

Appendix – Response to each recommendation

Theme: the Caribbean part of the Kingdom

Recommendation: Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten	
Number	6
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	2
Based on the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Article	38
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO urges the Kingdom of the Netherlands to draw up an implementation plan and take all possible measures, including financial ones, to encourage and assist Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten to ratify and implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

Response to the recommendation

The Caribbean countries (Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten) are autonomous within the Kingdom and thus each have their own responsibility for the legislation for implementing the policy needed for ratification of the Istanbul Convention. There are no underlying regulations within the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands that arrange cooperation between the Netherlands and the Caribbean countries and cover the topic of domestic violence. However, the four countries (the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten) plus the three public entities of the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba) have been cooperating since 2014 in the official International Taskforce on Children’s Rights, which covers inter alia the topics of domestic violence and child abuse. The Task Force’s key tasks include developing a vision, cooperation, sharing knowledge, exchanging best practices and monitoring. In addition, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) has been organising the biannual work conference ‘No Mas No More’ since 2017, in which the approach to domestic violence in the Kingdom of the Netherlands is discussed. A concrete result of this work conference will be a project for international and inter-island shelter arrangements, which was started last summer. That project aims to make it structurally possible for victims of domestic violence – female in particular – who are in unsafe situations to be sheltered on a different island or in a different country from where they are living. The next ‘No Mas No More’ work conference is scheduled for next year.

Further steps have been taken since the report was published. When recently asked about the situation, Sint-Maarten stated that work is being done on realising the implementing law. Curacao states that the country already has appropriate implementation legislation. In the explanatory memorandum to the approval legislation, Aruba has stated that it believes ratification of the Convention to be desirable and that it believes it is necessary to have the necessary implementation legislation ready. On Aruba, the interdepartmental Human Rights Committee started drawing up an implementation plan some time ago for the implementing law. This involves obtaining a picture of what legislation and policy are needed for compliance with the obligations of the convention. That study is currently under development. The report on the recommendations will look in greater depth at how the steps towards ratification are progressing on the Caribbean islands. [still waiting for further responses from Sint Maarten and Curacao]

Recommendation: Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba	
Number	9
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	2
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO welcomes the steps already taken to implement the Istanbul Convention in Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba in preparation for ratification and recommendation given by the Advisory Council on International Affairs. In light of that recommendation, GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to extend the application of the Istanbul Convention to Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba.

Response to the recommendation

To bring the situation in the Caribbean Netherlands more in line with the Istanbul Convention, the Ministry of VWS signed an 'Administrative agreement on the approach to domestic violence and child abuse for 2017-2020' with the public entities and made resources available to execute it. Based on that administrative agreement, the public entities and the ministry are working together on prevention, promoting expertise, strengthening the ability to provide assistance and setting up an easily accessible notification structure for reporting domestic violence and child abuse.

A shelter has been set up on Bonaire, for instance, for women and their children. Cases where domestic violence or child abuse is involved, are discussed in the Safety Network which is a cooperation between justice, care, education and local government. On instructions from the Ministry of VWS, a legal guide was produced that contains a step-by-step plan for what to do when domestic violence and child abuse are suspected. That guide adds to the body of knowledge among professionals in various occupations about their legal roles and responsibilities with regard to notifying suspicions of child abuse. The use of this guide is currently being implemented by the islands. The islands are also taking concrete steps towards setting up a contact point.

The 'Administrative agreement on an approach to domestic violence and child abuse for 2017-2020' has resulted in an improved approach to domestic violence and child abuse in the Caribbean Netherlands. It is however still too soon to extend the application of the Istanbul Convention. Various links in the chain have only just been set up and need further detailing and improvement.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is working on an inventory of what is still needed for bringing the approach to domestic violence and child abuse into line with the Istanbul Convention. To continue along this path and to work towards application of the Istanbul Convention, the Ministry of VWS is working with the public entities on a successor to the current administrative agreement from 2021 onwards.

Theme: Gender sensitivity

Domestic violence affects women disproportionately and gender is therefore one of the decisive factors in violence against women. The main focus of Dutch policy is on the underlying cause of the violence, and thus it is not mainly focused on gender equality. It is, however, important to pay attention to gender dimensions in relation to violence. Steps that have been taken or are being taken in addition to the current assignment are listed here.

