

5th GENERAL REPORT ON GREVIO'S ACTIVITIES



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

covering the period from
January to December 2023

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou

Foreword by the President of GREVIO

It is a true pleasure and a privilege to introduce the 5th General Report on the activities of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), which highlights GREVIO's work during the period of January to December 2023; a year full of achievements and developments which also gave us the opportunity to take stock of the progress made and to shed light on the various areas where more action is needed at national level. Halfway into this period, I had the honour of taking over the mantle from Iris Luarasi, whom I wish to wholeheartedly thank for her remarkable contribution, her dedication and for so skilfully leading the work of GREVIO for the past two years.

May 2023 marked the expiry of the mandate of the six most long-standing members to have served GREVIO since its inception, including the two former Presidents (Iris Luarasi and Marceline Naudi), the first Vice-President (Simona Lanzoni) and the members Biljana Branković, Françoise Brié and Helena Leitaó. All of them, in their individual roles and collectively together, have been instrumental in laying the foundation, shaping the work of the monitoring body and promoting the values and principles of the Istanbul Convention throughout the European continent and beyond. We can be nothing but grateful for what they have represented and achieved.

At the same time, the composition of GREVIO was renewed and in an ad hoc meeting held in Paris in June 2023 my colleagues Laura Albu, María Rún Bjarnadóttir, Aleid van den Brink, Marie-Claude Hofner, Ivo Holc, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, Päivi Hirvelä, Grzegorz Wrona and myself welcomed six new members: Guillaume Robert Barbe, Pascale Florence Franck, Olena Kharytonova, Helmut Tichy, Pille Tsopp-Pagan and Angelina Zaporozhan-Pirgari. This was a significant renewal of the composition of GREVIO and it has brought new expertise and a refreshing perspective to the work of the monitoring body. During that meeting, I stepped into GREVIO's presidency and my colleagues, Aleid van den Brink and Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop were elected First and Second Vice-Presidents respectively. I express my deep gratitude to all my colleagues for their support and trust.

In parallel, there was an increase in the number of the parties to the Istanbul Convention marked by the momentous accession of the European Union, which became the 38th party. Another promising development was the decision of some parties not to renew or uphold earlier reservations to provisions of the convention, which was made possible not least because of the increased level of implementation.

The year of 2023 was notable for the work that GREVIO was able to carry out and complete. First of all, GREVIO reached a number of 36 baseline evaluation reports adopted by the end of the year. The baseline evaluation procedure has resulted in a much-needed stocktaking exercise allowing parties to the convention to see where they stand on the many measures that the convention requires. There is now an important body of knowledge and information about the implementation of the Istanbul Convention across Europe, which makes crystal clear the aims of the convention and further dismantles any misinformation about what the Istanbul Convention is and is not about.

Building on the findings of the evaluation reports and the respective recommendations of the Committee of the Parties, GREVIO launched the same year its new thematic evaluation round, which focuses on the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice". With this focus on providing assistance and redress to women victims of violence, GREVIO wants to highlight the victim-centred approach of the Istanbul Convention. The thematic evaluation round aims to identify developments since the baseline evaluation in key areas such as comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection. It also looks more in depth at the implementation of 19 selected provisions in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution and brings attention to emerging trends in the area of violence against women and domestic violence. The section on emerging trends is a new way for GREVIO to address developments at the national level, whether these developments be positive or worrisome. The information in this part may be of value in the wider context of strategic action and foresight in terms of addressing upcoming challenges as well as upholding and strengthening positive evolution and advancements at national level.

On the basis of the results of the monitoring by GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties, I can say with conviction that progress has been made on many levels. Examples include the adoption of new national policies, including national action plans, that address violence against women more comprehensively, the expansion

of the range of available support services for women victims of violence, such as the creation of or improvement in the accessibility of national helplines, the deployment of new support services for victims of sexual violence and the introduction of specific criminal offences, or the amendment of existing ones, to prosecute stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation more effectively.

While it is worth taking a moment to appreciate what has been achieved, looking forward is equally important. And this shows that much more remains to be done. Further action is required, indicatively, on the issue of policies that in some countries focus mainly on domestic violence, without placing enough attention on various other forms of violence against women and their multifaceted manifestation, including in their digital dimension. Another example where more awareness and action are needed at national level is the protection and support of women – and their children – who are not truly safe from harm after they leave their abuser when custody and visitation decisions do not adequately consider the history of abuse and inadvertently expose them to further harm.

There are many more examples of challenges that I could give, and all of them can be remedied if political attention remains high. This year's focus section of the activity report is on the topic of risk assessment and risk management. Many perpetrators threaten their victims with serious violence, including death, and have often subjected their victims to serious violence in the past. The future safety of victims and their children falls within the responsibility of the officials dealing with them, from the moment officials become aware of the violence or its risk factors.

In this context, risk assessments serve as a crucial mechanism for national authorities to fulfil their due diligence obligation to prevent and protect women and their children against violence by private individuals. They allow the probability of harm, including lethal violence, and the severity of a situation to be assessed. Effective risk-assessment procedures enable professionals to then manage the identified risk by devising a safety plan for the victim in question in order to provide co-ordinated safety and support if necessary. Such procedures should become central to the multi-agency co-ordinated response of referral mechanisms and be made available to all professionals who enter into contact with victims. They should be comprehensive, reliable and ongoing; otherwise, victims may be lulled into a false sense of security, exposing them to greater risk.

Through its reports, GREVIO has elaborated on the importance of and need for thorough, effective and standardised risk-assessment and management procedures and has identified shortcomings on several occasions. In the same line, the European Court of Human Right has repeatedly stressed that “autonomous, proactive and comprehensive” risk assessments should form part of the positive obligations of states. We hope that the focus section of this year's activity report will raise awareness of this very important issue.

This 5th General Report also presents the exchanges of views and the close relations between the two pillars of the monitoring system established by the convention: GREVIO and the Committee of the Parties. The key findings of GREVIO in its reports have been turned into recommendations by the Committee of the Parties, with the

obligation to take further measures and report back on action taken within three years. This is a process that gives additional weight to the findings and work of GREVIO. In addition, GREVIO and the Secretariat continued developing and strengthening collaboration with Council of Europe bodies and institutions, civil society, national human rights institutions and international organisations.

As shown in this activity report, the year 2023 was another productive year for GREVIO. I would thus like to thank again my colleagues, former and current, for their commitment and tireless work. In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Secretariat to the convention as well as to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe at all levels. Collectively and individually, they have been an unwavering source of support the whole time and have contributed importantly to what has been achieved.

The declaration adopted at the Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government in Reykjavik endorsed the Council of Europe's pioneering role in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence. I can say with conviction that progress has been made on many levels. Still, the journey towards full implementation of the Istanbul Convention is long and unfinished, but there is an important navigation tool: the comprehensive obligations set out in the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO reports, which altogether serve as the GPS. GREVIO will continue to steadfastly promote the aims and principles of the convention and to provide guidance to states on the implementation of this gold standard.



31st GREVIO meeting, Strasbourg, France, 23-26 October 2023

Activities

Introduction

1. GREVIO, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, is the independent body established under Article 66 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention; CETS No. 210), tasked with monitoring the convention. GREVIO is composed of 15 independent and impartial experts of high moral character with expertise in the field of violence against women. Their term of office is four years, renewable once. At the European level, GREVIO is currently the only independent panel of experts monitoring the implementation of binding international legal provisions in the area of violence against women.
2. GREVIO launched its first (baseline) evaluation procedure in spring 2016, after adopting a questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the Istanbul Convention in its entirety. Working on a country-by-country basis, GREVIO carries out a first (baseline) evaluation of each country that has ratified the convention. In view of the substantial number of baseline evaluation procedures completed since 2016, in 2023, GREVIO moved into its first thematic evaluation procedure, focusing on the theme of “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice”. This theme was chosen in order to allow GREVIO to assess, in more detail,

those requirements of the Istanbul Convention that aim to build a responsive system of support to women victims of gender-based violence, offering effective protection and justice. The newly developed questionnaire for this thematic evaluation round covers a total of 19 provisions emanating from across various chapters of the convention. These include provisions requiring the development of comprehensive policies to prevent and combat violence against women and their financing, and data collection. It also places emphasis on the prevention of gender-based violence against women, the support and protection of victims, including in post-separation settings such as during the process of making decisions on child custody and visitation and in alternative dispute resolution processes. Women's access to justice for their experiences of violence against women and holding perpetrators to account is another strong element of the thematic evaluation round. It covers the obligation to duly investigate and prosecute all acts of violence and looks into vital judicial protective measures such as emergency barring and protection orders, risk-assessment procedures and work with perpetrators.

3. For both the baseline evaluation and the first thematic evaluation round, GREVIO initiates the procedure by addressing a questionnaire to the party concerned, inviting the authorities to respond by way of a comprehensive report in which all the relevant issues raised by the questionnaire should be addressed.

4. In addition to the information provided by the parties, GREVIO also collects information from various other sources, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other members of civil society, national human rights institutions, Council of Europe bodies (Parliamentary Assembly, Human Rights Commissioner and other pertinent bodies) and other international treaty bodies. After analysing the state report, GREVIO carries out an evaluation visit to the party concerned and subsequently draws up its draft evaluation report. The draft report is discussed in a GREVIO meeting and, following its approval by all GREVIO experts, it is sent to the relevant national authorities for comments. Following the receipt and consideration of these comments, GREVIO adopts the final report. GREVIO's reports – thematic and baseline – are made public on the Istanbul Convention website, together with any final comments received from the party concerned. The Committee of the Parties, which is the other body involved in the monitoring process and which is composed of the representatives of the parties to the convention, subsequently receives GREVIO's reports and may adopt, on the basis of GREVIO's conclusions, recommendations addressed to each of the parties (for a detailed workflow of the monitoring mechanism of the convention, see Appendix 7).

5. After a period of three years, parties are asked to report back to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to implement these recommendations. The committee's review of these reports results in the adoption of conclusions in respect of each party – a process that has been carried out since 2021. This ongoing review process results in progress made at the level of implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which the complementary nature of the monitoring carried out by GREVIO and the supervision of its recommendations by the Committee of the Parties greatly contributes to.

GREVIO meetings

6. In 2023, GREVIO held four meetings in total. This number includes three regular meetings (29th, 30th and 31st), held in February, May, and October respectively. It also includes an ad hoc meeting held in June, which had become necessary following the election of new GREVIO members on 1 June 2023.

7. During the three regular meetings, GREVIO considered and adopted its baseline evaluation reports concerning North Macedonia, Croatia, Luxembourg, Greece, Ireland, Liechtenstein and Moldova. Moreover, at its 30th meeting in May 2023, GREVIO adopted its 4th General Report of Activities, covering the period from January to December 2022 and including a thematic focus section that provides an overview of approaches taken in parties to the Istanbul Convention regarding the criminalisation and the prosecution of sexual violence, including rape, and protective measures for victims. The 30th meeting was further marked by the imminent expiry of the mandate of 10 GREVIO members, including six long-standing members who had unwaveringly contributed to the work of GREVIO since its inception (Iris Luarasi, Simona Lanzoni, Biljana Branković, Françoise Brié, Helena Leitao and Marceline Naudi). In light of the expiry of the mandates of the above-mentioned GREVIO members, including that of the GREVIO President and GREVIO Bureau members and the subsequent election/re-election by the Committee of the Parties of 10 candidates, GREVIO convened on an ad hoc basis in June 2023 and elected Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou as President, Aleid van den Brink as first Vice-President and Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop as second Vice-President for a term of office starting 20 June 2023 and lasting for two years.

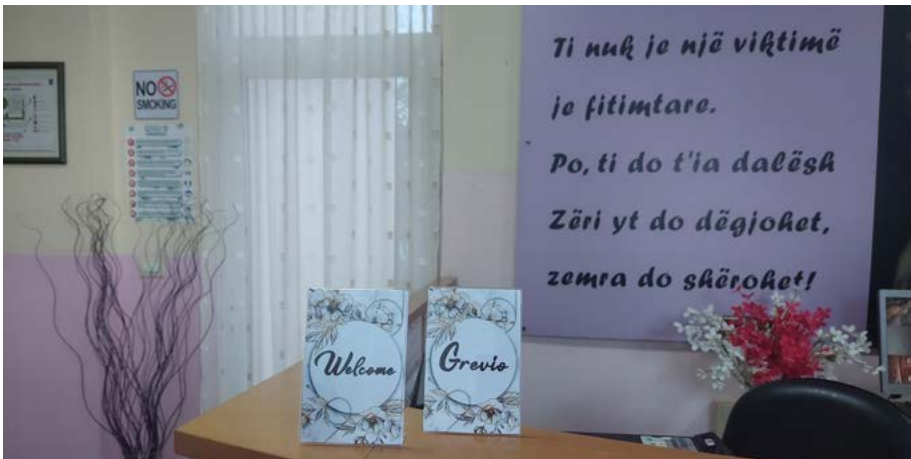
8. In addition, GREVIO held several thematic debates. At its 29th meeting in February, GREVIO member Biljana Branković gave a presentation on the “Nordic paradox”, which refers to the fact that many gender-neutral laws and policies on violence against women and domestic violence exist in several Nordic states and other countries, based on the assumption that these countries have fully achieved gender equality. The ensuing discussion among GREVIO members addressed the implications of this approach, including the increasing trend of claims of mutual violence in intimate-partner settings, leading to dual reporting with insufficient attention placed on primary aggressor analysis. The group further discussed the negative implications of gender-neutral policies on violence against women and the need for further research and attention on this issue. At its 31st meeting, Pascale Franck gave a presentation on the dangers of non-fatal strangulation, which highlighted the strong link between this severe form of violence and gender-related killings of women and girls, as victims of prior strangulation attempts are seven times more likely to be killed by their abuser. The presentation was followed by a discussion among GREVIO members focusing on the need for GREVIO to systematically verify that risk-assessment tools used in parties to the Istanbul Convention include non-fatal strangulation as a risk factor, and that professionals are sufficiently trained on this matter.

9. During its three regular meetings, GREVIO engaged in exchanges of views with the President of the European Court of Human Rights, the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the Chair of the Lanzarote Committee (29th meeting), the President of GRETA (30th meeting), the General Rapporteur on Violence against Women of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the Chair of

the European Disability Forum (EDF) Women's Committee (31st meeting). Each of these exchanges prompted in-depth discussions, demonstrating the relevance of the Istanbul Convention and its comprehensive approach to many other committees, bodies and entities.

Evaluation visits and procedures

10. In 2023, GREVIO carried out evaluation visits to eight parties to the convention. This included four baseline evaluation visits, to Moldova, Ireland, Liechtenstein and Greece, as well as the first four visits carried out under GREVIO's newly launched first thematic evaluation procedure. The first parties evaluated under this procedure are Austria, Albania, Denmark and Monaco. The duration of each of the visits was five days, except for the visit to Liechtenstein, which lasted four days.



