



**Comments submitted by Ukraine
on GREVIO's final report on the implementation
of the Council of Europe Convention
on preventing and combating violence
against women and domestic violence
(Baseline Report)**

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Коментарі до першого базового оціночного звіту Групи експертів Ради Європи з протидії насильству стосовно жінок та домашньому насильству (GREVIO), щодо законодавчих та інших заходів, вжитих Україною з метою імплементації положень Конвенції Ради Європи про запобігання насильству стосовно жінок і домашньому насильству та боротьбу із цими явищами (Стамбульська конвенція), що був ухвалений на 39-му засіданні GREVIO з 29 червня до 02 липня 2026 року

I. Purposes, definitions, equality and non-discrimination, general obligations

B. Scope of application of the convention and definitions (Articles 2 and 3)

9. GREVIO welcomes the fact that the Ukrainian authorities had already started taking measures before ratifying the Istanbul Convention to better align the Ukrainian legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, in particular through the 2017 Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence (referred to as “the law on domestic violence”). In this law, domestic violence is defined as “an act (action or failure to act) of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence committed in the family or within the place of residence or between relatives, former or current spouses or between other individuals who share (shared) a residence as one family but are (were) not in the family or marital relations, regardless of whether the person who perpetrated domestic violence lives (lived) in the same place as the victim, as well as threats of such acts”. Two definitions of domestic violence have subsequently been introduced in legislation: in the Code of Administrative Offences and in the Criminal Code where it is defined as involving physical, psychological or economic violence.⁵ While welcoming the continued efforts to better align definitions with those provided in the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO notes with concern that the co-existence of several definitions of domestic violence introduces uncertainty as to which law should be applied in cases of domestic violence.

Comment (1): Law enforcement and judicial practice proceed from the premise that the principal distinction between administrative and criminal liability in the context of domestic violence lies in the systematic nature of the conduct and the nature of its consequences for the victim. Thus, an act of domestic violence that is neither repeated nor systematic may constitute an administrative offence, giving rise to liability under Article 173-2 of the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences. In contrast, systematicity as an element of a criminal offence implies the repeated commission of identical or similar acts or omissions, each of which, when considered individually, may appear insignificant. Taken together, however, they reach a threshold at which the conduct as a whole acquires the characteristics of a criminal offence and results in the consequences specified in the operative provision of Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (physical or psychological suffering, health disorders, loss of working capacity, emotional dependence, or a deterioration in the victim’s quality of life). Sexual violence as a form of domestic violence has been criminalized by establishing the corresponding qualifying circumstance in Part 2 of Article 152 and Part 2 of Article 153 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. It should be noted that the list of criminal offences covered by the Law of Ukraine “On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence” is not limited to Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. The concept of a “criminal offence related to domestic violence” is widely applied and encompasses offences involving physical violence (including bodily injuries of varying degrees of severity and homicide), psychological violence (including incitement to suicide and threats to kill), and economic violence (including theft and damage to property).

In this context, a “crime related to domestic violence” is defined as any criminal offence the factual circumstances of which include at least one of the elements of domestic violence as defined in Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and the relevant law, regardless of whether such elements are set out in the relevant article (or part of an article) of the Criminal Code as constituent elements of the basic or aggravated offence. At the same time, with a view to further harmonizing national legislation and ensuring consistency in law enforcement practice, Draft Law No. 12297 proposes introducing legal definitions of the concepts of “systematicity” and “criminal offence related to domestic violence.” The draft law is currently under consideration by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.



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II. Integrated policies and data collection

A. Financial resources (Article 8)

32. GREVIO appreciates international donors' efforts to fund measures and projects to prevent and combat violence against women in Ukraine, including in the current context of the war of aggression. It also welcomes the readiness of the Ukrainian authorities to co-operate with the international community. Moreover, it also acknowledges the enormous challenges posed by the current context of the war and the different economic circumstances of parties to the Istanbul Convention. Nevertheless, it highlights the importance for state authorities to allocate appropriate public funds to services of a structural nature required by the Istanbul Convention and to fully acknowledge that responding to the need to protect women victims of violence in fulfilment of the convention's obligations requires sustained and continued financing efforts over time.

34. Despite the overall lack of available funding, GREVIO welcomes the fact that, in 2023 and 2024, additional resources were allocated to the network of specialist support services for women victims of violence, set up in 2021.¹ Nonetheless, it notes with concern the existence of substantial disparities in the funding that is available in different regions and cities for such services, given that the capacity of some local authorities to invest in services for women victims of violence is very limited. This is particularly the case for local authorities significantly affected by the war.²

Comment (2): In 2021 (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/696-2021-%D1%80#Text>), 2023 (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1011-2023-%D1%80#Text>), and 2024 (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1030-2024-%D1%80#Text>), a subsidy was provided from the state budget to local budgets for the creation of a network of specialized support services for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence, totalling 482,793,700 UAH (approximately 13,298,940 euros).

E. Data collection and research (Article 11)

1. Administrative data collection

d. Data on the asylum procedure

55. GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to pursue efforts to develop a system of administrative data collection on all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention in order to allow for evidence-based policy making. In doing so, they should: a. ensure that data collected by all relevant stakeholders (namely law-enforcement agencies, judicial authorities and healthcare facilities and social services) are disaggregated with regard to the sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, their relationship, geographical location and the different forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, and that information on the presence of children exposed to domestic violence is also included; b. harmonise data collection between law-enforcement agencies and the judiciary with the aim of, inter alia, allowing the assessment of conviction and attrition rates and of recidivism rates and enabling a thorough analysis of the pathway of cases through the criminal justice system chain – from initial contact with law enforcement through prosecutors' offices and finally to the courts; c. introduce a data-collection system that allows the recording of the registration and outcomes of asylum claims made on the basis of gender-related persecution; d. ensure that the process of collecting, storing and transforming collected data complies with standards on personal data protection, as stipulated in the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data.

Comment (2): Data on criminal offences are recorded in the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations (hereinafter referred to as the "Register"), which is maintained by the Prosecutor General's Office. As part of implementing the obligations arising from Ukraine's ratification of the Istanbul Convention, and in accordance with the Law of Ukraine "On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence," the Register has, since 2024, ensured the separate collection and systematization of information on criminal offences related to domestic



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на Митрополитської церкви в Києві, 22, Specialist support services. The funding allocated to the network of support services in 2024 approximately €13 298 940.

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violence. This makes it possible to compile data on the sex and age of victims and perpetrators, their family relationship, the geographical location and the various forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, as well as the presence of children who have experienced domestic violence. Order № 182 of the Prosecutor General, dated 10 July 2026, approved amendments to the Regulation on the Register, expanding the classification of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim to include such categories as a child residing in an institutional care facility, a child placed with a foster carer, a child raised by adoptive parents or foster carers, a child placed in a family-type children's home, and others. In addition, the recording of the use of victim-centered approaches during the questioning of children has been introduced: by an investigating judge in accordance with Article 225 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine, using the "Green Room" methodology, at child protection centers, with the involvement of a psychologist, guardianship authorities, remotely, and with the use of video recording. The Register complies with the requirements of the legislation regarding the protection of personal data and access to restricted information.

III. Prevention

C. Education (Article 14)

80. While welcoming measures taken to eliminate gender stereotypes and prejudices in education, GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to strengthen efforts to ensure the teaching of the elements listed in Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, including on the various forms of gender-based violence against women and girls.

Comment (3): To ensure a system-based approach to guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for women and men in education, a three-year operational action plan for 2025–2027 is being implemented to fulfil the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality by Education by 2030, which was approved by the Government of Ukraine in 2022 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Operational Action Plan'). The Operational Action Plan covers the entire education system and provides for the implementation of measures to ensure equal rights and opportunities, prevent discrimination and violence, strengthen the role of educational institutions and the professional community, and introduce inclusive practices to address the consequences of hostilities and support Ukraine's postwar reconstruction.

In particular, in accordance with the 2025 Operational Action Plan, a new State Standard for Preschool Education and methodological guidelines on combating discrimination and sexual harassment and promoting equality in higher education institutions were approved; a program was launched to certify 600 experts to review educational content, curricula, and textbooks for discriminatory and stereotypical elements; In preschool and elementary education, the gender-based separation of play, learning, and daily activities has been eliminated, and the educational process is now focused on fostering equal partnerships and the shared division of responsibilities; more than 2,500 girls and women have obtained professional qualifications in fields where women are traditionally underrepresented, and campaigns to engage girls in STEM have been scaled up; an "Anti-Bullying Section" has been created and integrated into AIKOM to provide information, monitor, and respond to cases of violence in educational institutions; Model professional development programs for educators on overcoming gender stereotypes, non-discriminatory communication, and combating child abuse were developed and approved in early 2026.

III. Prevention

D. Training of professionals (Article 15)

92. Last, GREVIO is not aware of any evaluation of the training programmes on violence against women.

Comment (4): The National School of Judges of Ukraine is currently drafting a document that will establish procedures for evaluating educational products (materials, training sessions, and workshops) developed to enhance the professional development of judges.

93. GREVIO encourages the Ukrainian authorities to take additional steps to ensure that all professionals are aware of the various forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular violence against women and girls, and to ensure that all professionals receive mandatory initial and in-service training to identify and respond to all



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forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. To this end, the Ukrainian authorities should, in particular: a. ensure that the training provided covers issues such as gender stereotypes; the difference between conflict and violence; the identification of victims; the rights and needs of victims; the prevention of secondary victimisation; victim-centred co-operation among all professionals; the content and objectives of perpetrator programmes; the impact of violence on children exposed to it; and violence against women exposed to intersectional discrimination; b. ensure that follow-up is provided to initial training, including that delivered by NGOs; c. evaluate the impact of training programmes on different professional groups.

Comment (5): Between 2023 and 2026, at the initiative of the Prosecutor General’s Office, in partnership with the Ukrainian Women Lawyers Association “JurFem”, conferences entitled “Survivor-Centered Justice for Gender-Based Violence” were held (28-29.11.2023, 26-27.11.2024, 03.12.2025). The conferences brought together prosecutors, investigators, inquiry officers, attorneys, experts, representatives of civil society organizations, and other professionals. The conferences addressed challenges arising during pre-trial investigations, the specific aspects of presenting evidence in the specified category, the implementation and compliance with victim-centered approaches, the appointment of examinations, and interagency cooperation among entities responsible for preventing and combating domestic violence. Discussions also focused on ensuring comprehensive support for victims of domestic violence, and taking additional measures to ensure systematic information and awareness-raising activities on the right of victims of domestic violence to free legal aid, as well as cooperation with the pre-trial investigation authority on these issues. Along with the continuation of joint training sessions for prosecutors, investigators, and inquiry officers on the specific aspects of criminal proceedings involving domestic violence offences, with a focus on victim-centered approaches. With the support of international partners and non-governmental organizations, a training programme was developed for investigators, inquiry officers, and prosecutors on the specific aspects of conducting pre-trial investigations in criminal proceedings involving domestic violence offences, aimed at strengthening their practical skills. Between 2023 and 2026, a series of training sessions was delivered to approximately 600 participants.

The Prosecutor General’s Office, in collaboration with the Ukrainian Women Lawyers Association “JurFem” and with the support of UN Women, developed an online video course for prosecutors, investigators, and inquiry officers on the specific aspects of conducting pre-trial investigations in criminal proceedings of the specified category, aimed at strengthening their practical skills while promoting victim-centered approaches. The course has been available since May 2024 on the online platforms of the Prosecutor’s Training Center of Ukraine, the National Academy of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, and the State Bureau of Investigation. In addition, the Prosecutor’s Training Center of Ukraine, in collaboration with representatives of the Department for the Protection of Children’s Interests and Combating Domestic Violence, conducted training sessions in June and October 2025 and in February 2026 on “Specific Aspects of Conducting Procedural Guidance and Support of Public Prosecution in Criminal Proceedings Involving Sexual Violence and the Sexual Exploitation of Children.” The Prosecutor General’s Office, in collaboration with the National Police of Ukraine, developed methodological recommendations entitled “Specific Aspects of Conducting Pre-trial Investigations in Criminal Proceedings Involving Children.” Among other things, the recommendations address the specific aspects of ordering and conducting psychological examinations of child victims of criminal offences involving sexual violence, offences against sexual freedom and sexual integrity, torture, and domestic violence. In addition, the Prosecutor General’s Office developed and, by decision of the Methodological Council of 9 October 2025, approved the “Guidelines on Certain Aspects of Conducting Procedural Guidance and Support of Public Prosecution in Criminal Proceedings Concerning Criminal Offences Related to Domestic Violence Committed against Children.” The Prosecutor General’s Office and the Prosecutor’s Training Center of Ukraine contributed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine’s development of a draft training curriculum for the professional development of specialists conducting interrogations and interviews with children, including child witnesses of domestic violence, using the procedural interview methodology. In addition, the Prosecutor’s Training Center of Ukraine, in collaboration with representatives of the Department for the Protection of Children’s Interests and Combating Domestic Violence and with the support of UNICEF, conducted six training sessions under the project “Implementation of the Barnahus Model for the Protection of Children



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III. Prevention

E. Preventive intervention and treatment programmes (Article 16) 1. Programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence

95. However, information brought to GREVIO's attention indicates that only a limited number of perpetrators are court-mandated to attend such programmes, including in the context of probation programmes, and that even fewer complete the programme. This seems to result from the lack of clear criteria available to judges regarding the eligibility of perpetrators to enrol in such programmes and from a lack of information exchange and co-ordination of all the relevant bodies in implementing court decisions on perpetrator programmes. In 2023, a total of 1 265 people were referred to such programmes and 848 completed them. This figure rose to 1 300 in 2024 and then fell to 1 254 in 2025, with a persistently low number of perpetrators completing the programme (225 in 2025).⁷⁵ Perpetrators may also participate on a voluntary basis, but rarely do so. In addition to the above programmes, a programme for persons feeling uncontrolled outbursts of violence is being developed, which GREVIO notes with interest.

Comment (6): Prosecutors have been included in the Coordination Councils for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, which serve as consultative and advisory bodies under local state administrations and local self-government authorities. In addition, interagency working groups have been established within prosecutor's offices to address issues related the relevant field. These coordination mechanisms help draw the attention of relevant stakeholders involved in preventing and combating domestic violence to the need to ensure the proper implementation of perpetrator programmes in the respective territories. At the same time, the introduction of a system for recording restrictive measures, including the referral of perpetrators to relevant programmes, applied during the pretrial investigation stage (Report 1-DN) and following court proceedings (Report on the Work of Prosecutorial Authorities, Form P), contributes to the timely and effective implementation of these measures in criminal proceedings.

100. GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to: a. pursue efforts to increase the quality of perpetrator programmes by developing a common methodology and minimum standards for work with perpetrators, in line with the Istanbul Convention and on the basis of the European standards for perpetrator programmes. They should include a gender-sensitive approach, the deconstruction of gender stereotypes and address the responsibility of perpetrators for their behaviour; b. strengthen the capacity of perpetrator programmes and roll them out throughout the country; c. take measures to increase the level of attendance and the rate of completion of perpetrator programmes; d. take the necessary steps to ensure specific training of the professionals working in perpetrator programmes; e. embed systematic risk-assessment procedures in work with perpetrators of domestic violence in order to ensure the safety of the victims and their children; f. ensure systematic evaluation of the programmes' effectiveness and absence of adverse effects.

