

Towards a Europe free from violence against women and girls

The Istanbul Convention creating a new horizon and paradigm change for all stakeholders

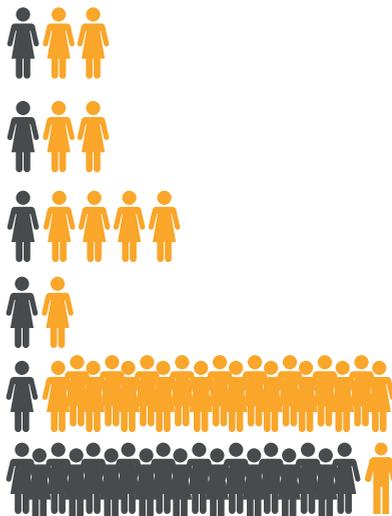


"The Istanbul Convention is widely recognised as the most far-reaching legal instrument to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence."

Gratiela Drăghici,
State Secretary ANES, Romania.

Violence against women is more common in Europe than you may think

- 1 in 3 women has experienced sexual violence, physical violence, or both
- 1 in 3 has experienced psychologically abusive behaviour by an intimate partner
- 1 in 5 has experienced stalking
- More than 1 in 2 have experienced sexual harassment
- 1 in 20 has been raped
- 95 % of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the EU are women



Research shows that:

Gender equality in the home reduces the risk of violence against children by almost two-thirds.

Those who are not sufficiently satisfied with gender equality in the home consider ending their relationship much more often than those who are satisfied.

The chances of having high quality of life are about twice as big for those who

live in one of the more gender equal countries in Europe than for those who live in one of the less gender equal countries.

The costs of gender-based violence against women in the EU is estimated to almost 226 billion euros annually.

Sources: Gullvåg Holter, Øystein (2014): "What's in it for Men?": Old Question, New Data, Men and Masculinities, Vol. 17 (5). European Institute of Gender Equality .

"Violence against women is a massive violation of human rights of women and girls across the world. It injures and harms their bodies and causes fear that constrains their ability to be involved in civil life, political life and economic life. All of us suffer from women's absence."

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: The Istanbul Convention

The Convention recognises violence against women as a violation of human rights and holds states responsible if they do not respond adequately to the violence.

An effective response to violence against women and domestic violence requires that the violence is **prevented**, that the victims are **protected**, and that the perpetrators are **prosecuted**.

No single agency or institution can deal with violence against women and domestic violence alone. An effective response to such violence requires concerted actions by many different actors. The Istanbul Convention

What is violence against women?

- domestic violence (physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence)
- stalking
- sexual violence, including rape
- sexual harassment
- forced marriage
- female genital mutilation
- forced abortion
- forced sterilisation

requires state parties to implement comprehensive and coordinated policies. These **integrated policies** should be carried out at all levels of government and by all relevant agencies and institutions.

The Istanbul Convention was opened for signatures on 11 May 2011 and entered into force on 1 August 2014. Status 2019: 34 accessions, 12 signatures not followed by accessions.

Integrated policies must:

1. Be comprehensive and offer a holistic response to violence against women.
2. Place the rights of the victim at the centre of all measures and be implemented without discrimination.
3. Be implemented by way of cooperation between all relevant actors, such as government agencies, the national, regional and local parliaments and authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations.
4. Support, recognise and encourage work of civil society and relevant non-governmental organisations and establish effective cooperation with these organisations.
5. Allocate appropriate financial and human resources for the adequate implementation of integrated policies, measures and programmes.



Tove Smaadal

Director of Kriसेntersekretariatet, Norway

The Istanbul Convention is ratified – what happens next?

1. How can the Istanbul Convention contribute to your work?

“The convention is ratified and part of Norwegian law. The fight to combat violence against women is no longer dependent on good politicians. The minimum standard is set by the Istanbul Convention and must be followed. Enough funds must be allocated, and the necessary measures must be initiated.”

2. What can be gained by international cooperation?

“Without a strong civil society (i.e. the women’s movement), international conventions have little significance.

6. Be based on research and statistics. Relevant statistical data on violence against women must be collected, and research into its root causes and the effect of measures must be financed. The knowledge must be available to the public.

7. Be coordinated, implemented, monitored and evaluated by one or more coordinating bodies established for this purpose.

Source: coe.int

Independent organisations must ensure that the conventions are implemented. Another benefit is that the content of the convention is made known more widely, it is more fleshed out, and greater pressure is put on the authorities who are obliged to comply with the requirements of the convention.”

3. What do you need now, to better help victims of domestic violence?

“The shelter movement is concerned about equal access to the crisis centre as a holistic service. Who you are and where you live should not decide what kind of help you get. We need national and municipal action plans, effective involvement of civil society organisations and increased funding for these organisations to enable their efforts to combat violence against women. Too many cases of violence and abuse are dismissed, and few are convicted. Today, victims do not receive adequate protection and legal security.”

“There is nothing more vulnerable than feeling unsafe in your own home”

– Thor Kleppen Sættem,
Ministry of Justice and Public
Security, Norway



Elisabete Brasil

Director of UMAR - Women's Union for Alternative and Response, Portugal

The Istanbul Convention is ratified – what happens next?

1. How can the Istanbul Convention contribute to your work?

“It is an instrument that broadens and defines a strategy to put an end to violence against women and domestic violence. Today, the formal complaints made by the victims of this violence do not receive enough response from the public services and the national legal framework in terms of their protection and security. The victims' rights are not respected, neither is the right to information. The various responses must now take the diversity of victims into account, so that services are not only adapted to the hegemonic idea of a victim: white, European, heterosexual and non-disabled.”

2. What can be gained by international cooperation?

“Violence against women is pandemic. In a global space where nothing is stable, where there are spaces of plural and inclusive belonging and freedom of movement, international cooperation is

essential. It will support a struggle that is not local, regional or national, but a defence of human rights, regardless of where people are.”

3. What do you need now, to better help victims of domestic violence?

“We must move from words to action. Place the victim at the centre of the intervention and give voice to their demands and needs. It means operationalising the rights in everyday life, in the lives of victims. If we have police, states and systems that are experts on violence against women, we need to diversify responses and respond in a holistic, articulated, systematic and intersectional way. We must respond with a legal framework that effectively enforces rights and protection of women and children, that makes the perpetrators responsible for the crimes they commit and give the victims the confidence they need in a system that does not blame them, but rather respects them.”

*"Towards a Europe free from violence
against women and girls – the Istanbul convention
creating a new horizon and paradigm change
for all stakeholders!"*



The high-level conference is organised under the Romanian presidency
of the European Council 2019.

This leaflet is part of a bilateral project between Romania
and Norway in collaboration with Portugal.

The primary objectives are to build capacity and commitment among European
stakeholders to use the Istanbul Convention as an important tool for eliminating
all forms of violence against women and girls, and to strengthen bilateral relations
between Romanian and Norwegian stakeholders, as well as multilateral relations
between relevant EEA/Norway Grants beneficiary countries and donor countries.

The cooperating countries have established a strategic network called the
SYNERGY Network against Gender-based and Domestic Violence
– for capturing synergies and making a greater impact of the Grants
on the situation of women and girls in Europe.



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