

# COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN UKRAINE – PHASE III (COVAW-III)



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# WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

The COVAW-III project (Combating Violence against Women in Ukraine - Phase III, 2025-2026) builds upon previous Council of Europe initiatives in Ukraine and aims to develop robust policies to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and promote gender equality in line with the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). The project takes a holistic approach to supporting policy development, legislation and capacity-building for relevant authorities while engaging various stakeholders including civil society organisations. COVAW-III promotes gender equality and equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, including during conflict and/or the post-war period.

The COVAW-III project focuses on two key aspects: violence against women and gender equality, both rooted in Council of Europe standards. COVAW-III will support the implementation process of the Istanbul Convention in Ukraine, and the knowledge and mechanisms created will contribute to better protection of women's human rights in Ukraine.



# WHO ARE WE WORKING WITH?

## **Institutional partners:**

Office of Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, National Social Service of Ukraine, Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and other Government agencies.

## **Project stakeholders:**

Civil servants responsible for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, legal professionals, law enforcement, and selected Ukrainian civil society organisations.

# WHY ARE WE WORKING IN UKRAINE?



The project addresses the urgent need for the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine, with the consideration that the ongoing war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has heightened the risk of multiple forms of violence against women. It offers assistance to Ukraine, as a Council of Europe member state, which includes strengthening institutional capacities to enhance understanding and implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

The promotion of gender equality during and after the war, as well as the provision of support to victims of violence against women and girls, including displaced persons and returnees, is a focus of the project. Through its gender-responsive approach, the project lays the groundwork for inclusive post-conflict reconstruction that addresses the specific needs of women and girls, aiming to establish this inclusive framework as the standard for tackling deep-rooted gender inequalities throughout the country.

The COVAW-III project is in line with the priorities of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction" (2023-2026) as regards combating violence against women and domestic violence.

# WHY FOCUS ON THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION?

On 1 November 2022, the Istanbul Convention came into force in Ukraine. Full implementation of the convention is vital, particularly in the wartime context which amplifies structural gender inequalities that contribute to gender-based violence against women.

Through the COVAW-III project, the Council of Europe is providing urgent support to Ukrainian authorities on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, including:

- supporting institutional capacities of Ukrainian civil servants, the prosecution service and law enforcement to promote gender equality and to combat violence against women, including conflict related sexual violence through thematic trainings, workshops, online Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) courses with a special focus on vulnerable groups and people affected by the war;
- promoting gender-sensitive return procedures to protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls;
- increasing understanding of Council of Europe and international standards on combating violence against women among civil servants, law enforcement, media and the general public;
- introducing Ukrainian authorities and civil society at central and regional levels into international gender equality standards at the level of policies, legislation and practices to achieve de facto gender equality;
- supporting women's civil society organisations to combat violence against women, promote gender equality and raise awareness of gender equality standards and the Istanbul Convention at national and local levels.

## PROJECT DURATION

**21 months** (1 April 2025 - 31 December 2026)

**Website with contact information:**

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[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