Comment (7): In accordance with Part 6 of Article 28 of the Law of Ukraine "On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence," a perpetrator may be ordered by a court to participate in a program for perpetrators for a period of three months to one year in cases provided for by law. The model program for perpetrators, approved by Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine No. 1434 dated October 1, 2018 (as amended by Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine № 588 dated October 13, 2021, in consultation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine), registered with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on October 29, 2018, under No. 1222/32674, sets forth a set of measures based on the results of a risk assessment, aimed at changing the abuser's violent behavior, fostering a new, non-aggressive model of behavior in personal relationships, a responsible attitude toward their own actions and their consequences, as well as toward fulfilling parental responsibilities, and to eradicate discriminatory notions about the social roles and responsibilities of women and men.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine has ensured the submission for state registration to the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine of the MIA Order dated January 2, 2026, № 7 "On the Approval of Amendments to the Procedure for Authorized Units of the National Police of Ukraine to Issue an Emergency Restraining Order Against an Abuser" (registered with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on January 19, 2026, under



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IV. Protection and support

D. Specialist support services (Article 22)

129. *As of May 2025, the Ukrainian network of specialist services, which was reinforced in 2022, comprised 59 shelters and 108 crisis rooms (short-term emergency accommodation) across the country for victims of domestic violence. In addition to these services, there were 29 helplines, 120 legal aid services and 109 services providing psychological support. Moreover, GREVIO welcomes the fact that around 700 mobile teams provide social and psychological support directly to women victims of domestic violence across the country. All these services are provided by the authorities and by NGOs. 120 Services provided by the authorities are funded through allocations from the state budget to the local authorities responsible for setting up specialist services. While welcoming the availability of a range of specialist support services for women victims of violence, GREVIO notes that women may face serious obstacles to accessing such services due to the martial law in effect and the safety concerns related to the war of aggression. Another issue of concern brought to GREVIO's attention is the residence requirement for anyone wishing to access services provided at the local level. Many IDPs, however, refrain from registering at their new place of residence, or may not settle sufficiently long. Administrative hurdles and the fear of being stigmatised appears to be among the reasons for not registering, and a number of IDP women victims of violence are subsequently unable to access specialist support services.*

Comment (8): Pursuant to Articles 9, 15 and 16 of the Law of Ukraine "On Legal Aid", providers of primary and secondary legal aid include, inter alia, legal aid centres. The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine establishes regional, local and interregional legal aid centres. These centres operate as territorial offices of the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid and are established with due regard to the needs of the relevant administrative and territorial units and the need to ensure access to legal aid. As of July 2026, Ukraine has established five interregional legal aid centres, within whose structure 423 Legal Aid Bureaus operate (477 as of December 2025, approximately 70 of which were not operational due to active hostilities and the occupation of parts of Ukraine).

Furthermore, the suspension or closure of individual permanent access points does not necessarily mean that legal aid is unavailable, as part of the services may continue to be provided remotely or through outreach services. Therefore, information regarding institutions that are not operational due to the war should clarify whether alternative access to legal services remains available or whether services are entirely inaccessible.

IV. Protection and support

H. Protection and support for child witnesses (Article 26)

148. *Additionally, age-appropriate psychological examinations and support are rarely available to children exposed to domestic violence, although shelters often provide psychological support to children as well as to their mothers.³ Against this background, GREVIO welcomes the amendments made in 2024 to the Code of Administrative Offences requiring the recognition of children exposed to domestic violence as victims, regardless of whether harm was caused to them. Importantly, the amendments introduce administrative liability of public servants for failure to report domestic violence against a child. GREVIO highlights the importance of ensuring that these legal provisions translate into practice and that children exposed to violence against women are granted, in practice, access to effective protection and support.*

Comment (9): With the aim of implementing the standards set forth in international legal acts, including the Istanbul Convention, in 2023, Joint Order No. 150/445/2077/5/187 issued by the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine launched a pilot project to implement international standards of child-friendly justice into practice.

This document provides for the adoption of European standards for the protection and enforcement of children's rights – particularly those who are witnesses of domestic violence – as well as compliance with the requirements of international law during the pre-trial investigation and court proceedings in relevant criminal



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Project 31687/01-24 involves specially trained psychologists in criminal proceedings involving children through the regional police. Secondary legal aid is also under way since 2023.

cases. The Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Improvement of Mechanisms for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence,” which entered into force on 19 December 2024, formally establishes the operation of child protection centers (based on the Barnahus model), thereby creating a legal basis for further developing and expanding the network of such centers. These centers are equipped not only to conduct interviews and other investigative and procedural actions, but also to provide psychological support and social rehabilitation services. To ensure that the best interests of the child are upheld in criminal proceedings involving children, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, and the Prosecutor General’s Office, by Joint Order № 493/5/67/32 of 7 February 2023, launched a pilot project to involve specially trained psychologists in criminal proceedings involving children, minors through regional centers providing free secondary legal aid. As of 1 September 2024, the project has been expanded nationwide.

The involvement of specially trained psychologists helps ensure that interviews and other investigative actions involving children are conducted effectively and that the evidence obtained can subsequently be used, including during court proceedings without the child’s presence, thereby preventing unnecessary revictimization in criminal proceedings. Furthermore, pursuant to Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Article 14 of the Law of Ukraine “On Free Legal Aid,” children are entitled to all types of legal services provided for in Part 2 of Article 13 of the Law, including legal representation and defence of their interests. This entitlement is implemented through the nationwide network of free legal aid centers.