Words of welcome from an Albanian NGO to GREVIO members

11. GREVIO's evaluation visits were essential for obtaining a direct insight into measures taken by parties with a view to furthering the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Through its meetings with state and civil society actors, GREVIO was able to assess the situation on the ground, including visits to specialist support services for women victims of violence, such as domestic violence shelters and counselling services. Its programme for visits carried out under the thematic evaluation procedure was slightly adapted to correspond to the scope of evaluation.

12. During the period under review, GREVIO also initiated the first thematic evaluation procedures in relation to Finland, Montenegro, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. It continued its preparations for the baseline evaluation visit to the United Kingdom, for which the procedure had been launched in 2022. State reports were received from all of these parties, while the respective visits were scheduled for 2024. GREVIO's evaluations are organised on the basis of a provisional timetable, which is available separately for the baseline evaluation and GREVIO's first thematic evaluation, the latter covering the period 2023-2031 (see Appendix 3).

HUDOC-GREVIO database

13. The HUDOC-GREVIO database enables public users to access and search for documents published by GREVIO. The database is regularly updated and directly accessible from the Istanbul Convention homepage and the HUDOC database of the European Court of Human Rights.
14. The main objective of this database is to allow users to make specific searches on GREVIO's evaluation reports by using various filters, in particular by articles, key words (forms of violence, target groups, etc.) and types of GREVIO findings to the parties, and to retrieve relevant information.
15. The following types of documents are available in the HUDOC-GREVIO database, in English and French:
 - ▶ GREVIO baseline evaluation reports and related final government comments;
 - ▶ GREVIO thematic evaluation reports and related final government comments;
 - ▶ recommendations issued by the Committee of the Parties;
 - ▶ GREVIO activity reports;
 - ▶ GREVIO general recommendations.
16. The database continues to be widely used as a public source for all documents published by GREVIO and 2023 saw an increase in its use by 39%.



GREVIO Bureau, from the left to the right: Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, President, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, second Vice-President, and Aleid van den Brink, first Vice-President

Membership and Bureau

17. GREVIO's mandate and composition requirements are set out in Article 66, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Istanbul Convention and further expanded on in Resolution CM/Res(2014)43 of the Committee of Ministers on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). Article 66 provides that GREVIO shall have between 10 and 15 members, depending on the number of parties to the convention, and that it shall take into account a gender and geographical balance, as well as multi-disciplinary expertise in the areas of human rights, gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence, or the assistance to and protection of victims. GREVIO members should therefore be nationals of states parties to the convention, be nominated by them and elected by the Committee of the Parties for a four-year term, renewable once.

18. The first 10 GREVIO members were elected on 4 May 2015, for a term of four years. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Germany on 12 October 2017 brought the total number of ratifications to 25, triggering the procedure to fill the remaining five seats on GREVIO. The Committee of the Parties subsequently elected, at its fifth meeting on 24 May 2018, five additional members, with a mandate of four years starting on 1 September 2018. Since the mandate of these five GREVIO members ended on 31 August 2022, the Committee of the Parties filled these seats during

an election in June 2022, electing Päivi Hirvelä (Finland), Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop (Ireland), Laura Albu (Romania) and Grzegorz Wrona (Poland), and re-electing Aleid van den Brink (Netherlands). Four other GREVIO members – Rachel Eapen Paul (Norway), Sabine Kräuter-Stockton (Germany), Vladimir Mkervalishvili (Georgia) and Per Arne Hakansson (Sweden) – ended their mandate in August 2022.

19. The year 2023 brought further change to the composition of GREVIO, with six long-standing members ending their mandates. These include two former Presidents of GREVIO (Iris Luarasi, Albania, and Marceline Naudi, Malta), as well as members of the Bureau, Simona Lanzoni (Italy), Biljana Branković (Serbia), Françoise Brié (France) and Helena Leitao (Portugal). Hence, the Committee of the Parties elected, at its 14th meeting on 1 June 2023, the following GREVIO members: Guillaume Robert Barbe, María Rún Bjarnadóttir (re-elected), Pascale Florence Franck, Marie-Claude Hofner (re-elected), Ivo Holc (re-elected), Olena Kharytonova, Maria Andriana Kostopoulou (re-elected), Helmut Tichy, Pille Tsopp-Pagan and Angelina Zaporozhan-Pirgari. This represented a significant renewal of the composition of the Group of Experts, bringing new expertise and introducing new perspectives to the work of the group. In accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 66 of the Istanbul Convention and Rule 14 of the Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/Res(2014)43, the committee decided that the mandate of these 10 members of GREVIO shall start on the 1 June 2023, for a duration of four years, renewable once.

20. As referred to in the previous section, GREVIO elected, at its ad hoc meeting in June 2023, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou as President, Aleid van den Brink as first Vice-President and Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop as second Vice-President. The term of office of the three new Bureau members started on 20 June 2023 and will last for two years.



Signatures and ratifications of the convention

Signatures and developments regarding the application of the Istanbul Convention

21. As of 31 December 2023, there were a total of 38 ratifications of the Istanbul Convention (37 countries and the European Union) and seven signatures not followed by ratification. The year 2023 was marked by the momentous ratification of the convention by the European Union. Indeed, under its Article 75, paragraph 1, the convention provides that it is open for signature by the European Union. While the EU signed the Istanbul Convention in June 2017, the procedure was completed with the deposit of two instruments of approval on 28 June 2023, triggering the entry into force of the convention for the EU on 1 October 2023. These two EU Council decisions refer to the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention "only as regards matters falling within the exclusive competence of the Union", notably, "with regard to institutions and public administration of the Union" and "with regard to matters related to judicial co-operation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement". Like all other parties, the EU will, therefore, undergo GREVIO's baseline evaluation procedure (Article 66, paragraph 1, of the convention), which will address the EU's implementation of the convention within its competences.

22. Equally worthy of note are some positive steps taken by a number of Council of Europe member states towards ratification of the convention. On 30 November, the Latvian Parliament, for example, passed a law approving the ratification of the convention. A relevant development in Lithuania was the decision of the Constitutional Court, on 13 October 2023, to accept the parliament's request to determine whether the Istanbul Convention is in line with the country's constitution.

23. As regards non-members of the Council of Europe, a positive momentum in the process of accession to the Istanbul Convention can be noted in relation to Mexico and Kazakhstan, the latter being one of the three non-member states invited to accede to the Istanbul Convention by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (together with Israel and Tunisia). In 2023, Kazakhstan expressed an interest in ratifying the Istanbul Convention and in working with the Council of Europe to counter disinformation campaigns regarding the convention in its country. Guidance was offered by referring to the Venice Commission's opinion on Armenia and the Istanbul Convention, which could be useful for Kazakhstan, as well as to the Council of Europe toolkit prepared to support national communication/advocacy campaigns to generate positive narratives and dispel myths and misinformation about the convention.

Reservations

24. The possibility for parties to enter reservations to the convention is strictly regulated under its Article 78. To promote uniformity in parties' implementation of their obligations, the convention aims to encourage them to consider withdrawing and/or reviewing their reservations. Besides foreseeing the possibility for the withdrawal of reservations at any time by a declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Article 78, paragraph 4), Article 79 subjects reservations to a limited period of validity (five years from the entry into force of the convention in respect of the party concerned) and to a system of compulsory renewal (Article 79, paragraphs 1 and 2). Moreover, the convention provides that any state party that makes a reservation is under the duty to provide GREVIO with an explanation on the grounds justifying its continuance, before its renewal or upon request (Article 79, paragraph 3).

25. At its 19th meeting, GREVIO decided that it would review the information provided by the parties to the convention on the reasons for upholding any reservations and that it would assess the situation in the area covered by the reserved article/provision in the context of the country assessment. If after such a review, GREVIO identifies an inadequate response to violence against women in terms of a significant lack of protection, prevention or prosecution as a result of the reservation, GREVIO may invite the party under evaluation to consider revoking the reservation.

26. In the course of 2023, several parties made declarations regarding their earlier reservations. Cyprus notified the Secretary General on 17 March 2023 about its intention to uphold its earlier reservation with regard to Article 30, paragraph 2, and withdraw its reservations for Article 44, paragraphs 1.e, 3 and 4, and Article 59.

27. The reservations previously put in place by Georgia and Germany were not extended during 2023. Germany declared on 1 February 2023 that it did not intend to renew its reservations in respect of Article 44, paragraph 1, and Article 59, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the convention, while Georgia's reservation lapsed after 1 March 2023.

28. Last, reservations put forward by Greece and North Macedonia, for which the period of five years and the requirement for renewal fell in 2023, have automatically been extended by six months, pursuant to Article 79, paragraph 2, of the convention, pending a communication of the respective governments in this respect.



Visibility and communications

Publications

GREVIO baseline evaluation reports

29. In accordance with Article 68, paragraph 11, of the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO reports and conclusions are made public as from their adoption, together with any comments by the party concerned. Six GREVIO baseline evaluation reports were published during the reporting period in respect of Luxembourg, Croatia, North Macedonia, Ireland, Greece and the Republic of Moldova (in order of publication) and are available on the Istanbul Convention's website, together with the comments of the respective national authorities. A press release is issued whenever a report is published. On this occasion, interviews may be given by GREVIO members and the Secretariat in order to provide information on the report and evaluation process.

30. Upon publication, GREVIO baseline evaluation reports have attracted considerable media interest, raising awareness and visibility of their findings. The GREVIO report on Ireland, in particular, received extensive coverage by national news (including *The Irish Times*, RTÉ, *Irish Independent*, *Irish Examiner*, National Women's Council,

Irish Mirror and *The Irish Sun*). The media underlined the adoption of positive legal and policy measures, including the adoption of the Third National (Zero Tolerance) Strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and the introduction of a consent-based definition of rape. GREVIO further praised the introduction of the female genital mutilation offence and the criminalisation of coercive control and forced marriage. However, some media also highlighted the serious shortcomings identified in the report, especially concerning the insufficient training of judges on handling cases of domestic violence, the absence of a co-ordinated multi-agency response mechanism for most forms of violence against women, and gaps in data collection. In Luxembourg, national media outlets (*Virgule*, *Les Frontaliers*) focused on the need to improve various aspects of women’s protection policies, particularly addressing the lack of a gender dimension in policies and the absence of a national helpline. Finally, national and regional media headlines drew attention to the publication of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports on the Republic of Moldova (*Balkan Insight*) and Greece (*Balkan Insight*, *Ekathimerini.com*, *The National Herald*).

4th General Report on GREVIO’s activities



31. GREVIO published its 4th General Report on 21 September 2023, covering its monitoring work from January to December 2022, including the adoption and publication of six GREVIO baseline evaluation reports (Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova). It extends and elaborates on GREVIO’s 1st, 2nd and 3rd General Reports, addressing GREVIO’s activities, composition and communications, encompassing its co-operation with other Council of Europe bodies and institutions and external stakeholders, the latter including organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union, as well as with NGOs and civil society. A new theme was introduced in the focus section of the 4th General Report: the criminalisation and

prosecution of sexual violence, including rape, focusing on the different approaches adopted by the parties, as well as women’s access to justice and specialised support services. After outlining the existing approaches to the criminalisation of sexual violence, including rape, the focus section highlights the evolution of legislation, policies and support services in this area across parties to the convention, underscoring the positive influence of the convention and GREVIO’s monitoring activity in fostering the adoption of the “yes is yes” model by a growing number of parties. Ending with a wide collection of positive practices identified during GREVIO’s monitoring work, the focus section further emphasises the paramount importance of both legislative reforms towards a consent-based definition of sexual violence and the establishment or enhancement of specialised victim support services.

Publications: a study on Article 10 and a booklet on the Istanbul Convention



32. In 2023, a new publication was launched as part of the Council of Europe “collection of papers” on the Istanbul Convention, a set of studies aimed at conducting in-depth analyses of individual articles offering tailored guidance on implementing those provisions effectively. Additionally, a leaflet focused on the progress made in the implementation of the convention and its impact in practice was published.

33. The first publication focused on providing guidance on setting up official co-ordinating bodies responsible for policies on violence against women, in line with Article 10 of the convention. This provision requires the designation or establishment of one or more official

bodies responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women. Drawing on GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports, the study provides policy makers and relevant professionals with guidance on designing evidence-based policies, co-ordinating the implementation of policies across sectors and ensuring the monitoring and independent evaluation of policies to prevent and combat violence against women. It also underlines ways to ensure the allocation of adequate resources, the development of clear mandates for these bodies and the use of efficient working methods, based on interinstitutional co-ordination, co-operation with non-governmental organisations and the implementation of a gender-sensitive and intersectional approach to policy making. Importantly, the study concludes with a checklist for setting up co-ordinating bodies in line with the requirements of Article 10, the general principles of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO’s findings, as well as a list of key resources for further guidance. The publication of the above study links directly to the objective of increasing the implementation of the Istanbul Convention’s standards in line with GREVIO’s findings. It also contributes to promoting state officials’ access to knowledge on how to set up co-ordinating bodies – a need expressed by various parties.



34. The second publication consists of a leaflet entitled “Sustaining progress towards ending violence against women and girls”, which provides up-to-date information on the Istanbul Convention, its tangible impact at national level and the outcome of GREVIO’s baseline evaluation procedure. The aim of this short publication is to allow a wide range of readers to easily access knowledge on the content of the convention, the functioning of its monitoring mechanism, the actual progress and gaps identified through GREVIO’s evaluation procedure since 2017.

35. This publication thus contributes to the objective of giving more visibility to GREVIO's work and the added value of the Istanbul Convention, as well as promoting national and international synergies in fostering the implementation of the convention on the ground. Indeed, the leaflet compiles in a condensed manner how GREVIO's evaluation procedure has brought to light promising developments in the national responses to violence against women, such as the comprehensive adoption of new national action plans on violence against women, the expansion of the range of support services for women victims of violence and the introduction of specific criminal offences to adequately prosecute more forms of violence (such as stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or forced sterilisation). It also summarises how GREVIO's findings provide a road map for reinforcing national action in this field, by listing some of the most common gaps in the implementation of the convention identified by GREVIO. These include, for example, the need to expand the number and funding of specialist support services for women victims (shelters or rape crisis/sexual violence referral centres, for example), to systematically train relevant professionals on preventing and detecting violence against women, to systematically collect comparable administrative and judicial gender-disaggregated data on all forms of violence against women or to address the reasons for low rates of prosecutions and convictions in cases of violence against women.

Communication around the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

36. The United Nations designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, aiming to promote global awareness of all forms of violence against women. This date also initiates the "16 days of activism against gender-based violence", which run until 10 December (Human Rights Day) and represent a period committed to actively addressing and eradicating violence against women and girls on a global scale through different actions. In 2023, as in previous years, GREVIO engaged in various initiatives to shed light on a wide range of aspects that require attention to prevent and combat violence against women.

37. Leading up to this important date, GREVIO's President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou participated in an exchange of views with the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe on 16 November 2023. On this occasion, she emphasised the importance of the EU's ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the start of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round on the theme "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice", highlighting the victim-centred approach of the convention.

38. On 24 November 2023, the President of the Committee of Ministers, Dominique Hasler, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, issued a statement recalling the importance of the Istanbul Convention and strongly encouraging the Council of Europe's member states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the convention. They reflected on the improvements driven by the Istanbul Convention in its parties, particularly regarding significant changes in legislation and the increase in specialised support services for victims. They also highlighted the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the convention in 2024.

39. During the 16 days of activism, social media profiles of the Council of Europe ran awareness-raising messages, echoing GREVIO's activities and work in different news. The campaign was accompanied by the hashtag #IstanbulConventionSavesLives, amplifying its reach and impact.

Participation in events

40. In the period under review, GREVIO members and the Secretariat participated in over 70 events that took place in various countries around Europe, with some events also taking place in Africa, Asia and the Americas. These included conferences, meetings and summits organised by a variety of stakeholders, including Council of Europe bodies, the United Nations, the European Union, national ministries, national human rights institutions, civil society and academic institutions. The events addressed a wide array of topics, such as the implementation and follow-up activities following the adoption of GREVIO reports in respect of several parties, the inter-relation of the case law of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Istanbul Convention, the role of men and boys in the fight against violence against women, the application of the Istanbul Convention in the field of women in sports and the prevalence and reporting of rape and sexual violence, among others. While not attempting to provide an exhaustive list, a few examples are provided in the following paragraphs.

41. The then President of GREVIO, Iris Luarasi, was one of those invited to participate in the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), organised by the United Nations in New York from 6 to 17 March 2023. At that event, the GREVIO President met with various UN and other officials working in the field of violence against women and attended several events organised by the Nordic Gender Equality Ministers.

42. Later in the year, the newly elected GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou was invited to participate in the European Union's ministerial meeting on equality taking place in Pamplona on 24 November 2023, the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The focus of the meeting was on tackling emerging forms of violence against women with a focus on cyber-violence and economic violence.



43. GREVIO members were particularly active during the period of the 16 days of activism (25 November to 10 December). One example of the many events that took place during this period is the invitation received by Päivi Hirvelä, a GREVIO member and former judge at the European Court of Human Rights, to participate in an event organised by the Finnish national co-ordinating body under Article 10 of the convention, the committee for combating violence against women and

domestic violence in Helsinki, Finland, on 4 December 2023. At the occasion, Ms Hirvelä presented the key points of GREVIO's 1st General Recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women.

Online HELP course on violence against women

44. The Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) aims to enhance and improve the capacity of all legal professionals – judges, lawyers and prosecutors – in all Council of Europe member states and beyond. Its key goal is to encourage legal professionals to apply European human rights standards in their daily work, through free and accessible online courses on human rights topics. The HELP course on violence against women, developed in 2017, has since been continuously adapted into a growing number of national versions and officially launched for different types of legal professionals, including law students. The course has been gradually implemented in the learning curriculums of national institutions providing training for the judiciary and other categories of legal professionals. Two launch events for this course took place in 2023, one for Italian and Spanish judges and prosecutors, which took place in October in Madrid, Spain, with the participation of members of GREVIO's Secretariat, and one in Athens, Greece, in December for Greek and Bulgarian lawyers with the participation of GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou as speaker. It is to be recalled that in 2022 the online course, "Violence against women and domestic violence for law enforcement", was added to the HELP online catalogue, offering law-enforcement professionals the opportunity to learn theoretical and practical concepts related to violence against women, its many forms and impacts on victims and society at large. The course also provides guidelines on how to respond to cases of violence against women and domestic violence, quickly and effectively, including techniques for interviewing victims and perpetrators and practical steps that should be followed by first responders, investigators and other stakeholders working to combat violence against women and domestic violence and protect victims. A launch event for this course was held in Chisinau, Moldova, with the participation of GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou as speaker.



Focus section: the role and importance of risk assessment and risk management in preventing and combating violence against women

Introduction

45. Risk assessments serve as a crucial mechanism for states to fulfil their due diligence obligation to prevent and protect individuals from human rights violations at the hands of private individuals. They allow the likelihood of immediate harm and the severity of threats to be assessed and form part of the tools to be employed to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights such as the right to life, physical safety, privacy and family life. In view of the disproportionate manner in which women and girls are affected by domestic violence and exposed to gender-based violence, including threats to life and limb and gender-related killings, risk assessments form a cornerstone of the comprehensive set of measures required by the Istanbul Convention in order to effectively prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence.

46. This focus section zooms in on the standards set out in Article 51 of the convention, which covers risk assessments, as well as progress and challenges in its implementation. It equally delves into an analysis of Articles 52 and 53 on emergency barring and protection orders, as well as on Article 31 on custody, visitation rights and safety, in order to highlight the importance of carrying out a risk assessment in those specific contexts. The analysis draws on the extensive corpus of baseline evaluation reports published to date by GREVIO and their respective findings.¹

47. This section also draws on the European Court of Human Rights (the “Court”) case law that sets out the requirement for effective risk assessments and contains references to the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO’s evaluation reports in this regard. The Court has consistently held in its jurisprudence that under the European Convention of Human Rights (the “Convention”) state authorities have a responsibility to take preventive operational measures in the form of effective deterrence against serious breaches of an individual’s physical integrity by a member of her family or by a partner. Taking preventive measures requires an assessment of whether there is a real and immediate risk to life or limb, taking due account of the particular context of domestic violence. The Court has held in several cases that in such a context, it is not only a question of an obligation to afford general protection to an individual at risk, but above all, to take into account the likelihood of the recurrence of successive episodes of violence within a family.²

Risk assessment and risk management as an international obligation

48. Article 51 as interpreted by GREVIO through its corpus of evaluation reports provides a comprehensive and detailed framework for victims’ risk assessments and risk management. More specifically, Article 51 requires parties to take measures, through legislation and by other means, to ensure that all relevant professionals, not only law-enforcement authorities, are required to assess and take steps to manage the safety risks of a victim on a case-by-case basis, including the risk of repeated and lethal violence, according to standardised procedure and provide, where necessary, co-ordinated support.³ Such co-ordinated effort must involve a range of different institutions and stakeholders, including, for example, law-enforcement agencies, staff from women’s shelters, social services, health professionals and probation and prison services, and must place the victim’s safety at the centre of any intervention. GREVIO has highlighted that risk assessments and safety plans are to be carried out for victims of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention, beyond domestic violence, and must be repeated at various stages of the investigation and application of protective measures, as the risk to a victim can change. The effectiveness

1. See the GREVIO baseline reports on Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Netherlands, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Türkiye.
2. See *Kurt v. Austria* [GC], Application No. 62903/15, paragraphs 164 and 190, *Talpis v. Italy*, Application No. 41237/14, paragraph 122, and *Volodina v. Russia*, Application No. 41261/17, paragraph 86.
3. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 260.

of risk assessment also hinges on recognising the continuum of violence, which is to be prioritised over an approach that addresses individual instances of violence in isolation. Therefore, it is essential to consider, evaluate and assess incidents of violence within the broader context of violence against women as a form of gendered violence and systematically address the safety not only of the woman involved but also of her children.



49. In its third-party intervention in the Court case *Kurt v. Austria* [GC],⁴ GREVIO referred to several indicators that should be included in any risk assessment because they are known to be indicative of a high risk. Of particular significance is whether the perpetrator possesses or has access to firearms as this is identified by the convention as a heightened risk factor that must be taken into account systematically. Such possession represents a powerful means to exert control over victims and increases the risk of homicide.⁵ Other important red flags include instances where the victim initiates separation or ends the relationship, past instances of violence, in particular sexual violence, coercive and controlling behaviour, the imposition of restrictive measures in the past, threats regarding the care of or access to the victim's children, threats of homicide against the victim and her children, substance abuse, mental health issues, unemployment and threats of suicide. A risk factor that has received growing attention by GREVIO due to its gravity is non-fatal strangulation.⁶ Indeed, research has shown that victims of prior strangulation are seven times more likely to later become victims of murder⁷ and that strangulation is a common method of killing in domestic violence settings.⁸ On the other hand, where it does not have a fatal outcome, it is likely to cause serious permanent injuries, such as brain damage, as well as extreme distress to victims, who commonly feel like they are about to die.⁹

4. Cited above.

5. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 113.

6. Strangulation is the obstruction of blood vessels and/or airflow by external (often manual) pressure to the neck, which causes decreased oxygen supply to the brain and can lead to unconsciousness and the loss of bladder control within seven to 15 seconds. These time spans are commonly accepted in the medico-legal field and were first examined in a study from 1943: Kabat H. and Anderson J. P., "Acute arrest of cerebral circulation in man: Lieutenant Ralph Rossen (MC), U.S.N.R.," *Arch Neuropsych*, 1943, 50(5): 510-528, available at: www.jamanetwork.com/journals/archneuropsych/article-abstract/649750.

7. Glass N., Laughon K., Campbell J., Block C. R., Hanson G., Sharps P. W. and Taliaferro E., "Non-fatal strangulation is an important risk factor for homicide of women", *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, Volume 35, Issue 3, 2008, pp. 329-335, available at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2573025/.

8. See for example www.femicidecensus.org/reports/ for data from the UK.

9. White C., Martin G., Schofield A. M. and Majeed-Ariss R., "I thought he was going to kill me: Analysis of 204 case files of adults reporting non-fatal strangulation as part of a sexual assault over a 3-year period", *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, Volume 79, 2021, available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1752928X21000135.

50. The legal standard of requiring that risk assessment be carried out in cases of violence against women enshrined in the Istanbul Convention is mirrored in General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence, updating General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) adopted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee).¹⁰ It specifies that measures to protect and assist women victims of gender-based violence need to provide appropriate and accessible protective mechanisms to prevent further or potential violence and should not be conditional on the victim initiating legal action. More specifically, such measures of protection should encompass immediate risk assessment and protection, comprising a wide range of effective measures and, where appropriate, eviction orders, protection, restraining or emergency barring orders against alleged perpetrators and adequate sanctions for non-compliance. Moreover, the EU Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) requires that an individual assessment of the victim be carried out by the relevant services with a view to identifying victims' specific protection needs.¹¹

Different approaches to risk assessment and management

51. Across the parties to the Istanbul Convention, a range of standardised tools are being used, at times adapted to the national context. These include several internationally recognised tools that are applied to assess the risk, including the lethality risk, that perpetrators of domestic violence pose to their victim, including, for example, the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA). GREVIO also found other models in use, notably B-SAFER, CARE, ODARA, DA and DASH. Moreover, several countries hold multi-agency risk-assessment conferences (MARACs) when a victim of domestic violence is known to be at risk of (further) serious harm. MARACs bring all relevant statutory agencies together and allow information on high-risk perpetrators to be shared with a view to identifying appropriate protective measures for the victim.

52. Where such internationally recognised tools are being incorporated into national practice, their use across all regions of the country may not be uniform (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany).¹² Other countries have developed their own tools, such as Portugal and Spain, the latter significantly enhancing the effectiveness of risk-assessment tools through the use of artificial intelligence.¹³

53. Specific risk-assessment tools for violence related to "honour" have also been developed, notably the Assessment of Risk for Honour-Based Violence (PATRIARCH). Such specific tools, however, are not in use throughout all parties to the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports point to their use mainly in the Nordic countries.

10. See the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992), CEDAW/C/GC/35, 2017: www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no-35-2017-gender-based.

11. Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

12. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Austria, paragraph 179; Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 282 and 283; and Germany, paragraph 308.

13. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Portugal, paragraph 201; and Spain, paragraph 259.

Shortcomings in the use of existing risk-assessment tools

54. Where standardised risk assessments are in use, GREVIO baseline evaluation reports have highlighted several shortcomings in their implementation. In certain baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO noted with concern the lack of inclusion of important red flags such as the perpetrator's possession or access to firearms (Spain)¹⁴ or the recent separation of the victim from the perpetrator (Poland).¹⁵ The baseline evaluation reports on North Macedonia and Iceland, on the other hand, highlight that risk assessments are not systematically carried out.¹⁶ Accordingly, GREVIO has, *inter alia*, strongly encouraged the authorities to ensure that an assessment of the victim's risk is carried out systematically and speedily by all relevant authorities in co-operation, providing co-ordinated protection and support.

55. Concern has equally been expressed by GREVIO where standardised risk-assessment tools are used improperly and inaccurately or, despite their availability for use, they are overridden with preference given to police officials' own assessment of the risk based on their experience and intuitive skills.¹⁷ As regards the former case, in its baseline evaluation report on Georgia, GREVIO noted with concern that police officers did not accurately/fully record the information provided by victims, including facts that could reveal aggravating circumstances or that were crucial to identifying the discriminatory gender motive, which resulted in the crime being qualified as less grave. Moreover, police officers did not ask all of the relevant questions included in the risk-assessment checklist and filled out some parts of the assessment on their own, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the risk-assessment process.¹⁸ GREVIO has equally identified in some parties the problematic practice of different agencies using different risk-assessment tools, leading to inconsistent results.

Risk-assessment tools mainly used for domestic violence

56. A review of the baseline evaluation reports published thus far reveals a predominant concentration of risk-assessment efforts on domestic violence, although these efforts vary significantly in terms of their comprehensiveness, level of multi-agency co-operation and mandatory nature. Forms of violence covered by the convention beyond domestic violence are far less frequently recognised as requiring a systematic risk assessment. GREVIO has therefore urged parties, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Switzerland, to ensure that risk-assessment instruments are available for all forms of violence covered by the convention.¹⁹ By way of example, GREVIO

14. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Spain, paragraph 235.

15. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Poland, paragraph 276.

16. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Iceland, paragraph 267; and North Macedonia, paragraph 323.

17. GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Italy, paragraph 228.

18. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Georgia, paragraph 326.

19. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 285 ; Cyprus, paragraph 240; Georgia, paragraph 330; Germany, paragraph 308; Iceland, paragraph 274; Ireland, paragraph 266; Italy, paragraph 233(a); Malta, paragraph 214; North Macedonia, paragraph 325; Poland, paragraph 280; Romania, paragraph 371; Slovenia, paragraph 330; and Switzerland, paragraph 233.

noted in relation to Cyprus that there is no risk-assessment tool to assess the risk that a victim or her daughter/siblings may be subject to FGM and therefore to allow the timely implementation of protective measures such as travel bans.²⁰

57. As regards violence related to “honour”, GREVIO found that Denmark, Norway and Sweden used the PATRIARCH risk-assessment tool, which was mainly used by law-enforcement agencies, albeit on the basis of varying degrees of training.²¹

58. Several countries have yet to introduce systematic risk-assessment procedures for any form of violence against women. For example, GREVIO urged the authorities in Germany and Poland to ensure that in cases of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence and forced marriage, systematic and gender-sensitive risk assessment and safety management is carried out.²²

Children are overlooked in risk assessment

59. Another recurrent shortcoming identified in GREVIO reports concerns the failure of the relevant authorities to carry out a risk assessment on the victims’ children parallel to their mothers. In this respect, GREVIO has clarified that it must be made clear in the law and in any protocol/guideline that the risk assessment should also systematically be carried out for the victim’s children.²³ As was detailed by GREVIO in its third-party intervention before the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Kurt v. Austria* [GC], perpetrators are often also violent towards children with whom they cohabit. Children may be exposed to direct and/or indirect violence, including after the end of an abusive relationship. With fewer opportunities available to subjugate their former partners after separation, many domestic abusers retaliate by abusing their children, leading, in some tragic cases, to their murder. The importance of carrying out a risk assessment for all victims, including children, cannot therefore be over-emphasised.

Risk-assessment procedures are not always fully integrated into MARACs

60. In a number of baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO has expressed concern over the fact that risk-assessment procedures, even when formalised, are not fully integrated into multi-agency co-operation efforts. GREVIO has recalled that the risk assessment is not a goal in and of itself, but a first step to ensuring co-ordinated safety measures and support to victims.²⁴ It has also emphasised that where key information from other stakeholders such as schools or the judiciary is missed, co-ordination and the safety of the victim can be compromised.²⁵ More specifically, in a consistent number of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, including Croatia, Greece, Georgia, Ireland, Poland and Spain, GREVIO drew attention to the fact

20. See GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on Cyprus, paragraph 240.

21. See GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports on Denmark, paragraph 20; Norway, paragraph 235; and Sweden, paragraph 215.

22. See GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports on Germany, paragraph 311; and Poland, paragraph 281.

23. See GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports on Germany, paragraph 308; Iceland, paragraph 27; and Ireland, paragraph 265.

24. See GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on Georgia, paragraph 324.

25. See GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on Cyprus, paragraph 240.

that the risk-assessment tools were based almost exclusively on information from law-enforcement authorities and that there was no efficient mechanism in place to consider, in a standardised and timely manner, information from other relevant sources, including the judiciary, women's specialist services or supervised visitation facilities such as family meeting points.²⁶

61. In requiring multi-agency co-operation to protect high-risk victims, the drafters of the convention intended that risk-assessment processes also include mechanisms such as a safety plan for the victim, to co-ordinate safety and support.

Assessment of dynamic risk development

62. Risk levels are dynamic and may spike in relation to certain steps in legal proceedings, such as the opening of criminal proceedings or requests made by the victim for sole custody of shared children. Ensuring continuous risk assessment and continuous adjustments to safety measures by law-enforcement authorities, prosecutors and judges throughout all stages of any legal proceedings, starting from the initial interaction with the victim to potential sentencing, is of utmost importance. Without consistent and ongoing risk assessments and management, victims might in fact develop a false sense of security, placing them in greater jeopardy.

63. GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, including those on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Ireland, Romania, and Norway, have noted with concern that procedures for risk assessment and management were not repeated at all relevant stages of proceedings.²⁷ In this connection, GREVIO has clarified that the assessment of the risk and identification of safety measures should be conducted continuously from the first meeting with the victim all the way to a possible sentence, because victims' risk can change and must, therefore, be assessed during all phases of the procedure.²⁸ Conversely, in Spain, once the victim has been registered in the central risk-assessment and risk-management tool in use by law enforcement (VioGen), following the first police assessment of risk, the police will make regular assessments of changes to this risk according to the level of risk that the victim is exposed to and the protection measures that have been imposed. If the level of risk is considered to have changed, the measures are adapted by informing the courts, which shall then decide on a case-by-case basis the legal measures of protection to be adopted. Moreover, in Spain, a risk assessment should be carried by the judiciary and further measures of legal protection can be put in place alongside those taken by the police.

64. It is equally noteworthy that in Iceland the Prison and Probation Administration has developed a risk-assessment tool to assess perpetrators' likelihood of further violent behaviour and to determine whether he should be released on probation.²⁹

26. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Croatia, paragraph 269; Georgia, paragraph 323-324; Greece, paragraph 270; Ireland, paragraph 267; Poland, paragraph 275; and Spain, paragraph 260.

27. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 285; Cyprus, paragraph 241; Georgia, paragraph 324; Ireland, paragraph 270; Norway, paragraph 236; and Romania, paragraph 372.

28. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 281; and Ireland 267.

29. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Iceland, paragraph 272.

Firearm management and risk assessment

65. Under Article 51, paragraph 2, parties are specifically required to ensure that risk assessments comprehensively consider credible information regarding the possession of firearms by perpetrators. The possession of firearms not only serves as a potent means to control victims but also heightens the risk of homicide, particularly in post-conflict scenarios or regions where firearm ownership is customary, granting perpetrators easier access to such weapons. Indeed, a 2017 study investigated the relationship between, on the one hand, state laws on the possession and relinquishment of firearms in cases of domestic violence and, on the other, the levels of intimate-partner homicide (by any means).³⁰ The study has shown that states with laws that ban the possession and mandate the relinquishment of firearms by perpetrators in cases of intimate-partner violence have 9.7% lower rates of intimate-partner homicide and 14% lower rates of intimate-partner firearm homicide.³¹

66. GREVIO has noted through its monitoring work that several countries recognise the critical link between firearm possession and domestic violence and thus include access to or possession of firearms as a risk factor in its risk-assessment procedures. By way of example, risk-assessment procedures in Montenegro, Poland, Romania and San Marino require law-enforcement agencies to establish whether a known perpetrator of domestic violence possesses firearms or other weapons.³² By contrast, GREVIO has noted with concern the absence of such a risk indicator in the risk assessments of a number of parties, including France, Monaco, North Macedonia and Serbia.³³

The evaluation of risk-assessment tools

67. Monitoring and evaluation systems are crucial in supporting quality assurance of risk-assessment and risk-management processes, and in identifying weaknesses and areas for improvement. At the same time, they are also an important element in the process of ensuring that the police are accountable in carrying out their obligations to assess risk and respond to intimate-partner violence within a multi-agency framework.

68. Indeed, ongoing efforts in parties to the Istanbul Convention to ensure the objective evaluation of risk-assessment tools in use have been identified. Notably, GREVIO observed in its baseline evaluation report on Estonia that a study had been commissioned by the authorities in 2016 to determine the effectiveness, need and feasibility of the MARAC risk assessment currently in use. The model impact assessment included the effect of the MARAC programme on victims and the cost-effectiveness of the intervention programme and was due to be carried out in 2022. Additionally, in its state report submitted to GREVIO in the context of the baseline evaluation procedure, the United Kingdom reported that the College of Policing has

30. Targeting gun violence and trafficking in Europe, Flemish Peace Institute, 2021, available at: <https://vlaamsvredesinstituut.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/TARGET-OnlineVersion.pdf>.

31. Ibid.

32. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Montenegro, paragraph 225; Romania, paragraph 265; Poland, paragraph 275; and San Marino, paragraph 190.

33. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on France, paragraph 235; Monaco, paragraph 145; North Macedonia, paragraph 328; and Serbia, paragraph 224.

published an evaluation of the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) tool, which was piloted to improve recognition of controlling or coercive behaviour and provide a more structured method of obtaining information to assess the threat posed by the perpetrator.³⁴ Based on this research, all frontline officers are advised to use DARA when conducting risk assessment at domestic abuse incidents. This notwithstanding, studies indicate that risk management is under-researched, under-evaluated and hard to link with risk-assessment outcomes.³⁵

The digital dimension of violence against women and risk assessment

69. In monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO frequently observes that the digital dimension of violence against women is overlooked in domestic laws and policies. This observation extends to risk-assessment frameworks, which often do not include or prioritise women and girls' exposure to risk online. This is despite the growing incidence of the digital dimension of violence against women and its increased criminalisation. For example, GREVIO welcomed the fact that Spain had been among the first European countries to explicitly criminalise, in 2015, stalking perpetrated through digital means of communication ("cyberstalking") under Article 172 *ter* of its Criminal Code.³⁶ In Germany, GREVIO found a solid legal framework applicable to the digital dimension of violence against women which explicitly criminalises several forms of technology-facilitated abuse such as cyberstalking, the unauthorised taking of pictures of private bodily parts, the sharing of images online and the use of stalkerware.³⁷ Similarly, in Iceland, GREVIO welcomed the clear stance taken against violence against women in the digital sphere. The newly introduced Article 199a of the General Penal Code incriminates image-based abuse and the sharing or distributing of such content without the consent of the victim.³⁸ The Act on the Protection of Sexual Privacy was adopted in February 2021 with the objective of increasing the protection against digital sexual violence and strengthening the sexual liberty of individuals. As regards Norway, this party to the convention had adopted a separate strategy on internet-related abuse (2021-2025), which addresses the online sexual abuse of children, while the Strategy against Hate Speech (2016-2020) covered certain forms of violence against women in its digital dimension, including sexist hate speech.³⁹ The National Action Plan on Rape included the digital dimension of sexual violence, emphasising the increase in digital manifestations of such violence, the different forms it may take, such as image-based abuse or sexualised extortion, and its specific characteristics, such as the anonymity of perpetrators and the interjurisdictional nature of offences, as well as its impacts on the well-being of victims. GREVIO had also pointed to the

34. Report submitted by the United Kingdom pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1, of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Baseline Report), page 49.

35. "Risk assessment and management of intimate partner violence in the EU", page 34.

36. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Spain, paragraph 214.

37. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Germany, paragraph 239.

38. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Iceland, paragraphs 192, 137 and 225.

39. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Norway, paragraphs 3, 6 and 64.

awareness-raising activities by the Norwegian law-enforcement agencies on the digital manifestations of violence against women, such as lectures in secondary schools, publishing information on various social media platforms and the forming of a “net patrol” in each police district, who are present on the internet and social media and offer advice and guidance on crimes committed on the internet, including violence against women.

70. In its General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, GREVIO recognises the growing levels of violence against women committed in the digital sphere and that its impact is particularly pronounced for women and girls at risk of or exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination.⁴⁰ It offers recommendations for the convention’s full implementation in the digital space, developing detailed proposals for action for the prevention of such violence, the protection of victims, prosecution of perpetrators and the development of holistic policies. Notably, it recommends monitoring, through data collection, the number of suicides, suicide attempts and gender-based killings of women and their children with a link to a history of harassment, stalking or psychological violence perpetrated in the digital sphere.⁴¹

Domestic homicide (femicide) review mechanisms

71. Gender-related killings of women and girls, also referred to as femicide and feminicide,⁴² represent the lethal end point of a continuum of multiple, overlapping and interconnected forms of gender-based violence. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that globally 81 100 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2021 and that the largest share of gender-related killings of women and girls are homicides perpetrated by



intimate partners and other family members.⁴³ Such homicides usually follow prior experiences of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.⁴⁴ By assessing the seriousness of the situation and the probability of repeated violence – including lethal violence – and managing the level of risk for a woman and/or girl, risk assessments and risk management play a crucial role in preventing the spiralling of violence and, ultimately, in averting gender-related killings. Accordingly, GREVIO pays close attention to whether parties to the convention have taken the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that a risk assessment is systematically carried out by the

40. General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, paragraph 12.

41. *Ibid.*, paragraph 56 (e).

42. See UN General Assembly resolutions A/RES/68/191, adopted in 2013, and A/RES/70/176, adopted in 2016.

43. Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide). Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021 – Improving data to improve responses.

44. UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, booklet 5, *Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls* (Vienna, 2019).

competent authorities in cases of violence against women, in line with Article 51 of the convention. Such preventive efforts are further strengthened by the requirement to ensure that any gender-related killing is carefully analysed with a view to identifying any possible failure of protection and improving and developing further preventive measures.⁴⁵ Indeed, GREVIO has consistently highlighted in its baseline evaluation reports the need to put in place a system to analyse all cases of gender-based killings of or attempted killings of women, such as a domestic violence killings review mechanism, with the aim of preventing them in the future, preserving the safety of women and holding to account both the perpetrator and the multiple agencies that come into contact with the victim.⁴⁶ In-depth reviews such as domestic homicide reviews or domestic violence fatality reviews offer an opportunity to identify gaps in the responses given by various agencies and support services to violence against women and to improve their responses and cross-sector collaboration. Reports have identified the following as some of their defining characteristics: the analysis of all previous contact between the victim and the relevant support services or institutions and with the perpetrator, intersectoral co-ordination when reviewing such killings, data-collection efforts and the formulation of recommendations to improve the relevant interventions.⁴⁷

72. GREVIO has found that most parties that have been evaluated have not put in place a systematic review mechanism for domestic killings. Nevertheless, it has welcomed as a first positive step the commissioning and carrying out of ad hoc reviews of gender-related killings within limited time frames in certain parties, including in France, Moldova,⁴⁸ Norway,⁴⁹ some cantons in Switzerland and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁰ GREVIO has equally welcomed the setting up of a Retrospective Domestic Violence Homicide Analysis Team in its baseline evaluation report on Portugal, which has published review reports into the deaths of women, as well as the publication of reports on femicide monitoring in Georgia.⁵¹ As regards France more specifically, GREVIO in its baseline evaluation report welcomed the review of all domestic homicide cases

45. Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 259.

46. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Belgium, paragraph 196; Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 284; Greece, paragraph 276; Iceland, paragraph 274; Ireland, paragraph 274; Italy, paragraph 233.d; Luxembourg, paragraph 197; Malta, paragraph 214; Portugal, paragraph 206; and Switzerland, paragraph 234; and GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on Liechtenstein, paragraph 244 (for attempted killing).

47. See Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 22-26 May 2023, Background paper on Femicide Review Committee, pages 1 and 37. This report defines a domestic homicide review or a domestic violence fatality review as a "multi-agency review process that is conducted following the death of a person as a result of domestic violence" entailing "a systematic examination of the circumstances surrounding the death, to identify what lessons can be learned from them, in order to improve responses to domestic violence and help prevent future deaths".

48. The authorities commissioned a National Analytical Study on Femicide in 2021 examining femicide perpetrated between 2016 and 2019, in order to improve the institutional response to gender-based and domestic violence.

49. The relevant committee reviewed 19 homicide cases where the perpetrator had been a current or former partner and found that in all of them intimate-partner violence preceded the killing of the victim, identifying various shortcomings. This analysis was taken into account when creating the National Action Plan on domestic violence.

50. See GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia-Herzegovina, paragraph 284; France, paragraph 236; Republic of Moldova, paragraph 66; Norway, paragraph 21; and Switzerland, paragraph 232.

51. See the baseline evaluation report on Georgia, paragraph 85; and Portugal, paragraph 205.

committed in 2015 and 2016 for which a final judgment had been reached, commissioned in 2019. Such analysis looked into whether a thorough risk assessment had been carried out repeatedly and a co-ordinated security plan had been established and whether appropriate measures had been applied to protect victims from further violence. It equally assessed whether victims had benefited from or had requested the issuing of a protection order and whether such an order had been breached.

Gender-based violence-related suicides and forced suicides not sufficiently included in homicide reviews

73. Gender-based violence-related suicides and forced suicides of women and girls can also represent a lethal end point for those who are on the receiving end of acts of violence against women. Indeed, as evidenced by the World Health Organization's multicountry study on women's health and domestic violence, violence against women is strongly associated with suicide attempts.⁵² According to studies, 76% of victims of intimate-partner violence have suicidal ideation – a rate that is seven times higher than in non-victims.⁵³ While there are no reliable statistics, studies in France, the United Kingdom and the United States estimate that suicides committed in a context of intimate-partner violence represent 12% of all women's suicides. By way of example, 217 women took their lives as a result of intimate-partner violence in 2018 in France and more than 1 000 across the European Union.⁵⁴ Moreover, studies equally show that experiences of sexual violence account for a significant share of women's increased risk of suicidal ideation.⁵⁵ For this reason, a history of sexual violence should be investigated, when possible, in the event of attempted or completed suicide, in order to better quantify the effect that sexual victimisation has on the suicide risk.⁵⁶

74. While not defined internationally, "gender-based violence-related suicides" or "forced suicides" are understood as suicides committed as a result of or following instances of violence against women and domestic violence⁵⁷ and/or as the ultimate effect of severe and repeated psychological intimate-partner violence.⁵⁸ Equally grave and important to analyse retrospectively are instances in which women or girls are forced or pressured to commit suicide including for reasons linked to "honour". The

52. Devries K., Watts C., Yoshihama M., Kiss L., Schraiber L. B., Deyessa N., Heise L., Durand J., Mbwapo J., Jansen H., Berhane Y., Ellsberg M. and Garcia-Moreno C., World Health Organization Multi-Country Study Team, "Violence against women is strongly associated with suicide attempts: evidence from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women", *Soc Sci Med.* 2011 Jul; 73(1): 79-86. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.05.006. E-pub, 27 May 2011. PMID: 21676510.

53. European Guide on Forced Suicides – Guidance systems for frontline professionals, Henry N. et al.: www.psytel.eu/PSYTEL/psy-documents/Suicides_forces/2022-SF_Eur_Guide_EN3_221228_web.pdf.

54. Ibid.

55. El-Khoury F., Puget M., Leon C., du Roscoat, E., Velter A., Lydié N. and Sitbon A., "Increased risk of suicidal ideation among French women: the mediating effect of lifetime sexual victimisation. Results from the nationally representative 2017 Health Barometer survey".

56. Ibid.

57. European Guide on Forced Suicides – Guidance systems for frontline professionals, Henry N. et al.: www.psytel.eu/PSYTEL/psy-documents/Suicides_forces/2022-SF_Eur_Guide_EN3_221228_web.pdf.

58. "Combating coercive control and psychological violence against women in the EU Member States", European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) refers to such cases as “instigated suicide” and defines them as “the unlawful death of a woman inflicted upon herself after incitement by another person”.⁵⁹

75. GREVIO has not identified, thus far, any party to the Istanbul Convention that examines the above-mentioned suicides in the context of homicide reviews with a view to assessing retrospectively whether preventive measures could and should have been taken.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, in its baseline evaluation report on Türkiye, GREVIO noted with satisfaction that the authorities were planning to conduct research on killings and suspicious suicides of women committed in the name of “honour” within the framework of the National Action Plan on Violence against Women and thus urged the authorities to ensure that suicides, accidents and deaths of women that might disguise killings in the name of “honour” are effectively investigated and prosecuted.⁶¹ Equally worthy of note is the fact that France has criminalised “gender-based violence-related suicide” as an aggravated form of harassment of one’s spouse, civil partner or live-in partner.⁶² Since 2020, such behaviour is liable to 10 years’ imprisonment and a fine of €150 000 where the harassment has led the victim to commit or attempt to commit suicide. It can be argued that the inclusion of completed or attempted suicide in domestic homicide reviews could be seen as a logical next step for a truly comprehensive review of gender-based deaths of women.

Case law of the European Court of Human Rights

76. The European Court of Human Rights has had the opportunity to pronounce itself in several cases on the necessity and requirements of risk assessments in the context of domestic violence.⁶³ Most notably, in its landmark case of *Kurt v. Austria* [GC] the Court established an obligation on the contracting parties to conduct an autonomous, proactive and comprehensive risk assessment when faced with a situation of domestic violence.⁶⁴ The terms “autonomous” and “proactive” in this context refer to the requirement of the authorities to base their assessment not only on the victim’s testimony and own perception of the risk but also on an investigation, initiated *ex officio*. This can include collecting evidence and assessing information obtained from other state agencies, witnesses and other relevant sources on all relevant risk factors. While the Court did not stipulate an absolute requirement to

59. [Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls \(also referred to as “femicide/feminicide”\).](#)

60. Bearing in mind that the United Kingdom had not been monitored by GREVIO in the period under review, the relevant domestic homicide review mechanism does indeed encompass cases of suicide as a consequence of domestic violence. See Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 22-26 May 2023, Background paper on Femicide Review Committee, p. 25.

61. See the GREVIO baseline evaluation report on Türkiye, paragraphs 255 and 256.

62. Notably it qualifies it as “an aggravated form of harassment of one’s spouse, civil partner or live-in partner through repeated comments or behaviour with the aim or effect of degrading their living standards, resulting in an alteration of their physical or mental health”. See Article 222-33-2-1 (Law No. 2020-936 of 30 July 2020), available at: www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/section_lc/LEGITEXT000006070719/LEGISCTA000006165282/#LEGISCTA000047052746.

63. See, for example, *Gaidukevich v. Georgia*, Application No. 38650/18, 15 June 2023; *Landi v. Italy*, Application No. 10929/19, 7 April 2022; *Y and Others v. Bulgaria*, Application No. 9077/18, 22 March 2022; *Tunikova and Others v. Russia*, Application Nos. 55974/16 et al., 14 December 2021.

64. *Kurt v. Austria* [GC], cited above, paragraph 190.

use standardised risk-assessment tools, it underlined, referencing GREVIO's third-party intervention, that their use could contribute to the comprehensiveness of the authorities' risk assessment. Additionally, the Court considered necessary some form of basic documentation of any risk assessment conducted, in the light of the requirement of the often urgent nature of intervention and information sharing between state authorities.⁶⁵

77. When it comes to child victims of domestic violence, including in cases in which they have witnessed violence by one parent against the other, the Court has pointed out that risk assessments must also be conducted in relation to them, bearing in mind the possibility that the outcome of the assessment may be different for each person affected.⁶⁶ Should a risk to children be established, law enforcement must share this information with the child-protection authorities and with persons who are in regular contact with the children, for example teachers, schools and other childcare facilities.⁶⁷ In this respect, the Court explicitly pointed to the requirements under Article 51 of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's third-party intervention.

78. If a real and immediate risk to a victim of domestic violence is detected, the authorities' duty to take preventive operational measures to mitigate and manage the risk is triggered. To that end, the authorities must be equipped with a "toolbox" containing an array of possible legal measures, including, for example, an emergency barring order, the arrest of the perpetrator or other measures that offer immediate protection to the victim. The Court has underlined that preventive operational measures inevitably constitute an interference with the (alleged) perpetrator's rights, which, however, may be necessary in order to protect the life and physical integrity of a victim of domestic violence.⁶⁸ To balance the rights of the different persons involved, any measure taken must be adequate and proportionate to the level of the risk assessed.⁶⁹ In addition, the Court has pointed out that risk-management plans and co-ordinated support services have proved valuable in practice to avert further risks, in addition to treatment options for the perpetrator.⁷⁰

79. Under the Court's jurisprudence, the obligation to conduct a risk assessment is not limited to criminal or administrative law. In the case of *I.M. and Others v. Italy*, where a knowingly violent father killed his son in the course of a supervised visit, the Court severely criticised the Italian authorities for not having assessed the risk to the child at any point in time.⁷¹ In the recent judgment of *Bîzdîga v. the Republic of Moldova*, the Court for the first time explicitly stipulated the requirement to conduct a risk assessment in family law proceedings where allegations of domestic violence have surfaced in the context of custody and visitation right disputes. It held that an assessment of any risks of violence or other forms of ill-treatment, therefore, must form an integral part of such proceedings. In addition, an alleged history of domestic violence is a "relevant and mandatory factor to be weighed in the assessment of domestic

65. *Ibid.*, paragraph 174.

66. *Ibid.*, paragraph 173.

67. *Ibid.*, paragraphs 174 and 180.

68. *Ibid.*, paragraph 183.

69. *Ibid.*, paragraph 190.

70. *Ibid.*, paragraphs 180-181.

71. *I.M. and Others v. Italy*, Application No. 25426/20, 10 November 2022.

authorities when deciding on contact rights”.⁷² The failure to do so led to a violation of Article 8 of the Convention in the case of *Luca v. the Republic of Moldova*.⁷³ In this case, the Court referenced the focus section contained in GREVIO’s 3rd Report on its General Activities, which pointed to information obtained in the course of its evaluation visits that one parent’s abuse of the other was only rarely taken into account when taking decisions on custody and visitation rights. Therefore, a systematic screening and following risk assessments constitute a necessary practice in such proceedings.

The importance of risk assessment in family law proceedings

80. Underscoring the importance of risk assessment at various points in time in a woman’s journey towards a life free from violence, GREVIO has throughout its baseline evaluation procedure continuously emphasised the need for robust risk assessment and screening for a history of domestic violence in family law proceedings. It has repeatedly called for such



screening to include a history of intimate-partner violence by one parent against the other, in order to allow information on the level of threats to the safety and well-being of the non-abusive parent and the child to surface.⁷⁴ Family law professionals must be enabled to consider a history of abuse for decisions on child custody and visitation to ensure the safety of victims and their children.

81. Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention seeks to ensure that incidents of violence covered by the convention, in particular domestic violence, are taken into account in decisions on custody and visitation rights to ensure that the exercise of these rights do not harm the rights and safety of the victim or children. Paragraph 1 aims at ensuring that judicial authorities do not issue contact orders without taking into account incidents of violence against the non-abusive carer as much as against the child itself, while paragraph 2 lays out the obligation to ensure that the exercise of any visitation and custody rights does not jeopardise the rights and safety of the victim and/or children.

82. In its assessment of the level of implementation of Article 31, GREVIO has developed important elements that it deems essential for the full implementation of this provision. Ensuring adequate levels of training of family law professionals on the nature of domestic violence, including psychological violence and post-separation violence, as well as on other forms of violence, features among these elements. Similarly, consultation by family courts of all relevant professionals and statutory agencies to assess the full spectrum of past and ongoing violence is another important element in order to enable family law judges to consider the history of violence when deciding on custody and visitation rights. Of equal relevance is the need to

72. *Bizdiga v. the Republic of Moldova*, Application No. 15646/18, 17 October 2023.

73. *Luca v. the Republic of Moldova*, Application No. 55351/17, 17 October 2023.

74. GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on Germany, paragraph 220; and Poland, paragraph 191.

ensure adequate risk assessment and screening at the level of family law courts. The Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports published in 2021 offers insights into the shortcomings established by GREVIO in this regard.⁷⁵ These were further detailed in the focus section dedicated to the intersection between domestic violence and child custody and visitation rights as contained in its 3rd Report on GREVIO's General Activities published in 2022.⁷⁶

Inadequate risk assessments and screening

83. The shortcomings identified by GREVIO in its baseline evaluation reports mainly pertain to the failure to conduct a risk assessment or screening for domestic violence in cases related to the determination of custody and visitation rights. GREVIO had noted the absence of such screening in relation to France, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Portugal and San Marino.⁷⁷ It had also found that judges did not conduct risk assessments or ask for the disclosure of the risk assessment and safety plans drawn up by law-enforcement agencies and/or other competent authorities with a view to taking them into account when establishing the best interests of the child.⁷⁸ Since then, GREVIO has identified similar shortcomings in its baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Slovenia.⁷⁹ Similarly, the need to increase the level of consultation and co-operation across various statutory agencies was raised by GREVIO in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg and Norway, among others.⁸⁰

Risks to women and children overlooked or minimised in family law settings

84. The inadequacy or inexistence of formalised procedures in place to identify risks women and children face from an abuser is compounded by the frequent positioning of mothers as “alienating” the other parent or as being “un-co-operative”. This is particularly the case where they raise before the competent courts a perpetrators’ past or ongoing abusive behaviour or seek sole custody of children after separation from their abusive spouse. GREVIO has revealed the use of such notions and labels in nearly all parties under evaluation and has pointed to the impact this has: minimising evidence of domestic violence and masking the level of risk women and children

75. Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, paragraphs 324-338.

76. 3rd General Report on GREVIO's Activities, covering the period from January to December 2021, paragraphs 67-85.

77. GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on France, paragraph 182; Italy, paragraph 187; Montenegro, paragraph 165; the Netherlands, paragraphs 200-202; and Portugal, paragraph 160.

78. GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Denmark, paragraph 161; Italy, paragraph 186; Montenegro, paragraph 165; the Netherlands, paragraph 204; and Portugal, paragraph 160.

79. GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 195; Croatia, paragraph 196; Estonia, paragraph 158; Germany, paragraph 229; Greece, paragraph 197; Iceland, paragraph 189; Ireland, paragraph 194; Norway, paragraph 164; and Slovenia, paragraph 236.

80. GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, paragraph 192; Croatia, paragraph 196; Cyprus, paragraph 177; Ireland, paragraph 194; Luxembourg, paragraph 138; Norway, paragraph 164.

are exposed to.⁸¹ In many of its baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO has found these notions to be “invoked without a proper understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence against women and its effects on children”, and “in the absence of a thorough risk assessment and case-by-case examination”. In several of its reports, it found the application of such concepts, including the scientifically unfounded concept of “parental alienation syndrome” to downplay the level of abuse, to disregard the gender-based nature of domestic violence and to ignore essential aspects of child welfare in Andorra, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania and Spain.⁸² For this reason, GREVIO has repeatedly voiced grave concern over the use of such concepts and has pointed repeatedly to its lacking scientific foundation. It consistently refers to the statement of December 2017 by the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP), which draws attention to the fact that the concepts of “parental alienation syndrome” (PAS) and “parental alienation” (PA) are unsuitable for use in any psychotherapeutic practice. Similarly, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, has pointed to the harmful impact recourse to such scientifically unfounded concepts as “parental alienation” lead to.⁸³

85. Numerous baseline evaluation reports call on the authorities to ensure wider levels of training on patterns of domestic violence, concepts of coercive control, manipulation and abuse, including psychological violence, which may also involve the use of technology or may be perpetrated online. Separation from an abusive partner will often increase not lower the risk to children, which is why dynamic risk-assessment procedures and screening, including within family law proceedings, is crucial. Understanding the level of risk for women and children who leave abusive situations, including situations of psychological abuse, is vital for adequate decision making in proceedings on custody and visitation rights. Research is increasingly pointing to child custody and visitation proceedings as an arena for continued abuse after separation, often taking the form of malicious litigation.⁸⁴ Such proceedings and subsequent visitation rights may also result in the potential targeting of children, which family law professionals need to be aware of. For these reasons, GREVIO frequently points to the need for a more thorough understanding of how post-separation abuse manifests itself in family law proceedings concerning custody and visitation rights. Robust screening and risk-assessment procedures are thus vital for the Istanbul Convention’s premise of safety first to develop its potential.

81. Third General Report on GREVIO’s Activities, paragraph 79.

82. GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports on Andorra, paragraph 149; Belgium, paragraph 146; Croatia, paragraph 193; Cyprus, paragraph 176; Estonia, paragraph 157; France, paragraph 181; Germany, paragraph 227; Greece, paragraphs 194-197; Iceland, paragraph 185; Ireland, paragraph 189; Italy, paragraphs 182 and 185; Luxembourg, paragraph 140; Poland, paragraphs 188-190; Romania, paragraph 256; and Spain, paragraphs 200-201.

83. A/HRC/53/36, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, Its Causes and Consequences – Custody, Violence against Women and Violence against Children” (2023), paragraph. 15.

84. Gutowski E. R. and Goodman L. A., “Coercive Control in the Courtroom: the Legal Abuse Scale (LAS)”, *Journal of Family Violence* 38, No. 3 (April 2023): 527-42, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-022-00408-3>.



Iris Luarasi, outgoing GREVIO President, 14th meeting of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention, Strasbourg, France, 1 June 2023

Relations with the Committee of the Parties

86. The Committee of the Parties and GREVIO represent the two pillars of the monitoring system set up by the Istanbul Convention. In 2023, the close relationship between the two bodies continued under the committee's former president, Marie Fontanel, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe, and Tania Gonggrijp, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Council of Europe, who was elected president of the committee on 26 September 2023.

87. In accordance with Article 68, paragraph 12, the Committee of the Parties may, on the basis of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports and conclusions, issue recommendations to parties, thus ensuring the equal participation of all the parties in the monitoring procedure of the convention, strengthening co-operation among parties and between them and GREVIO to ensure the proper and effective implementation of the convention. In 2023, six GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, on Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, were transmitted by GREVIO to the Committee of the Parties and considered at the committee's 15th meeting (on 5 December 2023). As per the committee's standard approach, it recommended that the respective governments take immediate action in respect of

certain findings made by GREVIO in its baseline evaluation report. It further requested them to report to the Committee of the Parties, within three years, on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the convention in those areas and to take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report. Several delegations highlighted the fruitful co-operation between GREVIO and national authorities in the process of evaluation.

88. Moreover, under Rule 26 of GREVIO's internal rules of procedure, the President of GREVIO may periodically meet with the Committee of the Parties to inform it about its work, as well as about any other issue relating to the good functioning of the monitoring mechanism of the convention. During the period covered by this report, two such exchanges of views were held. On 1 June 2023, Iris Luarasi, the outgoing GREVIO President (whose mandate expired on 31 May 2023), informed the committee about the adoption of three new baseline evaluation reports and about forthcoming country visits in the framework of the new thematic evaluation procedure. On 5 December 2023, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, the newly elected GREVIO President, informed the committee about the near completion of GREVIO's baseline evaluation procedure, with 36 evaluation reports adopted and published by the end of 2023. She also referred to the launch of GREVIO's first thematic evaluation round in 2023 and presented some of the main features of GREVIO's 4th General Report of Activities (published in September 2023) highlighting the general report's focus section addressing legal and policy changes on the criminalisation and prosecution of sexual violence.

89. Furthermore, the President of GREVIO launched a discussion with the committee on the implementation of Article 79, paragraph 3, of the convention on reservations. She underlined the need for parties to provide GREVIO with an explanation of the reasons for the renewal of a reservation upon the expiry of the five-year period of validity. She also called on all parties to work together in the promotion of the Istanbul Convention, inside and outside Europe.



GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou at the Ministers' Deputies meeting in Strasbourg, France, on 25 November 2023

Co-operation with other Council of Europe bodies and institutions

Committee of Ministers

90. In 2023, GREVIO continued its fruitful co-operation with the Committee of Ministers with a view to furthering the common goal of strengthening the impact of the Istanbul Convention.

91. An example of engagement with the Committee of Ministers is the annual exchange of views that took place between the GREVIO President and the Committee of Ministers on 25 November 2023. During this exchange, GREVIO President Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou informed the Committee of Ministers of recent developments involving GREVIO, including the publication of GREVIO's 4th General Report of Activities, which contained a focus section on legal and policy changes in the criminalisation and prosecution of rape and sexual violence. She underlined the promising trend – which often came as a result of the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention or GREVIO's monitoring reports – of parties moving away from a legal definition of sexual violence requiring the use of force or coercion and towards an approach criminalising all non-consensual sexual acts as required by Article 36 of the convention.

92. Moreover, the GREVIO President pointed out that the baseline evaluation procedure would soon be coming to an end, to be followed by GREVIO's first thematic evaluation procedure on the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice". Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou explained that the newly adopted questionnaire for this round aimed to identify developments since the first baseline evaluation in key areas such as comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection and on select provisions of the convention that seek to ensure a victim-centred, empowering and supportive framework to respond adequately to all forms of violence against women. In relation to the Reykjavik Declaration, adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in May 2023, the GREVIO President reaffirmed to the Committee of Ministers that GREVIO was ready to co-operate with the Gender Equality Commission and the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) to develop a draft Committee of Ministers recommendation on technology-facilitated violence against women that is fully in line with the high standards of the Istanbul Convention, a message she reiterated at her exchange with the Gender Equality Commission. Last, the GREVIO President welcomed the fact that the European Union had acceded to the Istanbul Convention in June 2023, thereby sending a strong political message and adhering to the highest available legal standards in the area of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

93. In this regard, it is commendable that the President of the Committee of Ministers, Dominique Hasler, joined the statement by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the occasion of 25 November 2023, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The statement highlighted GREVIO's findings from its monitoring, such as new measures being introduced in parties to the convention prohibiting perpetrators of domestic violence from approaching their victims, the reinforcement of specialist support services and amendments to criminal laws on rape being passed, allowing for the prosecution of cases that otherwise could not be pursued.

Parliamentary Assembly

94. Throughout 2023, GREVIO engaged with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in various ways, consolidating its long-standing co-operation. On 13 March 2023, for example, GREVIO President Iris Luarasi participated in a peer seminar organised by the Assembly in London. The seminar was held at the Palace of Westminster in London for Assembly members to exchange their experiences of monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, a role accorded to them under Article 70 of the convention. They also shared their knowledge on the evaluation procedure and held an exchange of views with NGOs active in supporting women and girl victims of violence in the UK. While the President of GREVIO addressed the role of national parliaments from the ratification to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, Carolina Lasén Diaz, the Executive Secretary of the Istanbul Convention, provided an overview of the various opportunities for parliaments to engage in the monitoring of the implementation of the convention, including by interacting with GREVIO. Meetings with representatives of national parliaments is a feature of many evaluation visits of GREVIO, offering fruitful and instructive insights.

95. The Assembly further undertook several initiatives to highlight the important role of the Istanbul Convention in preventing and combating violence against women. At its January 2023 session, the Assembly adopted Resolution 2479 (2023) “The Istanbul Convention: progress and challenges” emphasising the positive impact of the convention on its parties, but also pointing out the challenges that need to be addressed, such as the persistently high number of instances of violence and femicide and the spreading of deliberate misrepresentations of the convention’s objectives. In the corresponding recommendation, the Assembly called on the Committee of Ministers to promote ratification of the Istanbul Convention in those Council of Europe member states that have not yet done so, and to promote feminist foreign policy as a means of ensuring more representative and inclusive policy making on violence against women. The Assembly further proposed an Organisation-wide awareness-raising campaign on the aims and impact of the Istanbul Convention and its contribution to women’s rights and gender equality in Europe.

96. On the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Parliamentary Assembly President Tiny Kox issued a statement emphasising that “men and boys must ... be key players to ensure gender equality and the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls”. The Assembly’s General Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Etilda Gjonaj, added that in order to effectively combat violence against women, the patriarchal mindset that perpetuates and normalises unequal power dynamics must be changed, which she saw as a core challenge to gender equality.



Assembly’s General Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Etilda Gjonaj, 31st GREVIO meeting, Strasbourg, France, October 2023

97. Last, on International Human Rights Day (10 December 2023), the Assembly published a series of video messages by a number of politicians and members of the Parliamentary Assembly, sending a strong message of support for continuous action against violence against women.

Commissioner for Human Rights

98. In 2023, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, continued to actively address issues pertaining to violence against women as one of her priority areas of work. In doing so, she extensively referred to GREVIO’s work, in particular in her country reports focusing on this topic, notably on Serbia, the Czech Republic and Italy. She also continued to encourage further ratifications of the Istanbul Convention. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2023, she called on states to step up measures to prevent violence against women and to follow GREVIO’s guidance in this respect. Interaction with the Commissioner for Human Rights and her office have remained a key element in amplifying GREVIO’s findings, as in previous years.

European Court of Human Rights

99. Since its entry into force, the Istanbul Convention has provided new international law standards that can serve as guidance to the European Court of Human Rights (the “Court”) when issuing judgments related to member states’ legal obligations to prevent and prosecute violence against women, including domestic violence, and to protect victims. GREVIO’s past activity reports have systematically referenced these, tracing the increasing variety of thematic areas within the wider field of violence against women as covered in the case law of the Court.



100. In several judgments concerning violence against women and domestic violence delivered in 2023 (*Vučković v. Croatia*, Application No. 15798/20, 12 December 2023; *Bizdîga v. the Republic of Moldova*, Application No. 15646/18, and *Luca v. the Republic of Moldova*, Application No. 55351/17, both 17 October 2023; *Giuliano Germano v. Italy*, Application No. 10794/12, 22 June 2023; *Gaidukevich v. Georgia*, Application No. 38650/18, 15 June 2023; and *A.E. v. Bulgaria*, Application No. 53891/20, 23 May 2023), the Court addressed the issue of domestic violence and child custody decisions, frequently referring to the Istanbul Convention and/or GREVIO baseline evaluation reports. For example, in the case of *Bizdîga v. the Republic of Moldova*, the Court held that in proceedings concerning child custody and visitation rights, an alleged history of domestic violence was a relevant and even mandatory factor to be weighed in the assessment of domestic authorities when deciding on contact rights, referencing Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention. In the same vein, in the case of *Luca v. the Republic of Moldova*, the Court found a violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights on account of the failure of the Moldovan authorities to take into account incidents of domestic violence in the determination of the applicant’s child contact rights.

101. In the case of *Vučković v. Croatia*, a man convicted of sexual violence against the applicant had received a lenient sentence of community service. The Court considered the lack of consideration of the consequences of the sexual violence for the victim in the sentencing a violation of her rights under Articles 3 and 8 of the Convention. It pointed to GREVIO’s findings in the baseline evaluation report on Croatia, which had attested to the leniency of the authorities’ penal policy in dealing with violence against women.

102. The European Convention on Human Rights and the Court’s jurisprudence remain an important source for GREVIO’s work, and its baseline evaluation reports contain numerous references thereto. GREVIO baseline evaluation reports on Croatia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and North Macedonia, for example, reminded states of their obligations under the Convention, pointing to the Court’s findings in the landmark judgment in the case of *Kurt v. Austria* [GC] (Application No. 62903/15, 15 June 2021). In view of this cross-fertilisation between the two conventions, in 2023 GREVIO continued its close co-operation with the European Court of Human Rights, including through an exchange of views with the Court’s President Siofra O’Leary.



24th plenary meeting of the Gender Equality Commission, Strasbourg, France, 16 November 2023

Gender Equality Commission

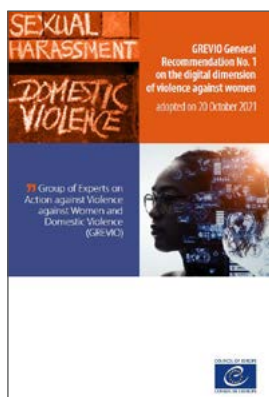
103. Synergies and co-operation between GREVIO and the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), and their respective secretariats, continued and were further strengthened throughout 2023.

104. On 28 April 2023, the President of GREVIO spoke at the GEC Annual Conference, which focused on “Men and boys in gender equality policies” and which was co-organised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, in the framework of the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. Speaking about the role of men and boys in combating violence against women, she emphasised their involvement as crucial to eradicate male violence against women. The need to challenge patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes and to address rigid notions of masculinity and femininity, which contribute to the acceptance of violence, were also discussed. The GREVIO President welcomed the Council of Europe “Guidelines on the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women”,⁸⁵ prepared by the GEC and presented at the conference, inviting all member states to urgently apply the 12 measures listed in the guidelines to strengthen the role of men and boys to prevent and combat violence against women.

105. Furthermore, the practice of holding regular exchanges of views between GREVIO and the GEC was continued throughout 2023 with a view to ensuring appropriate links between standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation activities, both in the wider field of achieving gender equality and in the area of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. On 24 May 2023, then GREVIO President Iris Luarasi held her last exchange of views with the GEC, as the mandate of 10 GREVIO members, including hers, would expire on 31 May 2023, and the Committee of the Parties would elect 10 members of GREVIO on 1 June 2023. She informed the GEC that seven new evaluation reports would be published in

85. Available at: www.coe.int/en/web/democracy-and-human-dignity/-/the-place-of-men-and-boys-in-gender-equality-policies-council-of-europe-guidelines-adopted#:~:text=The%20Guidelines%20detail%20the%20range,on%20men%20and%20boys%3B%20to.

2023, while at the same time the first thematic evaluation round had been launched, focusing on the theme of “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice”. The newly adopted questionnaire for this thematic evaluation round had been sent to the first four parties, Albania, Austria, Denmark and Monaco, with visits planned to these parties in the autumn. She further informed the GEC that GREVIO was increasingly addressing, in its evaluation reports, the situation of women fleeing Ukraine following Russia’s aggression, as many of the convention’s provisions were relevant to Ukrainian women having moved to European countries party to the convention. The President of GREVIO also informed GEC members about the adoption of the 4th General Report of Activities of GREVIO.



106. On 16 November 2023, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou held her first exchange of views with the GEC in her capacity as the new GREVIO President. She highlighted that the baseline evaluation procedure was getting close to completion, and she welcomed the inclusion in the new Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy for 2024-2029, soon to be formally adopted, of a specific objective on violence against women. She welcomed in particular the continuation of efforts to promote the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the support for its implementation, in keeping with the approach of the previous strategies. The GREVIO President also expressed her appreciation for the regular updates at GREVIO meetings on co-operation activities carried out by the Co-operation

Unit. She also underlined the importance of implementing the Reykjavik Declaration adopted at the 4th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in May 2023. In view of GREVIO’s expertise developed on the digital dimension of violence against women, as demonstrated in its General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, she expressed, in the name of GREVIO, its keen interest to contribute to the upcoming work to be carried out jointly by the GEC and the Council of Europe Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) on new standards on “combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls”.

The Co-operation Unit of the Gender Equality Division

107. Under the Council of Europe co-operation project “Combating digital and sexual violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (June 2023 to December 2024), run by the Co-operation Unit of the Gender Equality Division, several activities were carried out referencing and promoting GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on Bosnia and Herzegovina and its General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women.

108. The GREVIO Secretariat provided input to the first meeting of the government’s working group on how to enhance the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and ensure its consistent implementation, and participated in a seminar in December 2023 that brought together Bosnian state policy makers, members of the judiciary and law-enforcement authorities around

the theme of combating digital and sexual violence against women. Further interventions by independent international experts and the media organisation Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) enabled the participants to discuss different aspects of online and technology-facilitated violence against women and learn from international good practices. It drew the authorities' attention to the recommendations issued by the Committee of the Parties in 2023 as both documents offer tailor-made guidance and a road map to address the existing shortcomings in policies, legislation and practices in the area of violence against women.

