

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence - EU accession: judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement

2016/0062B(NLE) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 464 votes to 81, with 45 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence with regard to matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement.

The European Parliament **gave its consent** to the conclusion of the Convention.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women ('Istanbul Convention'), which came into force in 2014, is the first legally binding international instrument on preventing and combating violence against women and girls at international level. It is the first international text that is legally defining violence against women and establishes a comprehensive framework of legal and policy measures for preventing such violence, supporting victims and punishing perpetrators.

The Convention recognises violence against women as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women. It covers various forms of gender-based violence against women, which refers to violence directed against women because they are women or violence affecting them disproportionately.

The Convention defines and criminalises various forms of violence against women: psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, including rape, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion, forced sterilisation as well as sexual harassment. It prevents violence by obliging parties to invest in education, training for experts, and treatment programmes for perpetrators. It protects victims by obliging states to establish appropriate support services.

The Istanbul Convention is at the centre of a monitoring system, based on a two pillar monitoring mechanism: (i) an independent expert body (GREVIO), which draws up reports on the themes of the Convention; (ii) a Committee of the Parties (which follows up on GREVIO reports and makes recommendations to the parties concerned).

The Council has now requested the European Parliament's consent to the conclusion of the Convention divided in two draft decisions one with regard to institutions and public administration of the Union, and the other with regard to matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement.