

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

2016/0062A(NLE) - 19/07/2017 - Committee interim report tabled for plenary

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, together with the Committee on Womens Rights and Gender Equality, adopted the interim report by Anna Maria CORAZZA BILDT (EPP, SE) and Christine REVAULT D'ALLONNES BONNEFOY (S&D, FR) on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

The committee asked the Estonian Presidency to speed up the ratification by the Union of the Istanbul Convention, stressing that the accession of the Union to the Convention will ensure the establishment of a coherent European legal framework to prevent and combat violence against women and gender-based violence

While welcoming the signing of EUs accession to the Istanbul Convention on 13 June 2017, Members regretted the fact that the limitation to two areas, namely matters relating to judicial cooperation in criminal matters and those related to asylum and non-refoulement, raised legal uncertainties as to the scope of the EUs accession.

The report invited the Council, the Commission and the Member States to take account of a series of recommendations, including:

- initiating a constructive dialogue with the Council and Member States, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, so as to address reservations, objections and concerns expressed by Member States, and in particular to clarify misleading interpretations of the Istanbul Convention;
- keeping Parliament fully informed at all stages of the negotiations and ensuring that it is involved in the monitoring process of the Convention;
- ensuring that Member States ensure the proper application of the Convention and allocate adequate financial resources to preventing and combating violence against women;
- drawing up a holistic EU strategy on combating violence against women and gender-based violence;
- designating an EU Coordinator to act as representative of the EU to the Committee of the Parties at the Council of Europe once the Istanbul Convention is ratified by the EU;
- producing practical guidelines and strategies for the application of the Istanbul Convention;
- taking the necessary measures pursuant to Articles 60 and 61 of the Convention on migration and asylum, taking into account the fact that migrant women and girls have the right to live free from violence.

Members also called on the Commission to present a legal act to support Member States in their efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and to set up a European Monitoring Observatory on gender-based violence.

For its part, the Council should activate the passerelle clause by adopting a unanimous decision to identify violence against women and girls (and other forms of gender-based violence) as an area of crime under Article 83(1) TFEU.