (Skopje, Kavadarci, Kichevo) state that:
 - the agreement is often approved without a more detailed analysis of prior violence.

With regard to risk assessment:

- 4 courts (Bitola, Skopje, Kichevo, Negotino) state that:
 - the assessment is carried out independently by the judge,
 - without a mandatory request for a formalised risk assessment from the Mol or other institutions.
- None of the courts report the use of a unified methodology for risk assessment in custody and visitation proceedings.

This indicates significant inconsistency between the legal framework and judicial practice, as well as territorially and institutionally uneven application, which represents a substantial challenge with regard to the full implementation of Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention.

Article 31: Custody, visitation rights and safety

33. Please describe the measures taken to ensure that judges, court-appointed experts, and other legal professionals:

- a. have sufficient knowledge of the law and an understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence, including the psychological impact of witnessing violence on the child;*
- b. duly take into account complaints by victims in cases of domestic violence and hear child victims/witnesses, where applicable, when determining custody and visitation rights;*
- c. are informed about the lack of scientific basis of the concept of “parental alienation” or analogous concepts used to obscure violence and control exercised by perpetrators of domestic violence against women and their children.*

Based on the responses submitted by 11 courts (Basic Civil Court Skopje, Basic Criminal Court Skopje, Kavadarci, Kriva Palanka, Negotino, Kratovo, Radovish, Shtip, Kichevo, and others):

- 10 out of 11 courts state that:
 - the only systematic training mechanism is provided through the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors,
 - training is delivered as both initial and continuous education,
 - the selection of topics largely depends on the interest and individual assessment of judges themselves.
- 4 courts (Basic Civil Court Skopje, Kavadarci, Kichevo, and partially the Basic Criminal Court Skopje) explicitly state that there is a need for additional and more in-depth education, particularly regarding:
 - the dynamics of domestic and intimate partner violence,
 - the psychological consequences of witnessing violence on children.
- 1 court (Basic Court Kratovo) reports a specific thematic training:
 - “The Istanbul Convention and Resolution 1325”, organised by the Academy.

Based on the submitted responses:

- No court reports the existence of specific formalised protocols or standards for hearing child witnesses of domestic violence in custody and visitation proceedings.
- 7 courts (Skopje – civil and criminal, Kavadarci, Kriva Palanka, Negotino, Kichevo, and Bitola – indirectly through previous responses) state that:
 - victims’ complaints and the situation of children are taken into account through reports and opinions of the SWC,
 - judges individually assess the weight of the evidence, without a mandatory methodology.
- The Basic Court Shtip additionally states that:
 - judges dealing with these cases are members of multisectoral teams in accordance with Article 55 of the Law,
 - there is ongoing cooperation with a specialised NGO (“EHO”), which provides additional counselling and training one to two times per year.

Awareness of the lack of scientific basis of the concept of “parental alienation” and related concepts represents the most pronounced structural gap, according to the responses:

- The Basic Civil Court Skopje explicitly states that:
 - judges are not informed about the concept of “parental alienation”,
 - these concepts are not explicitly regulated in the applicable legislation,
 - if they are to be considered as falling within the scope of psychological violence, there is a need to organise dedicated training.
- None of the other courts indicate:
 - the existence of training,
 - guidelines, or
 - official positions regarding the use or the lack of scientific basis of these concepts in judicial practice.

34. Please provide details on the procedures in place to ensure that the competent family court cooperates/communicates with other relevant bodies/professionals, including but not limited to criminal courts, law enforcement agencies, health, and education authorities and specialist support services for women, when taking decisions on custody and visitation or when offering mediation in family law matters. Please indicate whether the law provides a legal framework for any of the established procedures.

Based on the responses submitted by the basic courts in the Republic of North Macedonia, it can be concluded that cooperation and communication of courts in family proceedings, particularly in cases related to domestic violence, victim protection and the determination of custody and visitation rights, are carried out primarily through legally established mechanisms, with a key role played by the social work centres (SWC), and, depending on the specific case, also through the Ministry of the Interior (Moi), the Public Prosecutor’s Office, educational and health institutions, as well as other relevant actors.

1. Legal framework for cooperation

The legal framework for interinstitutional cooperation is ensured through:

- the Family Law, which stipulates that in divorce proceedings where the parties have minor children, the court is obliged to request an opinion from the competent Social Work Centre when deciding on the custody of the children;
- the Law on the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which establishes an institutional and multisectoral approach and, in Article 12 paragraph 1, provides that the entities referred to in Article 11 (state administration bodies, courts, the public prosecutor's office, units of local self-government and legal entities with public powers) are obliged to cooperate with one another to achieve the objectives of the law, through protocols for interinstitutional cooperation.

These laws constitute the basic and general legal framework for cooperation; however, most courts indicate that there are no additional formalised internal court procedures for coordination beyond the statutory provisions.

2. The role of the Social Work Centres

The responses from all courts confirm that the social work centres are the key institutional partners of the courts in family proceedings.

- The Basic Civil Court Skopje, the Basic Court Negotino, the Basic Court Kichevo, the Basic Court Kavadarci, the Basic Court Kriva Palanka, and other courts state that the court obligatorily obtains an opinion from a professional team within the SWC, composed of a social worker, psychologist, pedagogue, and lawyer.
- In cases where there is no parental agreement, the SWC undertakes additional activities, including:
 - home visits to the parents' households,
 - cooperation with schools or kindergartens attended by the child,
 - interviews and professional methodological work with the child, in accordance with the child's age.
- On the basis of the reports received, courts may additionally request an expert assessment of parental capacities to determine the best interests of the child.

3. Cooperation with the Mol, the Public Prosecutor's Office and other institutions

In proceedings related to domestic violence:

- Courts cooperate with the Ministry of Interior and the PPOs, in particular with regard to:
 - monitoring the implementation of imposed temporary protection measures,
 - acting in urgent cases,
 - risk assessment and protection of victims.
- The Basic Court Kumanovo specifies in detail that there is active and direct cooperation with the Public Institution Inter-Municipal Social Work Centre Kumanovo, whereby:
 - the SWC is invited to attend hearings,
 - it is informed of all decisions adopted,
 - urgent proceedings are conducted through the ACMIS system,
 - temporary protection measures are imposed (restraining orders, contacting, harassment, etc.).
- Proceedings for the imposition of temporary measures are conducted in camera, in order to protect the dignity and integrity of the victim.
- For particularly vulnerable categories of victims, special procedural protection measures are applied in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code.

4. Cooperation with educational and health institutions

Several courts (Kavadarci, Kichevo, Skopje) state that the court, through the SWC or directly, may cooperate with:

- schools and pre-school institutions to obtain information on the child's behaviour and situation;
- health institutions, particularly in cases where there are indications of trauma, violence or a need for expert assessment.

5. Mediation in family law

A number of courts (Kavadarci, Kichevo, Kumanovo) explicitly state that:

- mediation in family law is not envisaged as a formalised mechanism, particularly in cases where domestic violence exists;
- courts act exclusively within the framework of legally prescribed judicial procedures and protection measures.

In general, the submitted responses indicate that:

- there is a legal basis for institutional and multisectoral cooperation,
- Social Work Centres act as the central coordination mechanism between the courts and other institutions,
- cooperation is most often implemented on an ad hoc basis and in relation to a specific case, rather than through detailed, formalised internal court procedures,
- several courts point to the need for clearer protocols and more developed coordination mechanisms, particularly in complex cases involving domestic and gender-based violence.

35. Please provide detailed information on the established procedures (including, where applicable, the relevant staff involved and the specific available infrastructure) when exercising custody and visitation rights, aimed at:

- a. eliminating the risk of the abused parent being subjected to further violence;*
- b. eliminating the risk of the child witnessing or experiencing violence;*
- c. ensuring that responsible staff are trained and that facilities are appropriate to enable safe supervised contact.*

36. Please indicate whether national provisions provide for the deprivation of parental rights as part of criminal sanctions where the best interests of the child, which may include the safety of the victim, cannot be guaranteed by other means.

Article 48: Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processing or sentencing

Criminal law

37. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes in criminal proceedings related

to cases involving the various forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

- 38. If voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes exist for any criminal offences within the scope of the Istanbul Convention, such as reconciliation or mediation, please provide information on the safeguards in place to ensure the victim's free and informed consent to such processes and the measures taken to avoid direct or indirect pressure on the victim. Please also indicate whether the offer of alternative dispute resolution processes may result in the discontinuation of the criminal investigation and prosecution or have other consequences for the victim.*

Civil law

- 39. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that alternative dispute resolution processes, such as mediation or procedures that may be considered equivalent, are not used in family law proceedings, such as divorce proceedings or proceedings related to child custody and visitation rights, where there is a history of violence.*

Articles 49 and 50: General obligations and immediate response, prevention and protection

- 40. Please describe the human, financial, and technical resources provided to law-enforcement agencies to ensure timely response and investigation of all cases of violence against women, including their digital dimension.*
- 41. What measures have been taken to ensure that police premises are accessible and suitable for receiving and interviewing victims of violence, while ensuring their privacy? Is it possible to report cases of violence against women in a place other than police premises, including through digital means?*
- 42. Please explain whether there are specialised police/prosecutorial units for the investigation and prosecution of violence against women and indicate:*
- a. which forms of violence against women fall within their competence;*
 - b. whether such units exist in all police/prosecutorial areas throughout the country.*

Within the Skopje Sector for Internal Affairs, as part of the Unit for Violent Crime, there is a dedicated Department for Domestic Violence, which is specialised in handling cases of domestic and gender-based violence, including criminal offences committed through

physical, psychological, sexual, and economic coercion in a family or intimate-partner context.

In the remaining seven Sectors for Internal Affairs across the territory of the state, within the General Crime Section, inspectors for juvenile delinquency and domestic violence are responsible for the detection, investigation, and processing of cases of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, in accordance with the statutory competences and internal procedures of the Ministry.

In this way, although there is a differentiated level of institutional specialisation (a dedicated department within SIA Skopje and specialised inspectors in the other SIAs), nationwide coverage with trained police personnel for handling cases of domestic and gender-based violence is ensured across the entire territory of the state.

43. Please describe all measures taken to ensure the prompt investigation and effective prosecution of cases of violence against women and domestic violence, such as prioritisation through fast-tracking, case comparison or other initiatives, without compromising the thoroughness of the investigation.

When acting in cases of domestic violence and violence against women, police officers act urgently and with priority, in accordance with the applicable laws, by-laws and internal rules and guidelines governing police conduct in such cases.

This action includes the timely undertaking of operational and investigative measures, securing the crime scene, collecting relevant evidence and information, as well as cooperation with the Public Prosecutor's Office and other competent institutions, with the aim of ensuring an effective investigation and the subsequent prosecution of perpetrators.

Measures for urgent and effective action are implemented in accordance with the rulebooks and procedures referred to in the response to question No. 45, thereby ensuring a balance between the need for accelerating proceedings and the obligation to conduct a thorough, professional and lawful investigation, with particular emphasis on the protection of victims and the prevention of secondary victimization.

44. Have measures been taken to encourage women and girls who experience any of the forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention to report incidents of violence to the authorities? Please provide examples of measures taken to build trust in law enforcement officials, including those aimed at addressing any linguistic or procedural difficulties encountered when lodging complaints, in

particular by migrant women, women asylum seekers, women with disabilities, women with addiction problems, and other women and girls exposed to the risk of intersectional discrimination.

45. Please indicate whether protocols/standard operating procedures or guidelines have been established for police officers providing guidance on how to receive reports, interview victims, investigate and collect evidence in cases of rape and sexual violence, domestic violence, psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment (including its online manifestation), forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sterilisation/abortion. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure comprehensive evidence collection beyond the victim's testimony.

The Ministry of the Interior has established by-laws and operational standards that provide guidance to police officers on receiving reports, conducting risk assessments, and taking urgent and temporary protection measures in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

In September 2021, the following key acts were adopted, which police officers apply in practice:

- Rulebook on the manner of execution of the imposed urgent protection measure – removal of the perpetrator from the home and home restraining order, as well as temporary protection measures (*Official Gazette of the RNM No. 210/2021*);
- Rulebook on the manner of assessing the risk of serious danger to the life and the physical and psychological integrity of the victim and members of her family, as well as the risk of repeating of violence, appropriate risk management, a template for a police report, and a proposal for the imposition of an urgent measure (*Official Gazette of the RNM No. 210/2021*).

These rulebooks ensure structured and standardised action, including through:

- use of a risk assessment template and preparation of a police report;
- taking urgent protection measures (where the conditions are met) and initiating temporary measures;
- referral and coordination with competent institutions and support services, depending on the specifics of the case.

Furthermore, in 2023, a Protocol on inter-institutional cooperation among the competent entities for taking measures for prevention, protection, and safeguarding from violence against women and domestic violence was adopted. The primary objective of the Protocol

is to ensure effective cooperation and mutual coordination as a prerequisite for urgent and effective protection, assistance and support for women victims, prevention of further violence and the establishment of accountability of the perpetrator.

The Protocol regulates inter-institutional cooperation and coordination among the competent entities in the areas of:

- social protection,
- policing,
- education,
- health care,
- criminal prosecution,
- probation,
- as well as support services provided by civil society organisations, which often receive financial support both at the stage of establishing the service and during its implementation by municipalities

With regard to comprehensive evidence collection, the established procedures and coordination mechanisms enable police action not to rely exclusively on the victim's statement, but to be directed towards systematic documentation of risk, evidence and relevant facts, as well as coordinated action with other competent institutions in relation to medical documentation, expert opinions and other sources of evidence (within the scope of statutory competences and cooperation protocols).

46. Please describe the efforts undertaken to identify and address all factors contributing to case attrition (the process through which cases drop out of the criminal justice system) in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, efforts to prevent the “dropping out” of cases of violence against women and domestic violence from the criminal justice system are implemented through a combination of criminal-law, civil-law, and multisectoral mechanisms, with a focus on urgency, coordination, and the protection of victims.

1. Criminal prosecution and sanctioning

The courts indicate that in all cases of violence against women and domestic violence for which sufficient evidence is secured are prosecuted, and where guilt is established, perpetrators are convicted and sanctioned with appropriate criminal penalties. In this regard, the Criminal Code envisages that criminal offences committed in the context of

gender-based violence, violence against women, and domestic violence are treated as aggravated forms of the offence, carrying more severe sanctions, which the courts regularly take into account when deciding on cases (Basic Court Negotino).

2. Reasons for case “attrition”

However, several courts point out that the main factors contributing to a reduction in the number of prosecuted cases include:

- non-reporting by victims, often due to fear, economic dependence or a wish to protect the perpetrator;
- withdrawal of cooperation by the victim with the aim of continuing cohabitation;
- lack of material evidence in certain cases, which makes proof more difficult.

These factors have been identified by the Basic Courts in Kavadarci, Kichevo, and other courts, which note that despite institutional readiness, social and psychological barriers faced by victims remain a significant challenge.

