



## Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and its monitoring mechanism GREVIO

*Francesca Montagna  
Violence against Women Division  
Council of Europe – Conseil de l'Europe*

*M.Cl Hofner Md Phd  
GREVIO expert  
Council of Europe*

# "Violence against women is the ultimate consequence of patriarchal society"

*Istanbul Convention Introduction EC 2011*



# Violence is a public health issue

## Requirements:

To be frequent

To have serious consequences on health

To impact the community

To be preventable

# Frequency is high

EUROSTAT survey, in 27 EU member states:

30.7 % women physical, sexual violence or threats over their lifetime.

17.7 % by intimate partners

31.8 % if psychological violence is included

For example, more frequent as

breast cancer

type II diabetes

1 /3 over the world (WHO 2023)

Violence against women is a structural and global phenomenon independent of social, economic, cultural, religious or national context.

# Consequences are serious



Dr N. Romain Glassey, Unité de médecine des violences du CHUV, CURML, Lausanne

...and not only on physical health





# Community is impacted

In 70% of the situation children are directly exposed and 40-60% of perpetrator have been exposed to violence during infancy



The burden of violence on the society's budget is enormous.

# Prevention is possible

Public health programs

Education

Sensibilisation

Protection of victims

Modification of laws and procedures

Etc....

**As required by the Convention !**



# Characteristic of the Convention

- “gold standard” of legislation on **gender-based violence**
- violation of **human rights**
- a form of **discrimination** against women
- historically **unequal power** relations between women and men
- identifying **gender inequality** as its root cause

## ... definition of gender

“gender” shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men

“gender-based violence” shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately

# Aims of the Convention

- protect all women, including women with special needs, from all forms of violence, including domestic violence
- contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote equality between men and women

# Signature and ratification

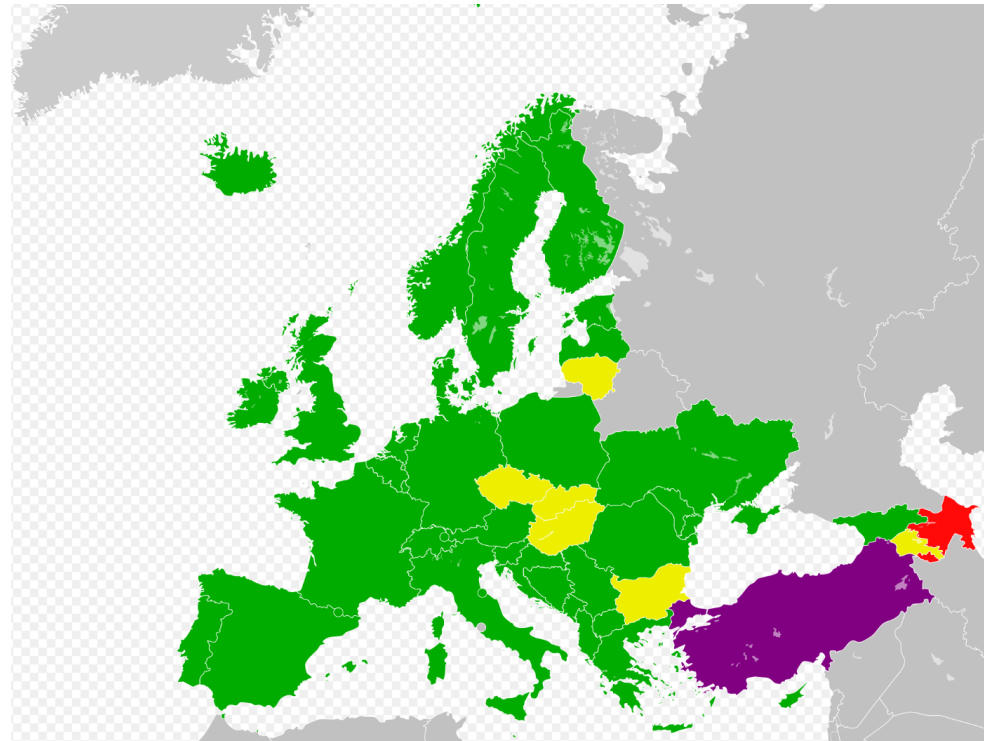
The Istanbul Convention (IC) entered into force on 1 August 2014.

All Council of Europe (CoE) members except Azerbaijan signed the IC.