In addition, child victims of domestic violence have access to shelters, medical and social rehabilitation centers, and mobile social and psychological support teams. A child whose life, health, or development has been adversely affected by domestic violence may be recognized as being in difficult life circumstances within the meaning of Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On the Protection of Childhood.” Pursuant to Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 585 of 1 June 2020, “On Ensuring Social Protection for Children in Difficult Life Circumstances,” children who have experienced domestic violence, including those who have witnessed such violence, are provided with social, psychological, medical, and legal assistance. Where necessary, they are also provided with temporary accommodation, access to educational and developmental programmes aimed at supporting their recovery and development, and protection measures, including restrictions on contact with the perpetrator.

V. Substantive law

2. Compensation (Article 30)

165. GREVIO encourages the Ukrainian authorities to take further measures to ensure that victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including conflict-related sexual violence, are systematically informed of their right to claim compensation and of the procedures to be followed and that they are provided with adequate support to do so.

Comment (10): The Law of Ukraine “On the Legal and Social Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence Related to the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine, and the Provision of Urgent Interim Reparations to Them” defines the fundamental principles of state policy regarding the legal and social protection of persons who have suffered sexual violence related to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and the provision of urgent interim reparations to them. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine reviewed a draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine titled “Certain Issues Regarding the Recognition of a Person as a Victim of Sexual Violence Related to the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine and the Award and Payment of an Urgent Cash Payment to Such a Person,” which was drafted by the Ministry of Social Policy, Family, and Unity of Ukraine. On June 4, 2026, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On Certain Issues Regarding the Recognition of a Person as a Victim of Sexual Violence Related to the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine and the Granting and Payment of an Emergency Cash Payment to Such a Person” was adopted and registered under № 811.



mentioned resolution approved the Procedure for Filing an Application for Recognition as a Victim of Sexual Violence Related to the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine; the Procedure for Filing an Application for Recognition of Persons as Victims of Sexual Violence Related to the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine and the Award and Payment of an Urgent Cash Payment to Such a Person” was adopted and registered under № 811.

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Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine; the Procedure for the Allocation and Payment of Emergency Cash Assistance to Persons Who Have Suffered Sexual Violence Related to the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine, which ensures the implementation of the Law of Ukraine “On the Legal and Social Protection of Persons who have suffered sexual violence related to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and the Provision of Immediate Interim Reparations to Them.”

V. Substantive law

B. Criminal law

1. Psychological violence (Article 33) and Physical violence (Article 35)

174. *Psychological violence is not criminalised as a specific offence in Ukrainian law. It is included under the definitions of domestic violence enshrined in Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code and Article 173-2 of the Code of Administrative Offences.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, it is covered under Article 120 and Article 129 of the Criminal Code on, respectively, incitement to suicide and the threat to kill. Physical violence is also an element of the definitions of domestic violence contained in the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code.¹⁷⁸ It is also criminalised outside the context of domestic violence.*

Comment (11): In light of the Supreme Court’s established legal position that the systematic nature of domestic violence is the criterion for distinguishing between administrative and criminal offences, the question of whether conduct should be addressed under the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences or the Criminal Code of Ukraine no longer arises in practice. In accordance with Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and the Law of Ukraine “On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence,” criminal offences related to domestic violence are not limited to the forms of psychological violence referred to in the report, including offences under Articles 120 and 129 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

They also encompass acts of physical violence, including the intentional infliction of bodily injuries of varying degrees of severity under, inter alia, Articles 121, 122, and 125 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, as well as attempted homicide, which is punishable under Article 115 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. The standardized approaches to the investigation of such criminal offences in these cases provide for the inclusion, within the scope of the charge, of the aggravating circumstance set out in Paragraph 6-1 of Part 1 of Article 67 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, namely, “the commission of a criminal offence against a spouse, former spouse, or another person with whom the perpetrator is (or has been) in a family or close relationship.”

179. *GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to ensure criminal liability for the intentional conduct of physical violence in the context of domestic violence.*

See comment 11 (Article’s 33 and 35)

V. Substantive law

B. Criminal law

2. Stalking (Article 34)

182. *GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to criminalise the intentional conduct of stalking as defined in Article 34 of the Istanbul Convention, including by considering establishing a specific offence, to enable incidents of online and offline stalking to be investigated, prosecuted and punished effectively.*

Comment (12): Draft Law № 12297 is currently under consideration by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; among other things, it proposes to amend the Criminal Code of Ukraine by adding Article 129-1, which would establish criminal liability for unlawful harassment (stalking).

V. Substantive law



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187. The statute of limitation for rape and sexual violence without aggravated circumstances is five years, calculated from the commission of the offence until the issuance of a final judgment.

Comment (13): The legal definition of the objective element of the criminal offence provided for in Article 153 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine encompasses the commission of any violent acts of a sexual nature not involving penetration of another person's body, in the absence of that person's voluntary consent. This legal definition is consistent with the title of the relevant criminal law provision – "Sexual Violence." At the same time, the defining feature of the unlawful act is precisely the absence of the victim's free expression of will. In legal practice, violence or violent acts in this context refer to any acts of a sexual nature involving both the use of physical and psychological violence – which may manifest as the use of force, restriction of freedom of movement, intimidation, threats, etc. – and cases where the victim's helpless state is exploited.

189. GREVIO urges the Ukrainian authorities to take steps to ensure that the definition of sexual violence in the Criminal Code fully complies with Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention.