109. In the framework of the Council of Europe project "Aligning laws and policies with the Istanbul Convention", run by the by the Co-operation Unit of the Gender Equality Division, the Secretariat gave presentations on several aspects of the Istanbul Convention to a group of judges and lawyers from the Kosovo* Constitutional Court on 18 and 19 December 2023.

110. Members of the Secretariat equally participated in various events organised by the Co-operation Unit of the Gender Equality Division, most notably as part of the meetings of the SYNERGY Network against Gender-based Violence established by the EEA and Norway Grants. The thematic focus ranged from the access of Roma women to justice following experiences of gender-based violence to avenues for action against sexual violence under the Istanbul Convention.

111. In the framework of the COVAW II Project on Violence against Women in Ukraine, exchanges were held on projects aimed at preparing GREVIO's baseline evaluation of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention by Ukraine.

Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)



112. At its 30th meeting, GREVIO welcomed Helga Gayer, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), as part of the regular and ongoing exchanges of views between the two independent monitoring bodies. She emphasised the cross-fertilisation between the work of GRETA and GREVIO and shared GRETA's experience accrued from three rounds of evaluations. As GRETA was moving into its fourth successive monitoring round, each time focusing on a specific theme, the added value of thematic evaluation rounds was discussed between the two monitoring bodies, as were ways of ensuring continued support and buy-in to the work of independent human rights monitoring bodies by its parties. In this context, the GRETA President underlined the importance of following up on the findings made through round tables, high-level meetings or other ways of engaging with parties. This approach was considered to be in line with the constructive dialogue GREVIO seeks to engage in with its respective parties. The two bodies further discussed lessons to be drawn from organising successive monitoring rounds – a process that GREVIO has just set in motion with the launch of its first thematic evaluation round under the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice".

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child

113. Throughout the year 2023, GREVIO continued its close co-operation with the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), in particular its subordinate bodies, the Committee of Experts on the rights and best interests of the child in the context of parental separation and in care proceedings (CJ/ENF-ISE) and the Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE). In this respect, GREVIO provided input to the preliminary draft recommendation on the best interests of the child in parental separation situations developed by the CJ/ENF-ISE as well as its explanatory memorandum. Input covered in particular issues such as the use of alternative dispute resolution procedures in domestic violence cases and the distinction between high conflict and domestic violence in parental separation cases.

114. GREVIO also followed the work of the newly established Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence (ENF-VAE), which is mandated to develop a non-binding instrument on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education to strengthen, *inter alia*, efforts to prevent and combat violence against children, including sexual violence and harmful behaviour. GREVIO and its Secretariat participated in the committee's meetings and provided input on the draft Feasibility Study on Age-appropriate Sexuality Education with a view to ensuring the compliance of the committee's work with the standards of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's findings.

Cybercrime Division

115. Since the publication of its General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, GREVIO has been enjoying increased co-operation with the Cybercrime Division, which continued in 2023. In this respect, GREVIO member María Rún Bjarnadóttir participated in the annual Octopus Conference, which took place in Bucharest, Romania from 13 to 15 December 2023. One of the thematic focuses of the conference was the collection and storing of electronic evidence. María Rún Bjarnadóttir's contribution demonstrated how the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women can be utilised to enhance the effectiveness of the Cybercrime Convention and its second protocol on e-evidence.

Committee on Artificial Intelligence of the Council of Europe (CAI)

116. In the course of 2023, GREVIO and its Secretariat participated in several meetings of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence of the Council of Europe (CAI), which has been working on the preparation of a draft Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. At these meetings, an effort was made to include the perspective of women and girl victims of gender-based violence in the preparation of the upcoming regulation on the use of AI. Bringing this perspective to discussions on new legal standards in this field is vital against the backdrop of AI increasingly being used to exacerbate, or even create new ways to perpetrate, violence against women through digital means.



Co-operation with civil society and national institutions for the protection of human rights

Role of NGOs and civil society, including national human rights institutions

117. Civil society has long played a very important role in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Their involvement includes advocacy, awareness raising and delivering essential services, which complement the efforts of state authorities. These services are crucial for women who have experienced violence, and civil society organisations have accumulated valuable expertise through their long-standing work. The Istanbul Convention, particularly its Article 9, recognises the importance of involving NGOs in all efforts to end violence against women and domestic violence on a national and international level. It also provides a framework for civil society and national human rights institutions to participate in and contribute to the monitoring work of GREVIO.

118. The number of civil society organisations participating in GREVIO's work has grown significantly over the years, which is evidenced by the number of consolidated reports submitted to GREVIO concerning the Istanbul Convention. In the course of the baseline evaluations that took place in the period under review, a significant number of relevant reports from NGOs were received. For example, during the baseline evaluations of Greece and Ireland, five and nine shadow reports, respectively, were received from national civil society bodies, some of which were submitted under the auspices of umbrella organisations or coalitions. NGOs dedicated to addressing the needs of women who are, or may be, exposed to intersectional discrimination have also demonstrated a keen interest in participating in GREVIO's work. Notably, during the baseline evaluations conducted within the reporting period, a number of NGOs focusing on intersex women (in Greece and Ireland) and women with disabilities (in Ireland) proactively submitted written contributions to GREVIO. This positive trend also continued in the first thematic evaluation round, which was launched in 2023. During its evaluations of Denmark, Austria and Albania, GREVIO received a large number of contributions from civil society organisations, indicating a sustained interest in GREVIO's monitoring process. Civil society organisations, including organisations providing specialist services for women victims, are also regularly consulted during GREVIO's on-site visits.

119. GREVIO continues to recognise the need to exchange in depth with national human rights institutions, including ombudspersons and other national human rights bodies. As key stakeholders, they are consistently invited to participate in GREVIO's evaluation process, including by submitting shadow reports and attending meeting and round tables during country visits. In this respect, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the National Human Rights Institution of the Republic of Moldova submitted written contributions during GREVIO's baseline evaluation of the respective countries.

120. Apart from national NGOs and umbrella organisations, GREVIO has established regular and enduring co-operation with international coalitions and networks in its evaluation work, who have an essential role to play in mobilising local organisations to better address the relevant issues. GREVIO also benefits from knowledge and expertise generated by international umbrella organisations in thematic areas. A notable example of this collaboration took place during GREVIO's 31st meeting in October 2023, where GREVIO had an exchange of views with Ms Pirkko Mahlamäki, the Chair of the European Disability Forum (EDF) Women's Committee. The discussions revolved around the challenges faced by victims of violence against women with disabilities and the measures of protection needed to address to their specific needs.

GREVIO's findings on state recognition of and support for NGOs and civil society

121. The importance of involving civil society, including in particular NGOs, in the design and implementation of policies and measures to combat violence against women is explicitly recognised in Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention. In its baseline evaluation procedure, GREVIO therefore systematically assessed whether parties to the convention honour this obligation. GREVIO has emphasised the need for parties to adopt an inclusive approach towards NGOs and to conduct a systematic

consultation process with them about preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

122. In the seven final reports on parties' evaluations adopted in 2023, GREVIO noted several good practices in terms of recognising the work of NGOs as well as facilitating their participation in policy making. In North Macedonia for example, GREVIO commended the fact that NGOs had been involved in the drafting of the Law on Violence against Women and other key legal instruments and policies, and that representatives from three NGOs have been included in the national co-ordinating body. Similarly, GREVIO positively noted the inclusion of two representatives of women's rights organisations in the Greek National Council for Gender Equality, an institutionalised forum that meets twice a year. In Moldova, the co-operation of state bodies with NGOs is even a legal requirement. On the flipside, GREVIO emphasised in several of its evaluation reports that while the expertise of NGOs was recognised by governments and sometimes tapped into on an ad hoc basis, an institutionalised mechanism for their consultation on a regular basis was often lacking. Further, GREVIO noted with concern in a number of reports adopted in 2023 that the state funding allocated to NGOs, in particular for the provision of services to victims, is often insufficient.

123. It should be noted that Article 9 does not form part of the first thematic evaluation procedure that was launched in 2023. However, GREVIO could still pronounce findings on the support of and co-operation with NGOs in parties if it finds that there is a particular trend in this regard, in particular in relation to funding of civil society organisations.



Aleid van den Brink, first Vice-President of GREVIO, Taiwan, 12-13 September, 2023 Asian conference of women's shelters – tackling online and technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Asia



Co-operation with international organisations

124. Since its inception, GREVIO has engaged in co-operation with international organisations, intergovernmental structures and international and regional monitoring bodies that operate in the area of violence against women.

United Nations

125. Throughout 2023, GREVIO pursued its exchanges with several UN entities and mandates, in particular in the context of the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (see below).

126. In March, GREVIO's President represented GREVIO at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, during which she also held meetings with Premila Patten, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and with Jane Frances Connors, UN Victims' Rights Advocate. On 23 June, GREVIO's incoming President, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, participated online in a side event to the Human Rights Council session, organised by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, following the presentation of her report on custody cases and violence against women and children. In her presentation, she highlighted GREVIO's extensive findings regarding custody, visitation rights and safety made in the context of its assessment of the implementation of Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention.

127. Interest in the Istanbul Convention and the monitoring work carried out by GREVIO was also expressed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which requested a presentation from the Secretariat at the Third Thematic Discussion of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration in September 2023. This was followed by exchanges held between the Secretariat and a delegation of representatives of UN Women (Regional Office for Western and Central Africa) and of the Economic Community of Central African States on the Istanbul Convention, held on 31 October 2023 in the context of the preparation of a regional instrument on violence against women in Africa.

128. Regular exchanges with UNHCR have also continued in 2023 on issues pertaining to violence against asylum-seeking and refugee women. On 2 March 2023, the Secretariat participated in a round table held in Madrid on the protection of asylum seekers and refugees with specific needs, jointly organised by UNHCR and the Council of Europe.

Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform)

129. The Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform) gathers seven United Nations and regional independent expert mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights operating at the international and regional levels. It aims to strengthen institutional co-operation between the mechanisms with a view to undertaking joint action to harmonise and improve the implementation of the existing international legal and policy frameworks on violence against women.

130. Following its decision to introduce a rotating presidency from among its members, the GREVIO President became the first-ever president of the platform, chairing its meetings and setting the agenda for one year from 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023. As agreed by the EDVAW Platform, GREVIO's mandate focused on the digital dimension of violence against women at the global level, leading to the publication of the platform's first thematic paper, adopted in English in 2022. This publication, entitled "The digital dimension of violence against women as addressed by the seven mechanisms of the EDVAW Platform", was made available in French in 2023.⁸⁶

131. By unanimous decision, the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls took over the platform's presidency as of 1 February 2023. At the suggestion of its chair, Dorothy Estrada-Tanck, the EDVAW Platform issued a joint statement on the occasion of International Women's Day entitled "A new sense of urgency: global and regional women's human rights experts call on all actors to unite to preserve hard-fought gains and combat rollbacks".⁸⁷ It also issued a joint statement on the International Day of the Girl Child, drawing attention to the need for inclusive digital spaces for girls' activism free from online harassment and violence, so that girls' potential, well-being and prosperity can be attained.⁸⁸ On the occasion of International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the EDVAW Platform joined a call to action for greater investment in measures to prevent violence against women and girls, issued by nine UN entities.⁸⁹

86. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/la-dimension-numerique-de-la-violence-a-l-egard-des-femmes-abordee-par/1680aafc8c>.

87. Available at: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/-/experts-call-for-united-efforts-to-preserve-hard-fought-gains-for-women-s-rights-international-women-s-day.

88. Available at: www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/newsroom/-/asset_publisher/anlnZ5mw6yX/content/experts-call-for-safe-and-inclusive-digital-spaces-free-from-online-violence-and-harassment-so-that-girls-potential-well-being-and-prosperity-can-be-attained-international-day-of-the-girl-child.

89. Available at: www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/statement/2023/11/statement-call-to-action-unite-invest-to-prevent-violence-against-women-and-girls.

132. In a bid to engage directly with civil society organisations from around the globe and as per its nascent tradition, the EDVAW Platform held an online briefing for NGOs on 28 February 2023, the eve of 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Under the heading of “Awareness-raising briefing for civil society organisations on the use of regional and UN human rights mechanisms to tackle violence and discrimination against women and girls”, the GREVIO President and the Executive Secretary to the Istanbul Convention presented the main features of the convention and its monitoring mechanism, including ways for civil society to interact and engage with GREVIO. More than 300 participants connected to this online event, most of whom came from outside the European region, representing an important opportunity to raise awareness of the Istanbul Convention beyond NGOs active in Council of Europe member states.

European Union

133. Following the EU's signature of the Istanbul Convention in 2017, it acceded to the convention by depositing two instruments of approval on 28 June 2023, triggering the entry into force of the convention for the EU on 1 October 2023. On that date, the EU became the 38th party to the Istanbul Convention, representing a significant development as it binds the EU henceforth to the highest standards in the fight against violence against women. Accession to the Istanbul Convention allows the EU to benefit from multilateral exchanges within the Committee of the Parties, as well as from the external assessment of the progress made and the expert guidance provided by GREVIO in the framework of its evaluation procedure carried out in accordance with Article 66, paragraph 1, of the convention. Following the ratification of the EU, GREVIO decided at its 31st meeting to establish a working group on GREVIO's future EU evaluation to reflect on and discuss the means and procedures for future evaluations.

134. During the reporting period, GREVIO and its Secretariat maintained regular contact with the European Commission and the EU Parliament, as well as with various EU agencies, including the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality, including in relation to developments on the proposed directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted on 8 March 2022.

135. Deepening its synergies with the FRA, GREVIO held an exchange of views with Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the FRA at its 29th meeting, in which he expressed appreciation for the use that GREVIO makes of relevant FRA data and related surveys. He informed the Group of Experts that a number of surveys were under preparation, touching upon intersectionality and violence against women and referred to the EU's Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS), which brings together data and information from a number of human rights sources and bodies with findings on EU member states, including GREVIO's monitoring reports.



Concluding remarks

136. GREVIO's activities and the developments in relation to the Istanbul Convention detailed by this 5th activity report demonstrate the continuous importance for the European region of legally binding standards on violence against women and domestic violence. This is reflected in the growing synergies and requests for co-operation made to GREVIO and by the ongoing efforts made in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, as evidenced by GREVIO's growing corpus of baseline evaluation reports. The year 2023 brought the number of published baseline evaluation reports to 36. This means a large number of Council of Europe member states have received a detailed assessment of their legislation and policy, including their practical implementation, in the area of violence against women and domestic violence. This comprehensive stocktaking exercise has revealed much progress in the implementation of the comprehensive set of measures provided for by the Istanbul Convention. At the same time, it has helped to focus attention on the shortcomings that prevail.