Open to accession for all states (not only CoE countries)!

Currently: 39 ratifications (with the EU)

1 October 2023: EU became a party to the IC



# Type of violence covered by the IC



Violence domestique



Violence à l'égard des femmes



Avortement et stérilisation forcés



Harcèlement sexuel



Mutilations génitales féminines



Violence physique



Violence psychique



Violence sexuelle



Harcèlement obsessionnel



Mariages forcés

... also addressing

## Perpetrators



Guidance for safe and effective perpetrator programmes: Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention



A comparative study and recommendations on programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence



## Exposed children

# The 4thP : a holistic approach

## Prevention

changing attitudes and gender roles that make VAW acceptable

## Protection

from further violence and support services for them and their children

## Istanbul Convention

## Prosecution

prosecution of perpetrators

## Integrated Policies

all the above measures become part of a co-ordinated and holistic response



# The two pillar monitoring system

## **GREVIO**

Group of 15 **independent experts** on Violence against . Women and men ; competences in diverse discipline and professional experiences, all over Europe.

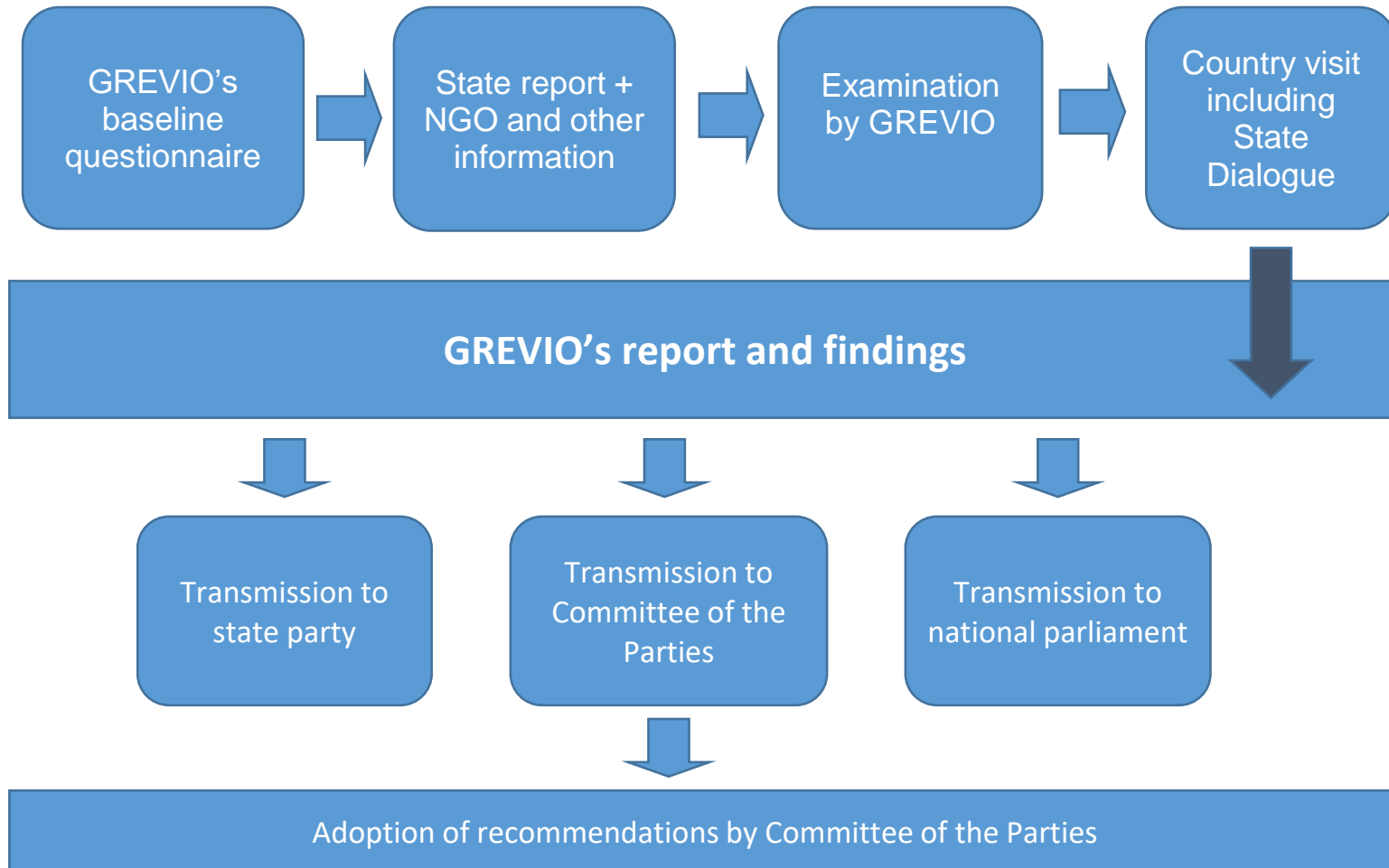
Grevio monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Convention in States Parties to the Convention