3. Emergency and interim protection measures

In order to prevent further case “attrition”, courts make extensive use of civil-law protection through the imposition of interim protection measures, in accordance with the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

In particular, the practice of urgent action is emphasised:

- cases are treated as urgent;
- automatic case allocation is carried out through the ACMIS system;
- hearings are scheduled without delay;
- measures such as restraining orders, bans on contact, removal from the home and other victim-protection measures are imposed.

(Basic Court Kumanovo)

Proceedings are closed to the public, with the aim of protecting the dignity, privacy and integrity of victims.

4. Role of Social Work Centres and risk assessment

In proceedings for the imposition of measures, courts regularly cooperate with social work centres, which, through their professional teams:

- prepare risk assessment reports;
- participate in hearings;
- submit expert opinions that are taken into account in judicial decision-making.

This practice is recognised as key to reducing the risk of repeat violence and to keeping cases within the system of legal protection (Basic Court Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo).

5. Multisectoral and institutional cooperation

Courts emphasise that there is a clear legal framework for institutional and multisectoral cooperation, established in Article 12 paragraph 1 of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The entities referred to in Article 11 (courts, the MoI, the Public Prosecutor's Office, social work centres, local self-government units, and others) are obliged to cooperate with one another through protocols for inter-institutional cooperation.

However, some courts indicate that there is a need for further strengthening and formalisation of these mechanisms in practice to better address the factors that lead to cases dropping out of the system.

6. Role of the non-governmental sector and preventive activities

Several courts point to the need for a stronger role of the non-governmental sector, in particular through:

- involvement of social workers, psychologists, and pedagogues;
- organisation of workshops, educational forums and counselling services;
- encouraging victims to report violence and to remain engaged in proceedings.

These activities are recognised as important for reducing fear, stigma and secondary victimisation, which directly affect the number of reported and prosecuted cases.

47. Please indicate whether legal or other measures have been taken to issue a renewable residence permit to migrant women who have become victims of any of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, if the competent authority considers that their stay is necessary due to their cooperation in the investigation or criminal proceedings.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Interior, the competent Unit for Foreigners and Readmission within the Department for Border Affairs and Migration has, to date, not issued residence permits to migrant women who were victims of violence,

including victims of domestic violence or other forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

In practice, during the period under review, no cases were recorded in which the issuance of a renewable residence permit for migrant women was requested or approved on the basis of their status as victims of violence, either in general or in the context of their cooperation with the competent authorities in an investigation or criminal proceedings.

Article 51: Risk assessment and risk management

48. Please describe all standardised and mandatory risk assessment tools used by all competent authorities in all regions for forms of violence against women, such as stalking, violence committed in the name of so-called honour and domestic violence, and to what extent these tools are used in practice to assess the risk of lethality, the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence, with a view to preventing further violence. Please indicate whether the following elements are considered red flags when conducting the risk assessment:

- a) possession of, or access to, a firearm by the perpetrator;*
- b) the victim filing for separation/divorce or ending the relationship;*
- c) pregnancy;*
- d) previous acts of violence;*
- e) previous issuance of a restraining measure;*
- f) threats by the perpetrator to take the children away from the common household;*
- g) acts of sexual violence;*
- h) threats to kill the victim and her children;*
- i) threat of suicide;*
- j) coercive and controlling behaviour.*

The Ministry of Interior applies standardised risk assessment tools in police practice, with the aim of timely identification of indicators of lethality, the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence. Risk assessment is used during police action following a report/incident and serves as a basis for the timely adoption of protection measures and the prevention of further violence.

Within the risk assessment, the police take into account key risk indicators, such as:

- previous acts of violence,
- threats,
- access to/possession of weapons,

- coercive and controlling behaviour (coercive control), as well as other relevant risk circumstances that may indicate an increased risk of escalation.

At the same time, the MoI states that, in conducting risk assessments and planning measures, the police coordinate with social services, in particular with a view to safety planning (including through the system of cooperation in case management).

49. Please indicate how effective cooperation between the different law enforcement authorities and specialist support services for women is ensured when carrying out risk assessments, and whether identified risks are managed by law enforcement agencies on the basis of individual safety plans that also include the safety of the victim's children.

Effective cooperation in risk assessment is ensured through coordination between the police and social services, especially in the area of safety planning and management of identified risks in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

Risk assessments prepared by the police as part of operational action following incidents/reports are used to guide protection measures and activities, while the coordination with social services enables a case-based approach aimed at reducing the risk of repeated violence and escalation, as well as ensuring appropriate safety and support.

50. Please describe the efforts undertaken to carry out a retrospective analysis of all cases of gender-related killings of women, in the context of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, with a view to identifying potential systemic gaps in the institutional response of the authorities to prevent such acts in the future.

In the recent period, the Republic of North Macedonia has taken initial and gradual steps towards establishing a systemic approach to the retrospective analysis of cases of gender-related killings of women (femicide), particularly in the context of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence against women. Although there is currently no formally established national mechanism for mandatory and regular retrospective analysis of all femicide cases, the issue has been recognised as a significant priority in the context of strengthening the institutional response and prevention.

In practice, individual analytical reviews and case assessments are carried out by the competent institutions (social work centres, the Ministry of Interior, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the courts), most often in the context of:

- internal reports,
- disciplinary and administrative proceedings,
- analyses of media-exposed cases,
- as well as expert and thematic analyses prepared with the support of international organisations and the civil society.

In the period 2023–2025, with the support of international partners (including UNFPA, UN Women, and the British Embassy), several thematic analyses and studies were prepared which indirectly address cases of severe forms of gender-based violence, including femicide, through:

- analysis of institutional coordination,
- assessment of risk management,
- monitoring of the exercise of due diligence,
- identification of weaknesses in the timeliness and effectiveness of protection measures.

These analyses pointed to potential systemic gaps, in particular in relation to:

- insufficient or incomplete assessment of the risk of repetition and escalation of violence,
- insufficient exchange of information between institutions,
- limited use and monitoring of emergency and temporary protection measures,
- lack of integrated analysis of previous reports, misdemeanour and criminal proceedings related to perpetrators,
- insufficient standardisation of data and their analytical use for preventive purposes.

As a response to these findings, within the preparation of the National Strategy for Prevention and Protection from Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2026–2033, the establishment of a structured mechanism for the systemic retrospective analysis of femicide cases is envisaged, in line with GREVIO recommendations and the principles of the Istanbul Convention. This mechanism aims to:

- identify institutional shortcomings and good practices,
- strengthen accountability and the exercise of due diligence,
- improve preventive policies and measures,
- prevent similar cases in the future.

In addition, the establishment of an integrated system for the collection and analysis of data on gender-based violence, currently under development, will provide a basis for more effective monitoring of risks, trends and outcomes of institutional action, including in the most severe cases of violence against women.

Article 52: Emergency barring orders

51. Have legal or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework regulating emergency barring orders to align it with the requirements of Article 52? If so, please indicate whether:

- a) emergency barring orders can remain in force until the victim is able to obtain a court protection order, in order to ensure that no protection gaps arise;*
- b) women victims of domestic violence are provided with support and advice proactively by the authority competent to issue an emergency barring order;*
- c) children are specifically included in contact bans issued under the emergency barring order;*
- d) any exceptions are made to contact bans, and under what circumstances.*

In the Republic of North Macedonia, a legal and secondary legislative framework for emergency protection orders has been established, aligned with the requirements of Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention.