Comment (14): Draft Law № 12297, in particular, proposes amendments to Article 152 (Sexual Violence) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine in order to bring it into line with the provisions of Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention.

194. GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to take additional measures, including legislative ones, in order to ensure that the offence of female genital mutilation is fully aligned with Article 38 of the Istanbul Convention and with the convention's aim to prosecute and punish this offence and to support and protect victims.

Comment (15): Draft Law № 12297, in particular, proposes to amend the Criminal Code of Ukraine by adding Article 121-1, which establishes liability for inducing or coercing a person to mutilate the genitals.

6. Forced abortion and forced sterilisation (Article 39)

197. GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to take measures to amend the Criminal Code to cover the intentional conduct of performing surgery that has the purpose or effect of terminating a woman's capacity to naturally reproduce without her prior and informed consent or understanding of the procedure.

Comment (16): Article 134 (Illegal Performance of an Abortion or Sterilization) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for criminal liability for performing an abortion by a person without specialized medical training, coercing a person into having an abortion without their voluntary consent, and illegally performing an abortion that results in long-term health impairment, infertility, or the death of the victim, and coercing a person into sterilization without the victim's voluntary consent.

V. Substantive law

B. Criminal law

10. Aggravating circumstances (Article 46)

208. However, information brought to GREVIO's attention indicates that these aggravating circumstances are not systematically applied in cases of domestic violence.⁴ It is unclear to what extent the application of aggravating circumstances regarding other forms of violence against women is ensured. Furthermore, GREVIO notes with regret that the circumstance that "the offence was committed with the use or threat of a weapon" (Article 46, paragraph g, of the Istanbul Convention) is not included in the exhaustive list of aggravating circumstances enshrined in Article 67 of the Criminal Code. Similarly, the fact that an offence is preceded or accompanied by extreme levels of violence does not form part of the list, although Article 67 spells out the circumstance of "committing a crime with particular cruelty".

Comment (17): Aggravating circumstances are set out in Part 1 of Article 67 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. In the context of Article 46 of the Istanbul Convention, national legislation provides for more severe criminal



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liability where a criminal offence is committed against a spouse, former spouse, or another person with whom the perpetrator is or was in a family or close relationship; by repeat offending and recidivism; against an older person, a person with a disability, a person in a helpless state, or a person with a mental disorder, including dementia or an intellectual disability; against a child or in the presence of a child; against a woman whom the perpetrator knew to be pregnant; with particular cruelty; or where the offence results in particularly serious consequences. Establishing these circumstances and confirming them with proper and admissible evidence are mandatory components of the activities of pre-trial investigation authorities and the prosecutor in criminal proceedings. At the same time, they are not subject to repeated consideration in cases where they are mandatory elements of the composition of a criminal offence (for example, Article 126-1, Part 2 of Article 152, and Part 2 of Article 153 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). An amendment to Article 67 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine adding the aggravating circumstance of “committing a criminal offence with the use of a weapon or the threat of its use” is proposed in Draft Law № 12297 dated 9 December 2024, which has currently been submitted to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

209. GREVIO strongly encourages the Ukrainian authorities to take measures to ensure that all circumstances listed in Article 46 of the Istanbul Convention may be taken into consideration as aggravating circumstances for all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and that they are effectively applied by the judiciary.

See comment 17 (Article 46)

225. Another difficulty lies with the understanding and interpretation of the criminal provision providing for “crimes related to domestic violence”. While no definition is provided in the Criminal Code for this category of offences, the Supreme Court has interpreted it as “the commission of a crime, but also other socially dangerous acts that have signs of domestic violence”.⁵ Situations in which this provision can be used include for example a crime committed against a partner/ex-partner or a murder committed in the presence of a child. GREVIO understands that this provision is designed to cover offences related to domestic violence that are not included in Article 126-1 on domestic violence and that require greater sanctions than those foreseen under Article 126-1, such as serious bodily harm or rape. However, in practice, it appears that there is little clarity on whether to use this qualification or aggravating circumstances.⁶ GREVIO notes with concern that this lack of clarity makes it difficult to apply this provision in practice and to benefit from the procedural guarantees provided for this offence, such as the possibility of continuing prosecution in case the victim withdraws her statement or of allowing a reconciliation procedure only at the initiative of the victim.⁷ It also has an impact on the application of Article 91-1 of the Criminal Code, which provides for the application of restrictive measures in the interests of a victim of a crime related to domestic violence.

Comment (18): Under the general rules governing the classification of criminal offences and in accordance with the principle of non bis in idem, aggravating circumstances shall not be taken into account if they have already been considered as elements of the criminal offence.

In light of this, where there are indications of the elements of a crime under Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, the aggravating circumstances provided for in Paragraph 6-1 of Part 1 of Article 67 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine shall not apply.

VI. Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

E. Ex parte and ex officio proceedings (Article 55)

1. Ex parte and ex officio proceedings

254. GREVIO urges the Ukrainian authorities to take the legislative measures required to improve the compliance of Ukrainian legislation with Article 55, paragraph 1, of the Istanbul Convention and allow for ex officio prosecution of offences established in accordance with Articles 35 to 39 of the convention.



med. Сторінка Decision of 7 April 2020, case no. 647/1931/19[1].

