Resolution on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence

2019/2855(RSP) - 28/11/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 500 votes to 91, with 50 abstentions, a resolution on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and ratification by all Member States

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey.

Condemning all forms of gender-based violence, the European Parliament called on the Council to urgently conclude the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU and to encourage its ratification by all Member States. In particular, it asked Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, which have signed but not ratified it, to do so without delay. Members also called for the Convention to be fully integrated into the EU's legislative and policy framework.

Members recalled that according to the 2014 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, one third of women in Europe have already been victims of physical or sexual violence at least once since the age of 15, 55% of women have suffered one or more forms of sexual harassment, 11% of women have been cyber harassed, and 1 in 20 (5%) has been raped. In many Member States more than half of female murder victims are killed by a spouse, parent or family member.

Better implementation of the Convention

Parliament strongly condemned the attempts by some Member States to revoke measures already taken to implement the Istanbul Convention and the attacks and campaigns against the Istanbul Convention, which are based on an intentional misinterpretation and misleading description of its content to the public.

Member States were invited to ensure the proper implementation and application of the Convention and to allocate appropriate financial and human resources to preventing and combating violence against women and gender-based violence. Members reiterated their support for the specific allocation of EUR 193.6 million for measures to prevent and combat all forms of gender-based violence and to promote the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Rights and Values Programme.

Prioritising the fight against gender-based violence

Parliament stressed the importance of:

- conducting awareness-raising campaigns to combat gender stereotypes and patriarchal violence and promote zero tolerance for harassment and gender-based violence;

- implementing broader educational strategies focusing on non-discrimination to prevent all forms of violence, in particular gender-based violence, especially in adolescence;

- ensuring that appropriate gender-sensitive training, procedures and guidelines, focusing on victims' rights, are at the centre for all professionals working with victims of gender-based violence.

The European Commission was invited to:

- add combating gender-based violence as a priority in the next European Gender Strategy by including appropriate policy and legislative and non-legislative measures therein;

- submit a legal act on the prevention and suppression of all forms of gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls (including cyber violence);

- activate the passerelle clause enshrined in Article 83(1) of the TFEU in order to include violence against women and girls and other forms of gender-based violence in the catalogue of EU-recognised crimes.