## **Comittee of the Parties**

A political body composed of the **representatives of the states' parties** that follows up on the GREVIO findings and adopts recommendations

# The monitoring process



GREVIO : <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/istanbul-convention/grevio>

# Prevention

Awareness raising (Art. 13)

Educational programs (Art. 14)

Training of professionals (Art. 15)

Preventive intervention and treatment  
programs for perpetrators (Art.16)

Participation of NGO, the private sector and  
the media (Art. 17)

# Protection

Support, assist and protect victims from any further act of violence, secondary victimisation and economic dependence.

Victims' access to relevant information (Art. 19)

General Support Services ( Art. 20)

Specialist Support Services (Art. 22) and shelters (Art. 23)

A telephone helpline free of charge (Art. 24)

Support services for victims of sexual violence ( Art. 25)

Protection and support for child witness ( Art. 26)

not depending on the victim's willingness to press charges or testify

# Prosecution

## **Perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions**

Criminalise or sanction all forms of violence covered by the Convention

DV should be taken into consideration in child custody and visitation rights (art. 31)

Law enforcement agencies must engage promptly and appropriately in violence prevention and in victim protection of VAW (art. 50)

Risk assessment (considering perpetrators' access to firearms) (art. 51)

Emergency barring orders (art. 52)- immediate danger

Restraining and protection orders (art. 53)

# Integrated policies

Art.7: '**integrated policies**' that is to say policies that are:

**Comprehensive:** because they encompass a multitude of measures and offer a holistic response to VAW

**Co-ordinated:** because they imply cooperation among various official bodies and non-state actors

The elaboration and implementation of these policy should be is ensured through:

The allocation of appropriate financial resources (Art.8)

The contribution of NGOs and civil society (Art.9)

The creation of an official coordinating body (Art.10)

Data collection and research on VAW (Art. 11)