137. The first thematic evaluation procedure will shed further light on those aspects of the Istanbul Convention that require renewed attention in order to build a system that is responsive to the needs of women and girls who experience violence against women and domestic violence. The theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice" was chosen to assess the extent to which parties to the convention have achieved the victim-centred approach that runs through the Istanbul Convention, by providing support to victims of any form of violence,

protection from further abuse, including for their children, and the ability to obtain justice for the abuse endured. The first set of evaluation visits carried out under this theme will show the extent to which this promise of the Istanbul Convention has been made a reality. This theme-based evaluation will allow GREVIO to focus on any differences in experiences for women faced with intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of migrant status, disability, race, ethnic origin or minority status, sexual orientation, gender identity and many more. It will also allow GREVIO to deepen its interlinkages with the monitoring work carried out by the Committee of the Parties. As the number of GREVIO baseline evaluations grow and against the backdrop of its imminent thematic evaluation reports, the Committee of the Parties has been supervising the implementation of the recommendations it systematically issues on the basis of GREVIO's findings. The outcome of this supervision process is a precious source of information for GREVIO. Together, this two-tiered monitoring mechanism serves the wider aim of continually increasing the level of compliance with the Istanbul Convention.

138. The EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention only reinforces the relevance of this monitoring mechanism. As a supra-national organisation, it will undergo evaluation by GREVIO and subsequently the Committee of the Parties, creating new opportunities for the harmonisation of standards and practices to prevent and combat violence against women in Europe on the basis of the Istanbul Convention.

Appendix 1 – List of GREVIO activities between January and December 2023

GREVIO meetings

- ▶ 29th GREVIO meeting - Strasbourg, 6-9 February 2023
- ▶ 30th GREVIO meeting - Strasbourg, 23-26 May 2023
- ▶ *Ad hoc* GREVIO meeting - Paris, 19-20 June 2023
- ▶ 31st GREVIO meeting - Strasbourg, 23-26 October 2023

GREVIO's first baseline evaluation reports (in order of publication)

- ▶ **Luxembourg** adopted during the 30th GREVIO meeting on 26 May and published on 10 July 2023
- ▶ **Croatia** adopted during the 30th GREVIO meeting on 26 May and published on 6 September 2023
- ▶ **North Macedonia** adopted during the 30th GREVIO meeting on 26 May and published on 7 September 2023
- ▶ **Ireland** adopted during the 31st GREVIO meeting on 26 October and published on 14 November 2023
- ▶ **Greece** adopted during the 31st GREVIO meeting on 26 October and published on 14 November 2023
- ▶ **Republic of Moldova** adopted during the 31st GREVIO meeting on 26 October and published on 14 November 2023
- ▶ **Liechtenstein** adopted during the 31st GREVIO meeting on 26 October and published on 4 December 2023

Evaluation visits

Baseline evaluation visits

- ▶ Republic of Moldova from 30 January to 3 February 2023
- ▶ Ireland from 30 January to 3 February 2023
- ▶ Liechtenstein from 14 to 17 February 2023
- ▶ Greece from 18 to 24 February 2023

First thematic evaluation visits – Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice

- ▶ Denmark from 18 to 22 September 2023
- ▶ Austria from 2 to 6 October 2023
- ▶ Albania from 2 to 6 October 2023
- ▶ Monaco from 2 to 5 October 2023

Appendix 2 – Timeline of GREVIO’s evaluation procedure (2016-2024)

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports
Austria Monaco	March 2016	September 2016	November 2016 December 2016	September 2017
Albania Denmark	September 2016	January 2017	April 2017 May 2017	November 2017
Montenegro Türkiye***	January 2017	May 2017	November 2017	September 2018
Portugal Sweden	May 2017	September 2017	February 2018 March 2018	January 2019
Finland France	November 2017	March 2018	October 2018	September 2019 December 2019
Italy Netherlands Serbia	February 2018	June 2018	March 2019	January 2020
Spain Belgium	September 2018	February 2019	October 2019	November 2020** September 2020
Andorra Malta	September 2018	February	February 2020	November 2020
Poland San Marino Slovenia	February 2019 September 2019 February 2019	September 2019 Feb. 2020 Oct. 2019	September 2020	September 2021
Romania**	September 2019	February 2020	July 2021	June 2022
Bosnia and Herzegovina** Germany**	September 2019 February 2020	February 2020 June 2020	Fall 2021	October 2022

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports
Estonia** Cyprus Switzerland Iceland, Norway** Georgia**	October 2020 February 2021	March 2021 June 2021	February/March 2022	November 2022
Croatia Luxembourg North Macedonia	September 2021	February 2022	Fall 2022	September 2023
Greece Ireland Liechtenstein Moldova	February 2022	September 2022	March 2023	November 2023
Ukraine	January 2023	June 2023	February/March 2025	November 2025
United Kingdom			January/February 2024	May 2025
European Union	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

* Changes to the timeline due to the adoption of the reporting form

** Changes to the timeline due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*** With effect of 1 July 2021, Türkiye withdrew from the Istanbul Convention and is no longer a state party to this convention.

Appendix 3 – Provisional timetable of GREVIO’s 1st thematic evaluation round procedure on the theme “building trust by delivering support, protection and justice” (2023-2031)

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO reports
Austria	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./Oct. 2023	September 2024
Monaco	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./Oct. 2023	September 2024
Albania	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./Oct. 2023	September 2024
Denmark	January 2023	June 2023	Sept./Oct. 2023	September 2024
Montenegro	May 2023	October 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Sweden	May 2023	October 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Finland	May 2023	October 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Spain	July 2023	December 2023	Feb./March 2024	November 2024
Portugal	May 2023	October 2023	June 2024	May 2025
France	January 2024	June 2024	Sept./Oct. 2024	September 2025
Italy	January 2024	June 2024	Sept./Oct. 2024	September 2025
Netherlands	January 2024	June 2024	Sept./Oct. 2024	September 2025
Serbia	January 2024	June 2024	Sept./Oct. 2024	September 2025
Belgium	March 2024	September 2024	Feb./March 2025	November 2025
Andorra	March 2024	September 2024	Feb./March 2025	November 2025
Malta	March 2024	September 2024	Feb./March 2025	November 2025
Poland	March 2024	September 2024	Feb./March 2025	November 2025

PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION	Questionnaire to be sent	Deadline for state reports	Evaluation visits	Publication of GREVIO reports
San Marino	March 2024	September 2024	Feb./March 2025	November 2025
Slovenia	September 2024	March 2025	Sept./Oct. 2025	September 2026
Romania	September 2024	March 2025	Sept./Oct. 2025	September 2026
Bosnia and Herzegovina	September 2024	March 2025	Sept./Oct. 2025	September 2026
Estonia	September 2024	March 2025	Sept./Oct. 2025	September 2026
Germany	March 2025	September 2025	Feb./March 2026	November 2026
Switzerland	March 2025	September 2025	Feb./March 2026	November 2026
Norway	March 2025	September 2025	Feb./March 2026	November 2026
Georgia	March 2025	September 2025	Feb./March 2026	November 2026
Cyprus	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./Oct. 2026	September 2027
Croatia	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./Oct. 2026	September 2027
Iceland	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./Oct. 2026	September 2027
Luxembourg	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./Oct. 2026	September 2027
North Macedonia	September 2025	March 2026	Sept./Oct. 2026	September 2027
Greece	March 2026	September 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Ireland	March 2026	September 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Liechtenstein	March 2026	September 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Republic of Moldova	March 2026	September 2026	Feb./March 2027	November 2027
Ukraine	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
United Kingdom	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
European Union	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Appendix 4 – Signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

PARTY	Signature	Ratification	Entry into Force
Albania	19/12/2011	04/02/2013	01/08/2014
Andorra	22/02/2013	22/04/2014	01/08/2014
Armenia	18/01/2018		
Austria	11/05/2011	14/11/2013	01/08/2014
Azerbaijan			
Belgium	11/09/2012	14/03/2016	01/07/2016
Bosnia and Herzegovina	08/03/2013	07/11/2013	01/08/2014
Bulgaria	21/04/2016		
Croatia	22/01/2013	12/06/2018	01/10/2018
Cyprus	16/06/2015	10/11/2017	01/03/2018
Czech Republic	02/05/2016		
Denmark	11/10/2013	23/04/2014	01/08/2014
Estonia	02/12/2014	26/10/2017	01/02/2018
Finland	11/05/2011	17/04/2015	01/08/2015
France	11/05/2011	04/07/2014	01/11/2014
Georgia	19/06/2014	19/05/2017	01/09/2017
Germany	11/05/2011	12/10/2017	01/02/2018
Greece	11/05/2011	18/06/2018	01/10/2018
Hungary	14/03/2014		
Iceland	11/05/2011	26/04/2018	01/08/2018
Ireland	05/11/2015	08/03/2019	01/07/2019

PARTY	Signature	Ratification	Entry into Force
Italy	27/09/2012	10/09/2013	01/08/2014
Latvia	18/05/2016		
Liechtenstein	10/11/2016	17/06/2021	01/10/2021
Lithuania	07/06/2013		
Luxembourg	11/05/2011	07/08/2018	01/12/2018
Malta	21/05/2012	29/07/2014	01/11/2014
Monaco	20/09/2012	07/10/2014	01/02/2015
Montenegro	11/05/2011	22/04/2013	01/08/2014
Netherlands	14/11/2012	18/11/2015	01/03/2016
North Macedonia	08/07/2011	23/03/2018	01/07/2018
Norway	07/07/2011	05/07/2017	01/11/2017
Poland	18/12/2012	27/04/2015	01/08/2015
Portugal	11/05/2011	05/02/2013	01/08/2014
Republic of Moldova	06/02/2017	31/01/2022	01/05/2022
Romania	27/06/2014	23/05/2016	01/09/2016
San Marino	30/04/2014	28/01/2016	01/05/2016
Serbia	04/04/2012	21/11/2013	01/08/2014
Slovak Republic	11/05/2011		
Slovenia	08/09/2011	05/02/2015	01/06/2015
Spain	11/05/2011	10/04/2014	01/08/2014
Sweden	11/05/2011	01/07/2014	01/11/2014
Switzerland	11/09/2013	14/12/2017	01/04/2018
Türkiye*	11/05/2011	14/03/2012	01/08/2014
Ukraine	07/11/2011	18/07/2022	01/11/2022
United Kingdom	08/06/2012	21/07/2022	01/11/2022
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION			
European Union	13/06/2017	28/06/2023	01/10/2023

* Withdrawn with effect of 01/07/2021

Appendix 5 – List of GREVIO members

From 1 January to 31 May 2023

Member	Nominated by	Title	From	To
Iris Luarasi	Albania	President	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Simona Lanzoni	Italy	First Vice-President	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou	Greece	Second Vice-President	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Laura Albu	Romania	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Maria Rún Bjarnadóttir	Iceland	Member	08/12/2021	31/05/2023
Biljana Branković	Serbia	Member	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Françoise Brié	France	Member	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Päivi Hirvela	Finland	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Marie Claude Hofner	Switzerland	Member	01/06/2019	31/08/2022
Ivo Holc	Slovenia	Member	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Helena Leitão	Portugal	Member	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Marceline Naudi	Malta	Member	01/06/2019	31/05/2023
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop	Ireland	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Aleid van den Brink	Netherlands	Member (re-elected)	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Grzegorz Wrona	Poland	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026

As of 1 June 2023

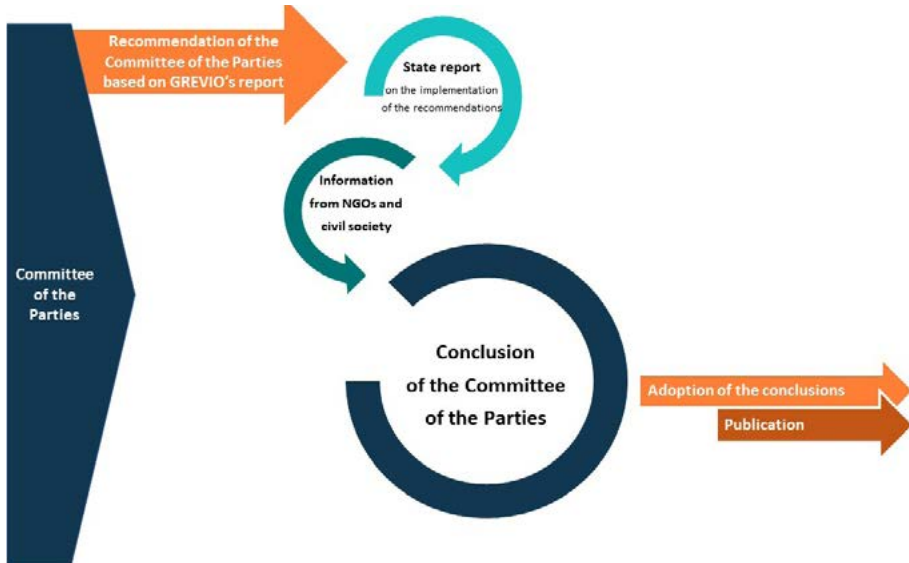
Member	Nominated by	Title	From	To
Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou	Greece	President (re-elected member)	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Aleid van den Brink	Netherlands	First Vice-President (re-elected member)	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop	Ireland	Second Vice-President	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Laura Albu	Romania	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Guillaume Barbe	France	Member	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Maria Rún Bjarnadóttir	Iceland	Member (re-elected)	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Pascale Florence Egida Emilia Franck	Belgium	Member	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Päivi Hirvela	Finland	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Marie Claude Hofner	Switzerland	Member (re-elected)	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Ivo Holc	Slovenia	Member (re-elected)	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Olena Kharytonova	Ukraine	Member	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Helmut Tichy	Austria	Member	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Pille Tsopp-Pagan	Estonia	Member	01/06/2023	31/05/2027
Grzegorz Wrona	Poland	Member	01/09/2022	31/08/2026
Angelina Zaporozjan-Pirgari	Republic of Moldova	Member	01/06/2023	31/05/2027



Appendix 6 – GREVIO’s Secretariat (from January to December 2023)

- ▶ Carolina Lasén Diaz, Executive Secretary
- ▶ Françoise Kempf, Administrator
- ▶ Francesca Montagna, Administrator
- ▶ Elif Sariaydin, Administrator
- ▶ Mihail Stojanoski, Administrator
- ▶ Sabrina Wittmann, Administrator
- ▶ Kerstin Schinnerl, Senior Project Officer (from 18 September 2023)
- ▶ Valentine Josenhans, Project Officer
- ▶ Christine Ebel, Principal Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Louise Morlon, Administrative Assistant (until 31 May 2023)
- ▶ Zsuzsanna Molnar, Administrative Assistant
- ▶ Joanna Szelezniak, Administrative Assistant (from 1 February 2023)
- ▶ Ioana Voelkel, Principal Administrative Assistant (from 15 July 2023)
- ▶ Antonio Garcia Cazorla, Trainee (until 31 January 2023)
- ▶ Sara Prifti, Trainee (since 1 October 2023)

Appendix 7 – Workflow of the monitoring mechanism



GREVIO is the independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) by the parties, made up of 15 independent experts. It draws up and publishes reports evaluating legislative and other measures taken by the parties to give effect to the provisions of the convention. In cases where action is required to prevent a serious, massive or persistent pattern of any acts of violence covered by the convention, GREVIO may initiate a special inquiry procedure. GREVIO may also adopt, where appropriate, general recommendations on themes and concepts of the convention.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.