Recommendation: Reflecting the notion	
Number	15
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	2 and 3
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to ensure that all policy and legislative measures taken in implementation of the Istanbul Convention reflect more clearly the notion that violence against women – both within and outside of dependency relationships – is gender-based violence directed against women because they are women or that affects them disproportionately.

Recommendation: Review the approach	
Number	33
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	6
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to review the gender-neutral approach and implement the gender analysis of legislation and policy and ensure that all policies relating to combating violence against women and domestic violence are gender-sensitive, based on a gendered understanding of violence against women and domestic violence, and to promote and effectively implement policies of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women.

Recommendation: Coordinated national policy	
Number	44
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	7
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to adopt and implement integrated, state-wide, effective, comprehensive and coordinated policies addressing all forms of violence against women and domestic violence – beyond dependency relations. To be effective, any such policy must recognise the gendered nature of the violence, address its root causes and fully reflect the specific needs of women who are or might be exposed to intersectional discrimination and must ensure consistency of service provision across the municipalities.

Recommendation: Avoid repeat referrals	
Number	145
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	20
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to ensure that female victims of violence are directly referred to specialist women’s support services and to avoid repeated referrals. It also urges the Dutch authorities to ensure that social services are able to recognise violence against women as gender-based violence and offer support and protective services that pay regard to the underlying issues of power and control and that emphasise the human rights and safety of women victims, while duly promoting victim agency and empowerment.

Recommendation: Coordinating body	
Number	59
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	10
Responsible ministry	VWS OCW

Description

GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to assign the role of coordinating body to fully institutionalised entities, to equip these with clear mandates, powers and competences and to allocate the necessary human and financial resources to these entities in order to ensure, on the one hand, the coordination and implementation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, and, on the other hand, their independent monitoring and evaluation. In so doing, the authorities should ensure that the functions of the coordinating body apply to all forms of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, that they are exercised in close consultation with relevant NGOs and civil society and that they are supported by adequate and appropriate data.

Response to the recommendation

Article 10 of the Convention states: “Parties shall designate or establish one or more official bodies responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by this Convention.”

Together with civil society organisations, the Netherlands is making efforts in combating violence against women (also known as gender-based violence). The various ministries have a different role in collectively tackling gender-based violence, depending on their own responsibilities. The Ministry of VWS focuses primarily on care and assistance for victims, the Ministry of Justice and Security (JenV) focuses on the approach under civil law, administrative law and criminal law, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) focuses on prevention and the underlying causes of gender-based violence, such as inequality between men and women and stereotypical views of masculinity and femininity.

The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport is the coordinator within the government for tackling domestic violence and child abuse. The national action programme called ‘Geweld hoort nergens Thuis’ (Violence does not belong anywhere) has set up a team to support the regional approach and – together with the national steering committee – to monitor and realise the progress of the programme’s actions by the various parties.

An additional coordinating body whose core task would be to link the ministries’ activities would most likely not improve policy coherence, as it would engender a further ‘layer’ of coordination. We are committed to strengthening the coherence of inter-ministerial activities wherever possible.

Based on the information above, it is our belief that the coordination between the ministries is sufficient, which is in line with Article 10 of the Convention.

Recommendation: Collect data	
Number	72
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	11
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

In order to document the nature of the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and the gendered nature of the violence more effectively, GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to develop standardised data categories for mandatory use by law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and all other relevant actors on the gender and age of the victim and perpetrator, their relationship, type of violence and the geographical location. GREVIO also encourages the Dutch immigration service to introduce a data collection system that records asylum claims on the basis of gender-related persecution.

Response to the recommendation

Following up on from this recommendation, the ministries of VWS and JenV organised a discussion with Veilig Thuis (Safe Home). During this discussion, it transpired that more was needed for exploring the options. This question was consequently included in the assignment that was issued regarding gender sensitivity. The police does not record data about the gender and the relationship between victims and perpetrators in a standardised manner. The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is by no means always clear at the time the police become involved. The registration is done, insofar as it is relevant for the criminal investigation, in free-format fields. The same applies to the type of violence. The police and the Public Prosecution Service can assign cases to social categories, including a ‘domestic violence’ category, so that a picture can be obtained of the number of cases in which there was (a suspicion of) domestic violence. The police, the Public Prosecution Service and the

court of law determine which offences are notified or reported, which cases proceed to prosecution and which do not, and what the settlements or convictions were.