# Impact of the IC

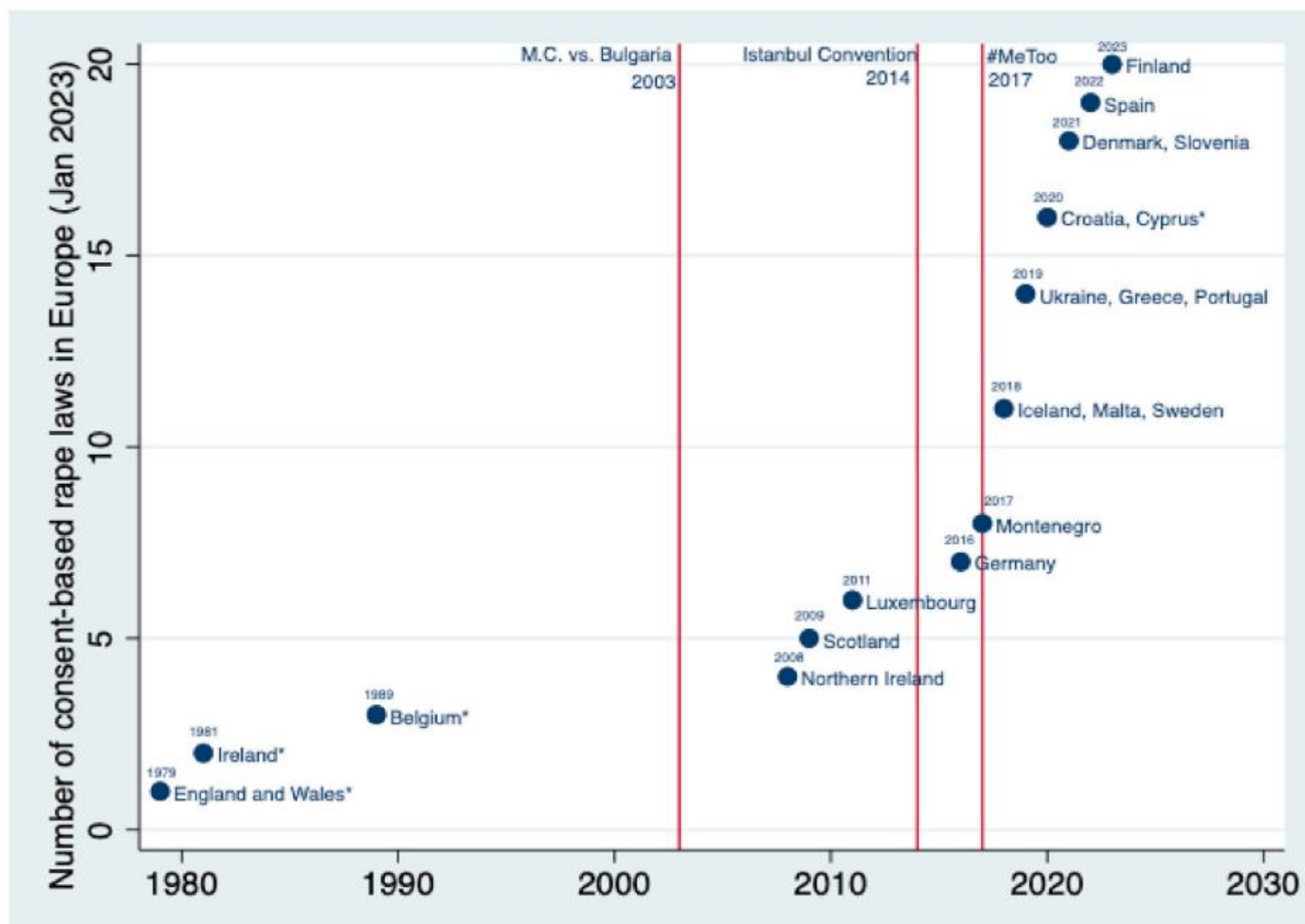
**Services:** national helplines (Monaco, Albania, Montenegro, Finland, France, Serbia), services for victims of sexual violence (Portugal, Finland, Belgium, Albania), increase in funding for shelters (Finland, Albania),

**Criminal offences on sexual violence based on the lack of freely given consent** (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Malta, Sweden, Spain, Iceland, Finland etc.)

**Specific offences introduced** stalking (Albania, Finland, Montenegro, Portugal, Serbia), forced marriage (Albania, Spain), FGM (Serbia, Italy)

**Specialization of law enforcement units, judges and prosecutor** (Albania, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden)





**Fig. 2.** Timeline of the development of consent-based rape laws in Europe. Notes: a. England and Wales, Ireland, and Belgium have made substantial amendments since then. b. Consent was mentioned in the Cypriot Criminal Code as early as 1959, under British rule.

[www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S175606162400020X?via%3Dihub](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S175606162400020X?via%3Dihub)

# Recurrent gap in the implementation

Lack of global & coordinated policies against VAW beyond DV

Lack of measures for victims of all forms of VAW other than DV

Low consideration of DV in custody decisions by courts /social services  
(Art, 31)

Protection order/measures often only cover victims of domestic violence,  
Risk assessment tools are not used for all forms of VAW other than DV (Art.  
51)

Low prosecution and conviction rates, high attrition

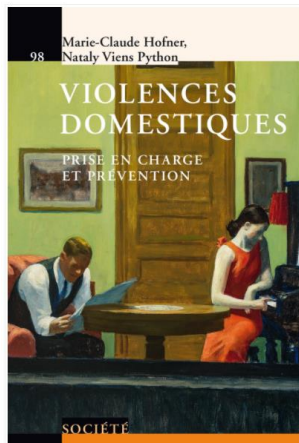
Poor data collection (Art. 11)

Lack of mandatory initial/continuous training in all sectors (Art;15)



[marieclaudhofner@gmail.com](mailto:marieclaudhofner@gmail.com)

Membre of Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)  
Council of Europe - Strasbourg  
Expert for the World Health Organisation – Geneva  
Former Associated physician, Violence Medical Unit, University Hospital Centre Lausanne (CHUV) and  
University Medico Legal Center Geneva-Lausanne  
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Biology and Medicine, University of Lausanne (UNIL)



<https://www.epflpress.org/produit/679/9782889150526/violences-domestiques>