

Committee of the Parties

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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation to the Netherlands on building trust by delivering support, protection and justice on the basis of the Istanbul Convention

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The Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”), acting under the terms of Article 68(12) of the Convention;

Having regard to the purposes of the Convention to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence; to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women; to design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence; to promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; and to provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 66 (1) of the Convention concerning the monitoring role of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “GREVIO”);

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by the Netherlands on 18 November 2015;

Having regard to the Baseline Evaluation Report adopted by GREVIO concerning the implementation of the Convention by the Netherlands, the Committee of the Parties’ recommendations adopted on 30 January 2020 and the Committee’s conclusions on the implementation of those recommendations, adopted on 1 June 2023;

Having examined the First Thematic Evaluation Report “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” concerning the implementation of the Convention by the Netherlands adopted by GREVIO at its 36th meeting (30 June to 3 July 2025), as well as the comments of the Government received on 10 October and on 27 November 2025;

Welcoming the measures taken and progress achieved by the Dutch authorities in implementing the Convention and noting in particular:

- the expansion of the policy framework in the Netherlands, with new national action plans adopted, some of which take a more gendered perspective and cover more forms of violence against women, including the National Action Programme on Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and Sexual, the Stop Femicide! Action Plan, the Action Plan on Harmful Practices (2020-2022), and the National Action Plan Women, Peace and Security (2021-2025);
- the comprehensive alignment of Dutch criminal legislation with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention, notably in relation to sexual violence with the 2024 Act on Sexual Offences introducing a definition of rape based on the absence of consent to the sexual act, as required under Article 36 of the convention, and the criminalisation of sexual harassment in the public sphere, both online and offline;
- the expansion of preventive measures, with the range of awareness-raising activities and target groups expanded, and wider forms of violence against women addressed, which frequently firmly address the specific situation of women with disabilities and LGBTI women and give women victims a voice in campaigns;

- the substantial efforts made to expand multi-agency co-operation in the provision of support services for victims, with multi-disciplinary approaches to risk assessment and risk management introduced.

A. Recommends in light of the considerations indicated in the preamble above, that the Government of the Netherlands take the following measures identified in GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report¹ for immediate action to:

1. ensure that the conceptualisation of domestic violence in policy documents and measures taken reflect more clearly the fact that domestic violence affects women disproportionately and harmonise the definitions in use across all legislation with the requirements of Article 3b of the Istanbul Convention, in particular to include economic violence and acts of violence perpetrated by a member of the family or of the domestic unit, or by a former or current spouse, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim (Article 3);
2. ensure that any policies and measures taken in relation to preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence are co-ordinated, including at and across municipal level, and that they cover all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including economic violence and forced sterilisation; assign the role of co-ordinating body to fully institutionalised entities, equip these with clear mandates, competences and the necessary human and financial resources of NGOs working with women victims of violence, in policy making as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures and ensure the involvement of women's rights organisations (Article 7);
3. introduce appropriate and sustainable funding for policies and measures on all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, both at central and municipal levels and introduce, in all relevant ministries, departments and other state entities separate budget and funding lines, based on the principle of gender budgeting, while ensuring appropriate and sustainable funding for women's rights organisations running specialist support services for women victims of all forms of violence, including smaller community-based NGOs, that allow for continuous service provision (Article 8);
4. adapt data categories for use by the justice sector and law-enforcement agencies to reflect the sex and age of the victim and perpetrator, the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, geographical location as well as the type of violence, and introduce in the healthcare sector harmonised data collection on contacts made by victims of violence against women (Article 11);
5. step up efforts to incentivise schools to impart knowledge on all principles listed in Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention; and to ensure that teachers are aware of and meet their obligation to report suspicions of violence against a child under the Reporting Code (Article 14);
6. step up the training of all professionals dealing with women victims in relation to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular in the justice, law-enforcement, social welfare, healthcare and education sectors, focusing on the prevention of secondary victimisation through a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach, including in relation to the digital dimension of violence, while drawing on

1. The Istanbul Convention's provisions concerned by GREVIO's proposals and suggestions are indicated in brackets.

the expertise of women's rights organisations and providers of specialist services (Article 15);

7. step up efforts to increase the number and capacity of domestic violence shelters as well as their ability to cater to the needs of women subject to intersectional discrimination, such as women without a residence permit, women with disabilities and young women and girls (Article 24);
 8. ensure that in deciding on custody and visitation rights, incidents of violence against women are a mandatory criterion to be taken into account and that the negative impact that such violence has on children is reflected in legislation, training, guidelines and practice while at the same time reducing, in family law proceedings, the representation of women victims of abuse as alienating, hostile or un-cooperative (Article 31);
 9. ensure effective investigation, including the pro-active collection of evidence beyond the victim's statement, prosecution and swift sanctioning in relation to all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, and to encourage women victims of violence to report, including women who are at risk of or subject to intersectional discrimination, for example women with disabilities, LGBTI women, women in prostitution and migrant women, while removing any practices that dissuade women from reporting rape or sexual violence, such as imposing "reflection periods"(Articles 49 and 50);
 10. step up efforts to ensure gender-sensitive risk assessment in cases of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women as part of a multi-agency response and analyse all gender-related killings or suspicious deaths of women as well as suicides that may be related to experiences of violence (Article 51);
 11. review and expand the system of restraining and emergency barring orders in full compliance with Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention, to ensure that relevant authorities can issue such orders immediately in cases of imminent danger, without a threshold of serious risk which is higher than the threshold of the Istanbul Convention (Article 52).
- B. Requests the Government of the Netherlands to submit a written report to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the Convention in the above-mentioned areas by 8 December 2028.
- C. Recommends that the Government of the Netherlands take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation report.
- D. Invites the Government of the Netherlands to continue the dialogue in progress with GREVIO.