The recording systems of the judicial bodies are primarily set up to support the working processes of their tasks and are therefore not designed for reporting or research purposes. Because we want to counteract the increasing pressure of recording and the administrative burden, we are not in favour of introducing new mandatory registration fields into the systems in the criminal justice chain just for research purposes. Moreover, implementing such IT changes is generally a lengthy and costly process.

Recommendation: Protection and support for victims	
Number	125
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	18
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to review the gender-neutral approach to the protection and support of victims and to ensure that all measures taken in this regard shall be based on a gendered understanding of violence against women and domestic violence while focusing on the human rights and safety of victims, as well as on their empowerment and economic independence.

Response to the recommendation

This recommendation has been included in the assignment that the ministries have given to an external party. Additionally, a study is currently underway into the correlation between economic independence and domestic violence. This research looks at the impact of economic independence and employment before, during and after experiencing domestic violence, among other things. The first results are expected in November. There is also a general agreement within the ‘Violence does not belong anywhere’ programme that the ‘New Future’ methodology should be brought to the attention of the various regions. This is a good example of a method that aims to promote the economic independence and empowerment of women who have ended up in women’s shelters as the victims of domestic violence.

Theme: Shelter

Recommendation: Shelter facilities	
Number	165
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	23
Responsible ministry	VWS

Description

GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to ensure that their efforts to redistribute shelter places throughout the territory do not result in permanent loss of shelter provisions. Moreover, GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to expand the provision of shelters to reach the minimum standard of one family place per 10,000 population.

Response to the recommendation

In 2016, The Netherlands had 500 shelter places for female victims of violence. According to the norm adopted by GREVIO, that figure should be 1700 places. The norm adopted by GREVIO dates from 2006 – 2008. During that period, which predates the Istanbul Convention, a taskforce was set up to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. The final report by that taskforce included a standard of 1 sheltered place per 10,000 inhabitants. This standard was then included in the development process and finally set down in the text of the convention and the explanatory memorandum (paragraph 135).

Following signals that there was a shortage of sheltered places, the Ministry of VWS – together with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and in cooperation with Valente (the umbrella organisation of institutions providing shelter) – commissioned a study in 2019 into the availability of shelters in these situations. The study showed that alternative shelter places were offered on 146 occasions in 2019 because there was no space available within the intended shelter facilities. Municipalities are currently working with the institutions to manage the flows into, through and out of the shelters. The Ministry of VWS has made 14 million euros available structurally per year to municipalities for this purpose and for organising sufficient shelter places from 2020 onwards.

Once the incoming and outgoing flows are optimised, it will be clear to what extent the actual need for shelters is being met. Various factors play a role in the outward flow, such as the availability of affordable housing. Given the scarcity of affordable housing, it is expected that a greater need for accommodation will persist for the time being.

The approach taken by the Ministry of VWS, the Dutch municipalities and the shelter establishments is not that providing shelter is always the best way to provide assistance in the event of domestic violence. When domestic violence is reported to Veilig Thuis or a women's shelter, a risk inventory is carried out. Shelter in a residential setting is considered an emergency measure. Forms of assistance in which the woman does not have to leave her own environment are preferred, provided that the safety situation allows that. Examples include ambulatory assistance, the use of Aware (a portable alarm for the victim) and time-out spots for the perpetrator.

The Ministry of VWS held meetings with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities and Valente about the minimum standard for shelter conditions and the current number of sheltered places. The conclusion is that in the context of the Netherlands, a variety of factors, and thus not only the norm adopted by GREVIO, should determine the availability of sheltered places. The Netherlands is fully committed to providing protection measures to women in need.

Theme: Vulnerable groups

Recommendation: Women with disabilities and female asylum seekers and illegal migrants	
Number	26
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	4, paragraph 3
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to ensure the implementation of the proposed measures for improving protection of women with disabilities, and asylum-seeking and irregular migrant women and to further ensure that the provisions of the Istanbul Convention are implemented without discrimination on any of the grounds listed in Article 4, paragraph 3.

