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The Istanbul Convention: progress and challenges

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2247 (2023)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2247 \(2023\)](#) on “The Istanbul Convention: progress and challenges”. It has forwarded it to the Bureau of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) and the Bureau of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) for information and possible comments. Recognising that the Istanbul Convention constitutes a unique and essential tool in shaping preventive and protective legislation and policies and punishing perpetrators of gender-based violence, the Committee regrets deliberate misrepresentations of the treaty and fully agrees with the Assembly on the need to dispel them.

2. With respect to paragraph 2.1 of the recommendation regarding the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, the Committee of Ministers welcomes the accession of the EU to the convention and encourages member States that have not already done so to ratify it. The Committee further invites Parties which have made reservations to the convention to consider withdrawing them.

3. As for paragraph 2.2, the Committee recalls the Reykjavík Declaration adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe on 16 and 17 May 2023, which calls for gender equality and the full, equal and effective participation of women in public and private decision-making processes as an essential element of the rule of law, democracy and sustainable development. The Reykjavík Principles for Democracy further commit to ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation in political and public life for all, in particular women and girls, free from violence, fear, harassment, hate speech and hate crime, as well as discrimination based on any ground.

4. Concerning paragraph 2.3, the Committee of Ministers reiterates its appreciation of the work of the High-level Reflection Group and is pleased to inform the Assembly that high priority was given at the 4th Summit to combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Heads of State and Government underlined the pioneering role of the Council of Europe, including through the Istanbul Convention, in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence. The Reykjavík Declaration draws attention to specific forms of violence against women such as conflict-related sexual violence and recognises the need to mitigate the risks that new and emerging digital technologies entail. Recalling [General Recommendation No. 1](#) on the digital dimension of violence against women, adopted by GREVIO on 20 October 2021, the Committee informs the Assembly that it is currently considering setting up a Committee of Experts on combating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls to draft a recommendation on this subject, as part of the Summit’s follow-up.

5. As for the recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.6, the Committee shares the view that implementation of the Dublin Declaration of Council of Europe Ministers of Justice on the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, adopted in September 2022, should be considered a priority by the Parties to the Istanbul Convention. In addition, the Committee will give high priority to the prevention of violence against women in the new Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029), currently under preparation. Reiterating its full and continued support for the Council of Europe’s co-operation activities on

1. Adopted at the 1482nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (29 November 2023).



gender equality and on combating violence against women, as well as the Assembly's Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence, the Committee encourages member States to make financial contributions wherever possible.

6. Finally, recalling the continued high levels of gender-based violence against women in Council of Europe member States and beyond, the Committee of Ministers is pleased to inform the Assembly that the organisation of an awareness raising campaign deflecting anti-gender rhetoric and providing information on the aims and impact of the Istanbul Convention and its contribution towards women's rights and gender equality in Europe is under consideration in the next programme and budget. The Committee also informs the Assembly that the Gender Equality Division has, through a series of grants, helped non-governmental organisations to launch national campaigns dispelling disinformation about the Istanbul Convention. This action may continue subject to the receipt of voluntary contributions.