



Stop violence against women: Commission welcomes the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention

Brussels, 1 June 2023

Today, the European Union is acceding to the Istanbul Convention by adopting two Council Decisions. The Istanbul Convention is a comprehensive legal framework aimed at protecting women from all forms of violence, and to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. With the accession, the EU as whole will be bound by ambitious international standards. On this occasion, the Commission issued the following statements:

President Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"Europe is on the side of women, to protect them from violence. All women and girls deserve a life free from violence, it is time for justice and equality. Today, the European Union is sending a strong signal: we are determined to prevent, condemn and fight violence against women and girls in all its forms."*

Next Steps

Following today's adoption of the two Council Decisions on EU accession under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU, they will be published in the Official Journal. The signed instrument of accession will be deposited with the Council of Europe upon the entry into force of these Council Decisions, which will take place on the twentieth day following the day of their publication in the Official Journal. The Convention will enter into force for the European Union on the first day of the month following a three-month period after the date of deposit of the instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

Background

The Commission proposed the EU's accession to the [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), the Istanbul Convention, in 2016, seeking a broad accession, covering both exclusive and shared competence. This May, the European Parliament voted in favour of granting the EP's consent for the EU accession by a large majority. EU accession will bring substantial value at EU level, both politically and legally.

The Istanbul Convention is a comprehensive and powerful legal instrument to prevent and combat violence against women, domestic violence and to protect the victims. It recognises that violence against women constitutes a violation of their human rights. It addresses violence against women through measures aimed at preventing violence, protecting and supporting its victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators.

Other EU initiatives to combat gender-based violence:

As part of the initiative "A New Push for European Democracy", the Commission adopted a [proposal for a directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence](#) on 8 March 2022. The proposal aims to ensure that the most serious forms of violence against women are criminalised across the EU, such as rape, female genital mutilation and gender-based cyber violence, including cyber stalking and non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

The European Commission is committed to preventing and combating gender-based violence, as stated in the [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#). The [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) reaffirms the commitment to proposing new rules to put an end to gender-based violence against women, including work harassment on grounds of sex. The Commission provides funding for projects and organisations to tackle gender-based violence through the [Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values](#) Programme.

Internationally, the [Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in External Relations 2020 – 2025](#) (GAP III) provides an ambitious external policy framework for achieving progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. The EU will continue its efforts to curb sexual and gender-based violence throughout the world, including in conflict and emergencies. For example, the global [Spotlight Initiative](#), with an initial EU investment of €500 million, aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The EU is furthermore an active member of the Call to Action on

Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, a global cross-stakeholder initiative with more than 100 members that aims to drive change and foster accountability from the humanitarian system to address gender-based violence from the earliest phases of a crisis.

For More Information

[Istanbul Convention](#)

[Ending gender-based violence](#)

Factsheet – [championing Gender Equality](#)

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