Response to the recommendation

The Netherlands has developed policies over recent years in a variety of fields for protecting women and girls in vulnerable situations. GREVIO correctly points out that this is not done structurally in all cases and that there is room for improvement.

The ministries of VWS and OCW have held discussions since GREVIO's evaluation report was published with the IOM, Rutgers and the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights in order to obtain a picture of what specific improvements could be made for particularly vulnerable victims and how.

Women with disabilities

The ministries of VWS and OCW intend to pay more attention to victims with physical and/or mental disabilities. The aim is that simple yet effective measures can be taken to better protect victims with disabilities, such as developing informational material for women and girls with mental disabilities. An assessment will be done over the coming period of how the approach for this can be improved.

Migrant and refugee women

There are several ongoing projects and initiatives within the current approach to various forms of violence, aimed at promoting safety for women with migrant or refugee backgrounds. Women from the communities concerned are involved in developing and carrying out these projects and initiatives. The Ministry of OCW has entered a partnership with the 'Change from Within' alliance, which focuses on combating gender-based violence and promoting equality between men, women and LGBTI people in migrant and refugee communities. Local refugee and migrant organisations play a key role in this alliance, which is receiving funding for 5 years.

On 18 February 2020, the ministers for VWS and Legal Protection presented the action plan against harmful practices to the Lower House of Parliament. This action plan aims to improve the approach to eliminating female genital mutilation, forced marriages, honour-related violence and hymen repair surgery. The action plan is part of the 'Violence does not belong anywhere' programme. One of the measures in the action plan is providing funding for migrant ambassadors. A migrant ambassador is often an immigrant themselves, or a current or former victim or a refugee; someone who has gained trust within their own community. They discuss the health risks of female genital mutilation with the target group and the fact that it is a punishable crime.

Migrants without residence status

Research in 2017 showed that municipalities often had a different approach to providing shelter places for victims of domestic and honour-related violence when those victims were in the process of applying for a residence permit. The general administrative measure for ‘Shelter for victims of domestic violence and honour-related violence without residence permits’ was therefore adopted for female victims of violence who do not have a residence permit. This general administrative measure states that victims of domestic violence and honour-related violence who do not have or have not yet obtained a residence permit are covered by the 2015 Social Support Act and are entitled to shelter. The ministries of JenV and VWS have been providing 2.5 million euros annually for that purpose to municipalities structurally since 2018.

Recommendation: Key role for non-governmental women’s organisations	
Number	53
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	9
Responsible ministry	VWS OCW

Description

GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to recognise the key roles that women’s NGOs, including black, migrant and refugee women’s organisations in particular, play in developing and implementing policy and ensure steps are taken to encourage and support their work and to maintain and protect their continued participation at the local and national level in policy making. To achieve this, GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to ensure that adequate financial support is provided in a method enabling the continued and sustainable existence and participation of women’s NGOs active in combating violence against women, including black, migrant and refugee women’s organisations.

Response to the recommendation

When formulating Dutch policy, it is customary to consult not only the stakeholders but also civil society. The Netherlands recognises the indispensable role played by civil society organisations and also appreciates it when these partners dissent to the policy. Their critical views and connections with the affected communities play an important role in the implementation of Dutch policy. The importance of involving NGOs in Dutch policy is essential – certainly for issues relating to equal rights, anti-discrimination and tackling violence against women – and more specifically the involvement of organisations for black women, migrants and refugees (female in particular), and LGBTI people with bicultural backgrounds.

We therefore do not recognise the content of this recommendation in the evaluation report. We always strive to include civil society organisations in policy making, and their importance is recognised, not only on paper but also in practice. This will also remain the case in the future.

Movisie’s “Change from Within” alliance and the “Self-Determination Consortium” are receiving a five-year institutional grant from the Ministry of OCW. In the alliance, migrant and refugee organisations are working with Movisie to promote gender equality and LGBT acceptance and to reduce gender-based violence within their own communities.

A multi-year project grant has also been given to Femmes for Freedom for the LEF project, which focuses on self-determination of women and girls from bicultural backgrounds and the elimination of harmful traditional practices.

Civil society partners have been actively involved in defining the agenda for action against harmful practices. The government recognises the importance of partners' expertise in this complex issue, as it is one that often affects a target group that is difficult to reach. These parties will also be actively involved in implementing the action plan so that the measures from the plan will genuinely lead to elimination of harmful practices.