In September 2021, the following acts were adopted:

- Rulebook on the manner of enforcement of the imposed emergency protection measure – removal of the perpetrator from the residence and prohibition of approaching the home, as well as temporary protection measures (Official Gazette No. 210/2021), and
- Rulebook on the manner of risk assessment of a serious threat to the life and physical and psychological integrity of the victim and members of her/his family, as well as risk management and procedural templates (Official Gazette No. 210/2021).

Through these secondary legislative acts, the following is enabled:

a) Continuity of protection

Emergency protection orders are imposed with the aim of the immediate removal of the perpetrator from the home and the restraining order, while the police prepare and submit a proposal to the competent court for further measures. In this way, continuous protection of the victim is ensured without temporal gaps, pending the adoption of a court decision.

b) Proactive role of the police towards the victim

In the course of their actions, police officers are obliged to inform the victim of her rights, the available protection measures and institutional support, as well as to initiate cooperation with the social work centres and other competent services, in accordance with the protocols for inter-institutional cooperation.

c) Inclusion of children in protection measures

Risk assessment and the imposition of emergency measures also encompass the protection of children, particularly where there is a risk that they may be victims or witnesses of violence. Prohibitions on contact and approaching are also applied with the aim of protecting children as a particularly vulnerable category.

d) Exceptions to contact bans

The information provided does not indicate specific exceptions to contact bans, other than those that may arise from a decision of the competent court, based on a risk assessment and the best interests of the victim and the child.

52. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce emergency barring orders and on the responses to any breaches of such orders.

The enforcement of emergency barring orders falls within the direct competence of the police, which act in accordance with the above-mentioned rulebooks and the applicable legislation. Specifically:

- the police are authorised to immediately remove the perpetrator from the residence if the perpetrator refuses to leave the shared premises voluntarily.
- continuous monitoring of compliance with bans on approaching and contact is carried out.
- any breach of an emergency protection order is recorded and immediately reported to the competent court, with a view to taking further legal measures.

Through such action, effective implementation of emergency measures is ensured, along with a swift response to their breach and additional protection of victims from repeated or escalating violence.

Article 53: Restraining or protection orders

- 53. Please indicate whether legislative or other measures have been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing restraining and protection orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 53. If so, please specify whether:*
- a) restraining or protection orders are available – in the context of criminal proceedings and/or upon application to civil courts – for women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, so-called “honour”-related violence, as well as digital manifestations of violence against women and girls;*
 - b) children are specifically included in protection orders;*
 - c) any exceptions to contact bans are provided for and, if so, under what circumstances.*

In the Republic of North Macedonia, a legal framework exists for the imposition of restraining and protection orders, in accordance with the Law on the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (LPPVWDV), which allows their application in both criminal and civil proceedings.

Restraining and protection orders are available to women victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence and are imposed:

- as emergency measures (Article 57 of the LPPVWDV), and
- as temporary protection measures (Article 58 of the LPPVWDV), upon a proposal by the Mol, social work centres or the victim herself, and are ordered by the civil courts.

Children are explicitly included as persons protected by the imposed measures, in particular where:

- they are direct victims of violence, or
- they are exposed as witnesses to domestic violence.

Contact and approaching bans are also applied with the aim of protecting children, in accordance with the risk assessment and the best interests of the child.

The institutional responses provided do not indicate the existence of systemic exceptions to contact bans. Any potential derogation may be made only on the basis of a court decision, following an individual assessment of the specific case.

54. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce protection orders and on the responses to any violations of such orders.

The enforcement and monitoring of protection orders in cases of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence are carried out through clearly delineated competences between the Ministry of Interior, the courts and the social work centres, in accordance with the Law on the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (LPPVWDV).

The Ministry of Interior plays a key role in the practical enforcement of protection orders. The police prepare and submit proposals for the imposition of emergency and temporary protection measures to the competent courts, carry out risk assessments, and act upon court decisions ordering the removal of the perpetrator from the home and the prohibition of approaching or contacting the victim. In cases of a violation of an emergency protection measure, the MoI submits a proposal to the competent public prosecutor for the imposition of precautionary measures, in accordance with Article 79 of the LPPVWDV, as well as the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.

The basic courts act upon requests for the imposition of emergency and temporary protection measures, determine their duration, and, through their decisions, oblige the competent institutions to enforce and monitor the measures, namely:

- the Ministry of Interior – for the execution of measures involving removal from the home and restraining orders,
- the social work centres – for monitoring the implementation of the measures,
- the Ministry of Health – for mandatory treatment or psychosocial intervention, where applicable.

Following the issuance of a court decision, the courts do not have executive competences to directly monitor or sanction breaches. Courts are informed of breaches for information purposes and subsequently notify the competent Public Prosecutor's Office for further action.

Social work centres have an obligation to monitor the implementation of the imposed temporary protection measures. In cases of non-compliance with a court decision, the centres shall submit criminal charges for failure to comply with a court decision, in accordance with Article 80 of the LPPVWDV, and shall simultaneously notify the court and the Ministry of Interior.

Any breach of emergency or temporary protection measures results in the submission of criminal charges and the initiation of criminal proceedings against the perpetrator. Depending on the specific circumstances of the case and the risk assessment, additional or more stringent measures may be imposed, including precautionary measures, detention, or new protection measures of longer duration.

Information received from the courts indicates that some basic courts do not have systematised data on the implementation and breaches of protection measures. Furthermore, although there is a clear institutional division of competences, the limited role of the courts after the imposition of measures means that the burden of monitoring and timely response largely rests with the Ministry of Interior and the social work centres, which points to the need for further strengthening of coordination, data exchange, and analytical monitoring of the implementation of protection measures.

Article 56: Measures of protection

55. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the following:

- a. that the competent authority informs the victim when the perpetrator escapes or is temporarily released, at least when the victim or her family may be at risk (paragraph 1);*
- b. the protection of the privacy and image of the victim (paragraph 1);*
- c. the possibility for victims to testify in court without being present or at least without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, in particular through the use of appropriate communication technologies where available (paragraph 1);*
- d. the provision of appropriate victim support services so that the rights and interests of victims are duly presented and taken into account (paragraph 1).*

In national legislation, the obligation to inform and monitor the perpetrator is implicitly contained in:

- the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
- criminal procedural legislation
- secondary legislation and police protocols

the Ministry of Interior:

- applies police procedures through which victims are informed if the perpetrator:
 - has escaped,
 - has been temporarily released,
 - is assessed as potentially posing a risk;
- undertakes emergency protection measures in cooperation with the social work centre;
- monitors the perpetrator and acts in cases of breaches of the imposed measures.

Judicial practice

- According to the responses received from the Basic Courts of Kavadarci, Kichevo, and Kumanovo: Informing the victim and the protection measures in cases where the perpetrator escapes or is released are carried out through the Mol and the SWCs, which have an active role in monitoring the perpetrator.
- The courts do not have a direct operational role, but act on the basis of notifications received from the competent institutions.

With regard to the protection of the privacy and image of the victim, the Mol applies procedures through which:

- the personal data and identity of victims are protected;
- confidentiality during proceedings is ensured;
- access to information is restricted exclusively to authorised officials.

According to judicial practice, proceedings concerning temporary protection measures are conducted in camera, with the aim of:

- preventing secondary victimisation,
- protecting the dignity and personal integrity of the victim.

With regard to the possibility for victims to testify without the presence of the perpetrator and the use of technologies, Article 67 of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence provides for the mandatory presence of the parties at the hearing.

The Basic Civil Court Skopje considers that:

- in practice, due to the prohibition of secondary victimisation:
 - the victim is heard only when strictly necessary;
 - the victim is enabled to give testimony without the presence of the perpetrator;
- this constitutes a practical correction of the statutory provision.