на Міністерстві внутрішніх справ України

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Підписувач: Шемелинець Людмила Миколаївна

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Comment (19): Draft Law № 12297, in particular, proposes to amend Article 477 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine by removing Articles 126-1, 152, 153, and 154 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine from the list of criminal offenses for which criminal proceedings are initiated solely on the basis of a complaint by the victim (criminal proceedings in the form of a private prosecution).

F. Measures of protection (Article 56)

260. *Regarding the protection of children, GREVIO welcomes the ongoing setting up of Barnahus centres in Ukraine, in which children victims of sexual violence can receive comprehensive support in the form of a one-stop shop. 259 Moreover, in 2024, standards were approved for prosecutors' work in criminal proceedings involving children. They require, among other things, that children be interviewed in child-friendly interview rooms with mandatory video recording and the presence of a psychologist, prompt pre-trial investigations and priority court proceedings and co-operation with all relevant child-protection sectors in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to such cases. GREVIO points to the importance of making these services accessible to children exposed to domestic violence by one parent against the other, for example when being interviewed in the context of child custody procedures.*

Comment (20): The active implementation of specific mechanisms aimed at minimizing the re-traumatization of children in criminal proceedings is currently underway. As of July 2026, 17 Child Protection Centers based on the Barnahus model are operational, and more than 1,800 investigative actions involving children have been conducted at these centers during the year. This helps ensure a child-friendly environment, provides children with comprehensive support, and reduces the risk of secondary victimization during criminal proceedings. In addition, prosecutors actively make use of Article 225 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine, which allows a child to be interviewed at an early stage of the investigation, with the testimony recorded for subsequent use during court proceedings. This approach helps avoid repeated interviews with the child. At the same time, methods for obtaining children's testimony (procedural interviews) have been improved; these methods involve the active participation of psychologists in interviews with minors, are based on the principles of effective communication, follow a clear protocol for preparing, conducting, and evaluating the interview, and are aimed at obtaining the most objective information possible about the circumstances of the incident.

For example, in 85% of criminal proceedings, professional psychologists were involved during interviews with children. In addition, as part of the implementation of the "Bring Kids Back UA" strategic initiative and pursuant to a directive of the President of Ukraine, the Child Rights Protection Center (CRPC) was established in Kyiv on 31 May 2023. Five regional centers are currently operational in Kyiv, Dnipro, Lutsk, Rivne, and Kharkiv, providing comprehensive assistance and support to children who have experienced or witnessed violence across different regions of Ukraine. Access to services for children who have witnessed domestic violence is further promoted through the implementation of the "Standards for the Work of Prosecutors in Criminal Proceedings Involving Children," approved by the Prosecutor General in April 2024. This work is supported by the Coordination Centre for Support of Victims and Witnesses, established within the Prosecutor General's Office, as well as specialized victim and witness support units currently operating in twelve regional prosecutor's offices. To implement these tasks, the heads and prosecutors of units responsible for combating crimes committed in the context of armed conflict, protecting the interests of children, and combating domestic violence, as well as, where necessary, other units responsible for overseeing compliance with the law during pre-trial investigations by providing procedural guidance on such investigations, as well as regional prosecutors' offices and heads of district prosecutors' offices, shall inform victims/witnesses, including children and their legal representatives, about the activities of these units. Upon obtaining informed consent, they shall also transmit the information necessary for the organization of a comprehensive package of support services.

VI. Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

G. Legal aid (Article 57)

262. *Ukraine has a widespread network of free legal aid centres, with 477 such centres across the country. 260 Free legal aid can in principle be provided to remedy rights violations. It can be granted up to six times a year. Free legal aid centres can provide both primary legal (information and advice, drafting of complaints, mediation, securing access to secondary legal aid and mediation) and secondary legal aid (defence, representation in court and before other state bodies, drafting of legal documents). Free primary legal aid is provided to persons while free secondary legal aid is granted to persons*



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with low income and, without any income condition, people with disabilities, to children aged 14 and older, IDPs, war veterans and, since 2018, to women victims of domestic and gender-based violence.

Comment (21): See also comment 8.

Part 4 of Article 14 of the Law of Ukraine “On Legal Aid” limits the provision of secondary legal aid to no more than six decisions during a fiscal year, exclusively for the categories of recipients explicitly specified in that article. This restriction does not apply, in particular, to victims of domestic violence or gender-based violence, as well as to victims of criminal offenses against sexual freedom and sexual integrity, or torture or cruel treatment committed during a war or armed conflict.

In addition, Article 14 of the Law of Ukraine “On Legal Aid” was supplemented by paragraphs 28-2 and 28-3, extending eligibility for free secondary legal aid to:

- persons who have submitted an application for recognition as a victim of sexual violence related to the Russian Federation’s armed aggression against Ukraine, on matters relating to appeals against decisions refusing to recognise a person as a victim of sexual violence linked to the Russian Federation’s armed aggression against Ukraine;
- victims of conflict-related sexual violence in matters concerning the protection of their rights under the Law of Ukraine “On the Legal and Social Protection of Persons Affected by Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Committed as a Result of the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the Provision of Urgent Interim Reparations.”