In terms of established technical capacities

- There are no established:
 - video links,
 - separate rooms,
 - technical means for remote testimony.

However, in other courts (Kriva Palanka, Kratovo), separate hearings are not applied, nor is a formalised risk assessment conducted.

Article 12 of the LPPVWDV provides for institutional and multisectoral cooperation, emphasising active cooperation between the court, the MoI and the SWCs, through which victims are provided with:

- civil-law protection,
- criminal-law protection,
- procedural support;

Particularly vulnerable victims are entitled to special procedural protection measures.

Part III: New trends in violence against women and domestic violence

This part of the report refers to new developments and trends in the field of prevention and response to violence against women and domestic violence identified after the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report. Within this chapter, information provided by the competent institutions and courts is presented, indicating changes and new phenomena in the forms of violence, judicial practice, allocation of resources and approaches to primary prevention, including the emergence and increase of digital manifestations of violence, as well as the institutional responses to these challenges.

56. Please provide information on new developments following the adoption of the GREVIO baseline evaluation report for your country with regard to:
- a. new trends in violence against women and domestic violence, including their digital manifestations (modes of perpetration, groups of victims, forms of violence);
 - b. new trends in domestic judicial practice related to violence against women;
 - c. new trends in the allocation of funds and budgeting by state authorities;
 - d. innovative approaches to primary prevention, for example new target groups and means of communication, public/private partnerships, etc.
 - e. new trends related to access to asylum and international protection for women victims of violence against women.

According to the Basic Court Skopje, there is an observable trend whereby psychological violence and control over women are increasingly accompanied by digital forms, which expand the channels for threats, humiliation, and control. The reported manifestations include:

- threats and abusive messages via mobile applications and social media;
- the publication of explicit photographs or threats to publish such material;
- impersonation of the victim (use/misuse of the victim's social media profile);
- contacting the victim's employer, colleagues or family members through digital channels (as a form of pressure, exposure, discreditation or isolation).

This trend indicates a shift from "traditional" forms of psychological violence towards combined (offline and online) violence, where digital tools are used to:

- continue the violence after separation,
- enable more effective control and monitoring,
- create fear through public exposure and shame.

According to the Ombudsman³, violence against women and domestic violence continue to constitute a serious and widespread phenomenon in the Republic of North Macedonia. This is also confirmed by data from the Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2026, according to which three out of five women (60%) consider violence against women to be a frequent occurrence, while almost one in five women (17%) personally know a survivor of domestic violence, either within their family or among friends. These data indicate a deeply rooted problem that requires continuous and systemic interventions.

The Ombudsman points out that the number of complaints submitted directly by survivors of domestic and gender-based violence is relatively low, indicating insufficient awareness, lack of trust in institutions and fear of stigmatisation. Particular concern exists regarding the situation of women from vulnerable groups, such as Roma women, women with disabilities, migrant women, and women asylum seekers, whose specific needs and experiences often remain insufficiently recognised and addressed in existing policies and services.

The Basic Court Kriva Palanka indicates that physical violence within the family/marital union occurs most frequently, most often involving the infliction of bodily injuries by an intimate partner. This suggests that, despite the increase in digital manifestations, physical violence remains dominant in the visible judicial and institutional sphere.

According to the Basic Court Berovo, survivors include both men and women, approximately aged 30–70, while perpetrators are predominantly men (15), aged 50–70. These data are indicative that domestic violence is not limited to a single age group, but that, in the specific judicial context, male perpetrators in older age categories predominate.

In accordance with the mandate established under the Law on the Ombudsman, this institution plays a significant role in the protection and promotion of the constitutional and legal rights of citizens, including in the field of prevention of and protection from violence against women. In the majority of cases, the Ombudsman acts *ex officio*, through monitoring the implementation of laws and by-laws, rather than on the basis of direct complaints from survivors.

Within its role as the National Preventive Mechanism, the Ombudsman carries out regular, systematic and unannounced visits to places where persons are deprived of, or may be deprived of, their liberty, including prisons, police stations, psychiatric institutions, migrant centres, and educational institutions. During these visits, a gender- and sex-sensitive approach is applied, taking into account the specific risks and needs of women.

³ Data obtained within the framework of the project EU Support for the Rule of Law

1) Institutionalisation of emergency and temporary measures (urgent procedures)

The Basic Court of Negotino highlights as a significant new development:

- the adoption of the Law on the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and
- the possibility to impose emergency and temporary measures through special court procedures, aimed at protection and prevention of further violence.

This represents a trend towards faster, measure-oriented judicial responses, where the focus is placed on real-time protection rather than solely on sanctioning.

2) Trends in sanctions and outcomes of criminal and civil proceedings (example: Sveti Nikole)

The Basic Court of Sveti Nikole has provided data illustrating the prevailing types of judicial outcomes:

Criminal proceedings (2023–2025)

- 2023: 6 final judgments – all convictions, predominantly suspended sentences (1 fine/monetary penalty; 5 suspended sentences with a determined prison sentence).
- 2024: 4 judgments – convictions; 3 suspended sentences and 1 effective prison sentence.
- 2025: 2 judgments – convictions; suspended sentence with a determined prison sentence.

The court reports the imposition of measures such as:

- mandatory treatment of the perpetrator (Psychiatric Hospital; duration of 3–12 months, and in 2025 – 12 months);
- prohibitions: threats, harassment, contacting, approaching within 100 metres, with a duration of 3, 6 or 12 months.

This demonstrates a trend towards the use of measures combining:

- restriction of contact/approach (safety), and
- mandatory treatment (corrective/treatment element).

The Basic Court of Gostivar has provided a broader statistical overview:

- Open investigations: 4 (1 in 2023; 3 in 2024)

- Temporary measures/detention: 4 (1 precautionary measure in 2023; 3 detentions in 2024)
- Final judgments: 75 (35 in 2023; 40 in 2024), of which:
 - suspended sentences: 48 (24+24)
 - prison sentences: 6 (1 in 2023; 5 in 2024)
 - fines: 7 (4 in 2023; 3 in 2024)
 - acquittals: 1 (in 2024)
- Withdrawal of prosecution: 9 (4 in 2023; 5 in 2024)
- Discontinued proceedings: 4 (2 in 2023; 2 in 2024)
- “Protection orders” reported: 13 (4 in 2023; 9 in 2024), of which 4 were granted
- Prohibitions against threats/harassment/communication: 2 cases in 2023 and 2 cases in 2024.

The courts of Kratovo and Radovish report that they do not have information or new data on this issue, which indicates uneven documentation practices or differing capacities for analytical monitoring.

The submitted responses do not contain systemic, quantitative data on budget lines, amounts, new programmes or financial allocations. The Basic Court of Kavadarci provides a general formulation stating that measures/efforts are being undertaken aimed at allocation of funds, budgeting and communication resources, but without specific figures or a description of new budgetary mechanisms.

The Ministry of Education reports a specific innovation in prevention and early response in schools:

- In 2023, the campaign “Together to Put an End to School Violence” was launched.
- A reporting channel was established through specially created email addresses:
 - prijavinasilstvo@mon.gov.mk
 - paraqitdhune@mon.gov.mk
- Citizens are encouraged to report violence, including through the professional services within schools.

- In 2024, 49 cases were reported, of which:
 - 32 were resolved,
 - 17 are ongoing/in the process of resolution.

According to the Ombudsman, during visits carried out within the framework of the National Preventive Mechanism, confidential interviews are conducted with women deprived of liberty, with the aim of identifying potential cases of sexual harassment, psychological or physical violence. Particular attention is paid to analysing accommodation conditions from the perspective of privacy, safety, access to hygiene products, health and psychological care, as well as the existence of separate facilities for women and children. While conducting this exercise, international standards and recommendations of torture prevention bodies are applied, including the prohibition of degrading body searches, the provision of female staff for sensitive tasks, and protection against sexual exploitation.

The information submitted in response to question 56 does not contain data on:

- asylum procedures with a gender component,
- specific procedures/guidelines for women victims of violence,
- practical changes in access or criteria,
- new measures for international protection in this context.

Part IV: Administrative data and statistics

This chapter summarises administrative and judicial statistical data for two full calendar years preceding the receipt of the questionnaire, with the aim of providing a quantitative overview of the scope of reporting, proceedings and outcomes in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.

The data were submitted by the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and by the basic courts (civil and criminal divisions). Differences are noted in the format and level of detail of the reports due to differing recording systems, competences, and statistical categories.

The Ombudsman identifies several systemic weaknesses, including insufficient coordination and exchange of information between the police, social work centres, health institutions and the public prosecutor's office, as well as limited access to specialist support services, particularly in rural areas. In addition, there is insufficient awareness among victims of their rights and of the available protection mechanisms.

Positive developments include the establishment of 24/7 SOS telephone helplines, the provision of free legal aid and representation for victims, the implementation of training for police, health and social services, as well as enhanced cooperation between state institutions and civil society organisations in providing confidential and accessible services for victims.

According to the Ombudsman, further improvement of inter-institutional coordination is necessary, along with the expansion and decentralisation of specialist services, an increase in the number and accessibility of shelters, and the provision of sustainable funding for SOS helplines. Particular emphasis should be placed on the systematic collection and publication of disaggregated data as a basis for developing effective and inclusive policies for the prevention and protection from violence against women.

57. Please provide annual statistics for two full calendar years preceding the receipt of this questionnaire regarding administrative and judicial data on:

- a. the number of reports, opened investigations, prosecutions, final judgments delivered and sanctions imposed in relation to all forms of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the Istanbul Convention;*
- b. the number of emergency barring orders issued by the competent authorities, the number of breaches of such orders, and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of such breaches;*
- c. the number of protection orders issued, the number of breaches of such orders, and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of such breaches;*
- d. data on the number of decisions issued by family courts on custody/visitation/residence of children that explicitly took incidents of domestic violence into account.*

In accordance with the requirements of question 57, the available administrative and judicial data for 2023 and 2024, collected from the competent institutions, are presented below. Due to differing methodologies and recording practices, the data are not always fully comparable across all categories, which represents a structural challenge also highlighted in the responses of several courts.

a) Administrative data – reports, proceedings and victims

(Ministry of Interior)

2023

In 2023, a total of 1,082 criminal offences related to domestic violence were registered. A total of 1,097 perpetrators were recorded, of whom 1,001 were men and 96 were women. The total number of victims amounted to 1,123 persons, with women predominating (883) compared to 240 men.

At the same time, 321 misdemeanours were registered, committed by 375 perpetrators (285 men and 90 women), with a total of 394 victims (228 women and 166 men).

During the year, 5,300 complaints were filed. Among the perpetrators, men predominated (4,285) compared to 1,120 women. Women again constituted the majority of victims (3,519), compared to 1,892 men.

2024

In 2024, 1,087 criminal offences related to domestic violence were registered, indicating relative stability compared to the previous year. A total of 1,108 perpetrators were recorded (1,018 men and 90 women), as well as 1,146 victims, of whom 911 were women and 235 men.

A total of 277 misdemeanours were registered, committed by 337 perpetrators (263 men and 74 women), with 345 victims (157 women and 188 men).

The number of complaints filed in 2024 amounted to 4,210. Once again, men predominated among the perpetrators (3,389), while the victims were predominantly women (2,893), compared to 1,434 men.

These data indicate a relatively stable number of registered criminal offences, with a continued predominance of women as victims and men as perpetrators. At the same time, a decrease in the number of complaints and misdemeanours is observed, which may be the result of several factors (changes in reporting practices, classification, or institutional responses). A fuller interpretation would require a more in-depth qualitative and contextual analysis.

b) Judicial data – criminal and civil proceedings

(extracts from submitted responses)

Due to differing judicial practices and recording systems, courts submitted data with varying levels of detail.

Basic Criminal Court Skopje – In 2023, 155 cases related to domestic violence were recorded, resulting in the imposition of prison sentences, suspended sentences (including with probation supervision), treatment measures and discontinued proceedings; detention was ordered in five cases. In 2024, 121 cases were recorded, resulting in prison sentences, suspended sentences and precautionary measures, including detention in nine cases involving 12 persons.

Other basic courts (Gevgelija, Negotino, Kavadarci, Kichevo, Kriva Palanka, Bitola, Strumica, Veles, etc.) submitted data on cases and outcomes on criminal offences relating to domestic and gender-based violence, which did not always include a complete breakdown across all categories listed under point 57(a). Some courts explicitly stated that they do not have detailed statistical data for all items.

c) Emergency restraining orders and breaches thereof

Specific and comprehensive data were submitted by the Basic Court Negotino:

- 2023: 17 proceedings were initiated for the imposition of emergency measures (removal from the home and prohibition of approaching). One breach was recorded, following which criminal proceedings were initiated for the offence of “Failure to enforce a court decision” (Article 377 of the Criminal Code), and a conviction was rendered.
- 2024: 27 proceedings were initiated, with no recorded breaches.

Some of the other courts indicated that no separate statistics are kept on emergency restraining orders or that such data are not available.

d) Protection orders and breaches thereof

The Basic Civil Court Skopje submitted data on the number of decisions issued for temporary protection measures:

- 2024: 238 decisions
- 2025 (ntil September): 166 decisions

The court stated that it does not have data on breaches and sanctions, as monitoring and enforcement fall within the competence of other institutions.

Basic Court Negotino:

- 2023: 6 proceedings; breaches by two perpetrators → criminal proceedings and convictions
- 2024: 15 proceedings; breaches by three perpetrators → criminal proceedings and convictions

In summary, based on the available responses from 19 basic courts, the following were recorded:

- 221 proposals for protection measures
- 542 decisions imposing measures
- 68 protection orders
- 485 criminal convictions related to breaches of protection measures

e) Decisions on custody, visitation, and residence of children

With regard to this item, most courts stated that they do not have a separate statistical register that would allow identification of custody, visitation or residence decisions in which incidents of domestic violence were explicitly taken into account. Some courts indicated that such data would require additional manual analysis of court decisions.

The Basic Court Bitola and the Basic Civil Court Skopje stated that judges take the occurrence of domestic violence into account when deciding, where relevant to the best interests of the child, while at the same time pointing to the absence of a systematised statistical register that would allow quantitative reporting on this basis.

ANNEX

Table 1: Initial training (education or vocation training)

Please complete the table and indicate the professionals (in the fields of health care, law enforcement, criminal justice, social protection, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism, and support services) who have received initial training on violence against women. Please list each category of professionals in a separate row.