Furthermore, while the Law does not establish an independent and unconditional basis for providing free secondary legal aid solely on the basis of a person’s status as a victim of sexual violence outside the context of an armed conflict, paragraph 22 of Part 1 of Article 14 of the Law of Ukraine “On Legal Aid” covers victims of gender-based violence. Although the Law does not establish an independent and unconditional ground for granting free secondary legal aid solely on the basis of a person’s status as a victim of sexual violence outside the context of armed conflict, paragraph 22 of Part 1 of Article 14 of the Law of Ukraine “On Legal Aid” covers victims of gender-based violence. The statutory definition of gender-based violence includes acts causing sexual harm or suffering and disproportionately affecting persons of a particular sex. Consequently, victims of sexual violence may qualify for free secondary legal aid where the act in question constitutes gender-based violence or where they fall within another category of beneficiaries established by law (for example, low-income persons or internally displaced persons). In this context, and with regard to the protection of the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, it should also be emphasised that persons covered by the Law of Ukraine “On Refugees and Persons in Need of Complementary or Temporary Protection” are entitled to free secondary legal aid, including legal representation and the drafting of procedural documents, from the moment they submit an application for refugee status or complementary protection until a final decision is taken on their application.

Additionally, regarding support for victims of violence during legal proceedings, we note that the group of individuals who may serve as representatives is defined by procedural law. In particular, in criminal proceedings, Article 58 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine stipulates that a victim in criminal proceedings may be represented by a representative—a person who is entitled to act as a defense counsel in criminal proceedings; in turn, pursuant to the provisions of Article 45 of this Code, a defense counsel is a lawyer. The centers enter into agreements with attorneys listed in the Register of Attorneys Providing Free Secondary Legal Aid to provide such assistance. After a decision is made to provide free secondary legal aid, the center appoints a lawyer who is listed in the Register of Lawyers Providing Free Secondary Legal Aid and has entered into an agreement with the center to provide such aid. The lawyer’s authority is confirmed by a letter of authorization from the center and/or a power of attorney in accordance with the requirements of procedural law. Furthermore, in the context of paragraph 256 of the GREVIO report, it is important to distinguish between: representation of interests provided by the free secondary legal aid system; psychological support; crisis counseling; social support; physical accompaniment to court; and assistance from specialized consultants or representatives of support services. The legal aid system does not replace specialized support

but ensures that victims have access to justice and legal services.

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263. However, information brought to GREVIO's attention highlights that only a small proportion of women victims of violence make use of free legal aid. It is estimated that only about 1% of victims that report domestic violence to the police apply for free legal aid.⁸ Access to legal aid remains nonetheless crucial for women victims of violence, in particular to request protection orders and, for victims of conflict-related sexual violence, to initiate steps to obtain compensation.

Comment (22): According to the official 2025 report of the Legal Aid System:

- legal aid centres issued 1,635 decisions granting free secondary legal aid to victims of domestic violence;
- 262 victims were referred to the Legal Aid System by public authorities;
- legal aid centres conducted 83 outreach visits to general and specialised support services, during which legal assistance was provided to 257 persons in relation to 284 requests.

In addition, persons also apply for free secondary legal aid in connection with criminal proceedings. In 2025, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine registered 8,121 criminal offences related to domestic violence. Of these, 1,996 criminal proceedings were registered specifically under Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. During the same year, legal aid centres issued 227 decisions appointing legal representation for victims of domestic violence in criminal proceedings. These figures do not contradict GREVIO's conclusion that legal aid remains underutilised, since decisions granting legal aid, requests for assistance, referrals, police reports and individual victims represent different statistical units. Nevertheless, all of these indicators should be taken into account to ensure a comprehensive assessment.

264. Several factors may explain this low use of free legal aid by women victims of violence: a lack of information on existing possibilities, a lack of effective referral to free legal aid centres by the police and social workers, and a widespread lack of trust in state institutions and reluctance to undertake legal proceedings for fear of reprisals and/or secondary victimisation. GREVIO understands that many women victims of violence, including of conflict-related sexual violence, prefer to turn to NGOs for support and legal advice. Moreover, GREVIO notes with concern allegations indicating that some victims have had their application for free legal aid turned down due to a narrow interpretation of the legal services to be provided by the legal aid centres and a lack of specific training on violence against women among some lawyers working for the centres. Against this background, GREVIO notes that the Ukrainian authorities are aware of the need to enhance the access of women victims of violence to the free legal aid services they are entitled to and have taken steps in this direction, such as the launch of information campaigns and the training of legal aid professionals employed by the centres on issues such as the specific needs of IDPs and of victims of conflict-related sexual violence. GREVIO highlights the importance of removing obstacles for women victims of violence to access free legal aid in order to ease their access to justice and to effective protection measures. This is also an important means of support for victims of conflict-related sexual violence to obtain redress and ensure accountability.

Comment (23): Recognizing the importance of removing barriers to women's access to free legal aid as victims of violence, prosecutors emphasize the need to inform them of this right at the earliest stages of the pre-trial investigation. The introduction of a specialization for prosecutors in overseeing compliance with the law and support of public prosecution in this category of criminal proceedings has facilitated the practical implementation of victim-centered approaches, in particular, the provision to victims, at the initial stage of the pre-trial investigation, of a leaflet listing specialist support and protection services, and the explanation of their right to free legal aid. In addition, the obligation to inform child victims and witnesses of a criminal offence, as well as their legal representatives, of the right to free secondary legal aid is one of the Standards for the Work of Prosecutors in Criminal Proceedings Involving Children.



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