Professionals	Do they benefit from initial training on violence against women and domestic violence ?	Is the training mandatory ?	Are training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols ?	Who funds the training?	Please describe the content and duration of the training
MSPDY – employees in Social Work Centres (SWC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	MSPDY; British Embassy / UNFPA	<p>“Basic Training on Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.” 27–28 March 2024, Limak Hotel, Skopje. Two-day training. Reported: 95 participants + 60 = total 155 participants (teachers, professional associates, and educators).</p>
SWC – professional staff (local training in Kisela Voda Municipality)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Yes	Kisela Voda Municipality	<p>“Recognising and Addressing Violence against Women, Domestic Violence and Violence against Children.” 25 September 2024 (Biljana Belichanec Cinema Hall, Kisela Voda) – 95 participants; 30</p>

					September 2024 (Kitka Cinema Hall, Drachevo, Kisela Voda). Total reported: 106 participants (80 women, 26 men), SWC professionals.
Multisectoral teams (SWC, police, health sector, CSO) – basic trainings (4 cycles)	Yes	Yes	Yes	British Embassy and UNFPA Office; MSPDY (organised by the Public Institution Institute for Social Activities)	Four three-day “Basic Trainings for Working with Women Victims of Violence and Domestic Violence through a Multisectoral Approach” : 24–26 Feb 2025 (Belvi Hotel, Ohrid); 10–12 Mar 2025 (Glorius Hotel); 7–9 Apr 2025 (Glorius Hotel, Veles); 19–21 May 2025 (Sirius Hotel, Strumica). Target group: SWC professionals, police officers, health workers, and CSOs. Total: 85 participants (61 women, 24 men).
Multisectoral teams (SWC, Mol, health sector, CSO) – regional trainings (5 cities)	Yes	Yes	Yes	MSPDY in cooperation with UNFPA and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights	Trainings for multisectoral team members in: Shtip (12.06.2025), Skopje (17.06.2025), Bitola (20.06.2025), Kumanovo (23.06.2025),

					Tetovo (24.06.2025).
Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) – media professionals from 13 national TV and radio stations (11 women, 2 men)	Yes	No	Yes – AAVMS Guide for monitoring reporting standards in cases of GBV	AAVMS; JUFREX2 project (EU + Council of Europe)	June 2022: one-day workshop “Gender-Based Violence and Professional Standards for Journalistic Reporting” (4 female experts; topics: international and national legal framework and reporting standards).
AAVMS – media professionals from 7 regional radio and TV stations (3 women, 4 men) + representative from 1 national TV	Yes	Yes	Yes – AAVMS Guide for monitoring the application of standards	PRO-FREX Project (EU + Council of Europe) and AAVMS	December 2023: one-day workshop “Gender-Based Violence and Professional Standards for Journalistic Reporting” (4 female experts). Topics: international and national legal framework; indicators for reporting; recommendations for reporting on GBV.
AAVMS – media professionals from local radio and TV stations	Yes	No	Yes – AAVMS Guide for monitoring the application of standards	PRO-FREX Project (EU + Council of Europe) and AAVMS	December 2024: one-day workshop “Gender-Based Violence and Professional Standards for Journalistic Reporting” (4

					female experts). Topics: international and national legal framework; indicators for reporting; recommendations for reporting on GBV.
Ministry of Interior – Asylum Sector (asylum officers / national trainers)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Regional training (European – stated as “EULA”)	Module: “Interviewing Vulnerable Persons.” Aim: preparing asylum officers to collect reliable information during interviews with vulnerable persons, conduct interviews professionally, protect applicants with special needs, and prepare cases. Focus: legal framework; definition of vulnerability in the context of international protection; identification of vulnerabilities; barriers to disclosure; case studies; self-care after difficult interviews. Format: online + 2 days in person.

Training of trainers – “art of training” and participatory facilitation (CPPD, MSPDY and OO)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	4 three-day modules: 18–20.10.2023; 31.01–02.02.2024; 14–16.05.2024; 02–04.10.2024. 16 participants. Trainers subsequently delivered trainings to more than 750 participants (National Bank staff, law students, teachers, Mol staff, police candidates).
Inter-institutional expert working group no. 2 (MTSP/MSP, CPPD, OC) – NAP for Roma women and girls	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	Meeting/training for development of an operational plan for implementation of the NAPRWG. 27.05.2024. 21 participant.
CPPD – Second thematic training on SOGI	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	19–20.06.2024. Topic: “Development of Equality and Human Rights for LGBTI*Q Persons in Slovenia – from No Rights to Marriage Equality.” 11 participants.
Sector for Internal Control and Professional Standards – ToT on anti-discrimination in policing	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	25–26.06.2025. Topic: “Legal obligation for fair and impartial law enforcement.” 12 participants.

Expert working group no. 4 – prevention of gender-based violence (inter-institutional)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	Inter-institutional meeting on advancing GBV prevention. 03.07.2025. 18 participants.
MSPDY – study visit (GBV) – Vienna, Austria	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	“Approaches to strengthening and improving victim protection in the field of gender-based violence.” 30.09–03.10.2025. 9 participants.
Police (broad target group) – training on anti-discrimination in policing	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	“Legal obligation for fair and impartial law enforcement.” 06–10.10.2025. 410 participants.
CPPD – Thematic training no. 4 (balancing individual rights and public interest)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	11–12.11.2025. 11 participants.
Public administration/institutions – Impulse Forum (HRBA)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	“From principles to practice – shaping laws and measures through a human-rights-based approach (HRBA).” 13.11.2025. 43 participants.
Media/journalists + public (campaign) – “1 in 5” Stop Sexual Violence against Children (launch event)	Yes	Not applicable	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	Launch event: 18.11.2025 55 participants. Covered by 19 media (10 newspapers/online portals, 8 national TV stations, 1 MIA

					with live broadcast). Reach ~ 100.000 .
Media – Intervention 17 (media invitation and press release for “1 in 5”)	Yes	Not applicable	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	Media invitation and press release: 19 media (10 newspapers/online portals, 8 national TV stations, 1 MIA with live broadcast). Reach ~ 100.000 .
SWC – Training of trainers for responding to GBV victims’ needs (basic)	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	Basic ToT for SWC together with MSPDY. 02–04.12.2025. 26 participants.
Criminal judges and prosecutors – ToT on sexual violence standards	Yes	Unknown / not specified	Unknown / not specified	Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law	Training of trainers on sexual violence standards, targeting criminal judges and prosecutors. 10–11.12.2025.

Table 2: In-service training

Please complete the table and indicate the professionals (in the fields of health care, law enforcement, criminal justice, social protection, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism, and support services) who receive in-service training on violence against women. Please place each category of professionals in a separate row.

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is the training mandatory?	Frequency	Training supported by guidelines/protocols	Content and duration of training
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AAVMS – employees of the Expert Service (Programme Affairs Sector)	12 (6 women, 6 men)	No	One-off (event)	Yes (AAVMS Guide for monitoring standards in cases of gender-based violence)	June 2022 – one-day workshop “Gender-based violence and professional standards for journalistic reporting” (international/domestic framework; indicators; recommendations). Funding/support: JUFREX2 (EU + Council of Europe) + AAVMS.
AAVMS + researchers from ISPPI + EU Delegation + Council of Europe	AAMVS: 6 (2 women, 4 men); ISPPI: 4 women; EU Delegation: 1 woman; Council of Europe: 3 (2 women, 1 man)	No	One-off (event)	Yes (AAVMS Guide)	December 2023 – one-day workshop (international/domestic framework; reporting indicators; recommendations). Support: PROFEX (EU + Council of Europe) + AAVMS.
AAVMS – employees of the Expert Service (Programme Affairs Sector)	6 (2 women, 4 men)	No	One-off (event)	Yes (AAVMS Guide)	December 2024 – one-day workshop (international/domestic framework; indicators; reporting recommendations). Support: PROFEX (EU + Council of Europe) + AAVMS.
Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (judges, public prosecutors, professional associates, etc.) – initial/continuous training	97 trainees (8th generation of initial training) + other target groups (not specified)	Not specified	Continuous (multiple topics/events)	Not specified	Covered topics include: gender-sensitive justice; Istanbul Convention; ECtHR case-law on violence against women; femicide (legislation/standards/practice); criminal offences against sexual freedom and sexual morality (evidence);

					forms of violence in domestic violence and psychosocial support; victim-/survivor-centred approach; HELP course “Access to Justice for Women”; handbook/ToT on femicide; UN Security Council Resolution 1325, etc. (list 1–29). Duration not specified per topic (some listed as ToT/courses/conferences).
Mol – National trainers (EUAA) – module “Interviewing vulnerable persons” (Asylum)	3	Depending on the needs of the Asylum Sector	As needed	Yes	Combined format: online + 2 days in-person . Focus: legal framework and definition of vulnerability in the context of international protection; identification of vulnerabilities; factors hindering disclosure; case studies; self-care after difficult interviews.
Mol – National trainers (EUAA) – module “Trafficking in human beings” (Asylum)	4	Depending on the needs of the Asylum Sector	As needed	Not specified	Combined format: online + 2 days in-person . Content: indicators of trafficking in human beings; responding to the needs of potential victims in the asylum context; rights and protection under CEAS; communication/protective measures; activities to ensure protection in asylum procedures.

Mol – police officers	3 (2 men, 1 woman)	No	Not specified	Not specified	07.11.2023, Skopje (UNDP) – workshop “Combating sexual and gender-based violence in the digital sphere”. Duration not specified.
Mol – police officers	7 (6 men, 1 woman)	No	Not specified	Yes	13–15.11.2023, Mol Training Centre – “Initial training on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence”. Content/hours not specified.
Mol – police officers	8 (8 men)	No	Not specified	Yes	11–13.12.2023, Mol Training Centre – “Initial education on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence”
Mol – police officers	1 (1 man)	No	Not specified	Not specified	17.06.2024, Tirana (EMPACT) – “Sexual and gender exploitation”. Duration not specified.
Mol – police officers	6 (4 women, 2 men)	No	Not specified	Not specified	21.06–01.07.2024, Seoul, Korea – “Combating gender-based violence in the digital era” (Korean National Police Agency).
Mol – police officers	1 (1 man)	No	Not specified	Not specified	08.10.2024, Skopje (MSPDY) – “Gender-responsive budgeting”.
Mol – police officers	2 (2 women)	No	Not specified	Yes	06–07.11.2024, Podgorica (CoE) – “Women in policing”.
Mol – police officers (handling domestic violence cases)	24 (18 men, 6 women)	No	Not specified	Yes	20–21.11.2024 – “Training of police officers handling domestic violence cases” (organised by the

					Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women).
Mol (Ministry of Interior) – police officers; representatives of the Public Institution Inter-Municipal Centers for Social Work Skopje; health professionals; and civil society organizations.	18 participants, of whom 7 were men and 11 were women.	No	Not specified	Not specified	“Introductory training” (organizer: HERA and USAID). 21–22 November 2024, Hotel Arka.
Mol – police officers	2 (2 women)	No	Not specified	Not specified	05–06.03.2025 (MARRI) – “Gender-based violence in the context of migration”.
Mol – police officers	2 (2 women)	No	Not specified	Not specified	25–31.05.2025, Vienna (IPA) – “Gender perspective, mediation and conflict resolution”.
Mol – police officers	17 (6 women, 11 men)	No	Not specified	Not specified	27–29.05.2025, Berovo (UNDP) – “Gender-sensitive treatment of victims of gender-based violence”.
Multisectoral teams (SWC, police, health, CSOs) – participation of police officers	4 (2 women, 2 men)	No	Not specified	Yes	17.06.2025, Skopje – “Training for multisectoral teams...” (Helsinki Committee).
Multisectoral teams – participation of police officers	8 (2 women, 6 men)	No	Not specified	Yes	20.06.2025, Bitola – “Training for multisectoral teams...” (Helsinki Committee).

Mol / multisectoral response – participation of police officers	4 (4 women)	No	Not specified	Not specified	04.09.2025 – “Meeting on multisectoral response in monitoring femicide” (Helsinki Committee).
CPPD + MSPDY + OO (Rule of Law project) – ToT: Art of training and participatory facilitation (anti-discrimination/equality)	16	Not specified	4 modules (cyclical)	Not specified	4 x 3 days: 18–20.10.2023; 31.01–02.02.2024; 14–16.05.2024; 02–04.10.2024. <i>(Subsequent cascade effect: over 750 trained (National Bank staff, law students, teachers, Mol, police candidates.)</i> Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Inter-institutional expert WG #2 (MLSP/MSPDY/CPPD/OO) – NAP for Roma women	21	Not specified	One-off (meeting)	Not specified	27.05.2024 – working group for development of an operational plan for implementation of NAPRWG. Duration: not specified. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
CPPD – Thematic training on SOGI	11	Not specified	One-off (2 days)	Not specified	19–20.06.2024 – “Development of equality and human rights for LGBTIQ persons...” (Slovenia). Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Sector for Internal Control and Professional Standards (Mol) – ToT anti-discrimination in policing	12	Not specified	One-off (2 days)	Not specified	25–26.06.2025 – ToT “Anti-discrimination in policing: legal obligation for fair and impartial law enforcement”. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Inter-institutional expert WG #4 – prevention of	18	Not specified	One-off (meeting)	Not specified	03.07.2025 – expert working group meeting on strengthening GBV

gender-based violence					prevention. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
MSPDY – study visit (victim protection/GBV)	9	Not specified	One-off (visit)	Not specified	30.09–03.10.2025, Vienna – “Ways to strengthen and improve victim protection in GBV”. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Training on anti-discrimination in policing (wide coverage)	410	Not specified	One-off (5 days)	Not specified	06–10.10.2025 – “Legal obligation for fair and impartial law enforcement”. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
CPPD – thematic training #4 (balancing rights)	11	Not specified	One-off (2 days)	Not specified	11–12.11.2025 – “Balancing individual rights vs public interest and competing rights”. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Impulse Forum – HRBA (various institutions/participants)	43	Not specified	One-off (forum)	Not specified	13.11.2025 – “From principles to practice – shaping laws/ measures through HRBA“.Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Campaign “1-in-5” – kick-off event (media/institutions)	55 participant s; covered 19 media outlets; reach ~100.000	Not specified	One-off (event)	Not specified	18.11.2025 – kick-off event + Intervention 17 (media invitation/press release). Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
ToT: Responding to the needs of victims of gender-based violence (basic) – for SWCs with MSPDY	26	Not specified	One-off (3 days)	Not specified	02–04.12.2025 – training of trainers (basic). Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law

ToT: standards on sexual violence – criminal judges and prosecutors	Not specified	Not specified	One-off (2 days)	Not specified	10–11.12.2025 – ToT on standards on sexual violence (target group: criminal judges/prosecutors). Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Hate speech and digital gender-based violence, recognition and response by local self-government – workshop under the project “Strengthening Municipal Councils – Phase 2“	35 municipal councillors and municipal administration from 30 municipalities + 45 municipal administration	No	One-off (1 day)	ZELS and UNDP	17.04.2024 and 13.06.2024 – introduction to disinformation and digital gender-based violence; development of new knowledge on measures for recognising disinformation, understanding the harmful impact of gender-based disinformation and its spread via social media, with a focus on women and girls; victim protection mechanisms. Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law
Forum “United in ending gender-based violence”	50 equal opportunities coordinators, councillors, MPs, mayors, ministers, service providers’ representatives	no	One-off (1 day)	ZELS and UN Women	05 December 2024 -exchange of experiences and sharing of practices for implementing measures for prevention of and protection from gender-based violence Project: EU Support for the Rule of Law