Theme: Criminal law and civil law

Recommendation: Define the obligations of judges	
Number	205
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	31
Responsible ministry	JenV

Description

GREVIO urges the Netherlands to take the necessary measures, including any required legislative amendments, to ensure that courts are under an obligation to:

- i) consider all issues relating to violence against women and domestic violence when determining custody and visitation rights;
- ii) ensure that the risk of witnessing future violence against a close person is recognised as the perpetrator jeopardising the best interests of the child;
- iii) adopt gender-sensitive guidelines to ensure that the gender-based nature of the violence and the impact of any power imbalance in the relationship on the ability to negotiate fairly are recognised and that necessary support requirements for women victims of violence are in place in child procedures; and
- iv) restrict the custody and visitation rights where this is warranted to guarantee the safety and best interests of the child.

Response to the recommendation

Violence against women, domestic violence and its consequences for children are all taken into account at different moments when child protection measures are imposed and when dealing with custody and contact issues. The Child Care and Protection Agency (Raad voor de Kinderbescherming, RvdK) has the statutory task of advising the judge about the child's situation; this includes the child's safety. An understanding of all aspects of domestic violence and child abuse is part of the training that the RvdK staff receive.

It is up to the judge to form an opinion about the case in court. In the case where a parent commits violence against a child, the judge may take child protection measures by placing the child under the supervision of a guardian or by placing the child under the protection of government authorities. If the interests of the child require immediate measures, parental authority can be suspended and a provisional guardian can be appointed if necessary. Ultimately, a parent's custody may be terminated in cases of violence against a child. In custody and access cases, the child's situation and family situation are taken into account. Domestic violence can be a reason for temporarily or permanently having no contact or supervised contact. In the case where domestic violence occurred before the child was born, this can also be considered as a risk factor for the parent concerned.

Judges take account of all the aspects brought before them in a case; violence against the partner can be one of the relevant aspects. The judge will reach their decision within the legal context, i.e. if the law determines that the purpose of a measure is to safeguard the interests of the child, the judge will have to prioritise that.

This legal mechanism ensures that aspects of violence that impact children's safety are taken into account. As far as the Ministry of JenV is concerned, there are no new and significant developments that require a change of the law. The terms of reference provided under the gender-sensitive approach

will cover whether additional gender-sensitivity guidelines and further support requirements are possible and necessary.

Recommendation: Alternative settlements of disputes	
Number	247
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	48
Responsible ministry	JenV

Description

GREVIO urges the Dutch authorities to review and adapt legislation and guidance on alternative dispute resolution in all criminal cases of violence against women and domestic violence, to ensure that such practices do not lead to their decriminalisation and that the rights of victims are upheld. GREVIO also strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to introduce clear protocols and guidance in all areas of law where mediation is used, to ensure all offers of mediation are accepted entirely voluntarily and that no inappropriate pressure is placed on women to accept any form of mediation or alternative dispute resolution.

Response to the recommendation

The “Directive on domestic violence and child abuse” issued by the Public Prosecution Service states as its principles that violation of the standards laid down in criminal law in principle requires correction, rejection and reparation of damages suffered and that the interests of victims must be taken into account when the Public Prosecution Service considers whether to take criminal-law action. The Public Prosecution Service’s guideline on criminal procedure for domestic violence and child abuse is currently being amended. The intention is to adopt the principle that cases involving suspected offences of domestic or other violence, public decency and harassment will in principle be subpoenaed. This also gives the victim an opportunity to exercise their victim’s rights in criminal proceedings.

There can be arbitration in an ongoing criminal case, whereby the first appropriate form of arbitration is mediation. Only a public prosecutor or judge can propose mediation. Throughout the process, participation in mediation must be accepted voluntarily by both the victim and the suspect. The mediation is arranged by the court’s Mediation Office and the mediation takes place in the secure environment of the courthouse. The mediation is led by two specially selected criminal case mediators who are listed in the Mediation Federation Netherlands (MFN) register. They work according to the rules of the MFN, which include working independently and impartially and making sure that participation is voluntary throughout the entire process. The process is free of charge. If desired by the victim and the defendant, the outcome of the mediation will be laid down in a final agreement that will be appended to the criminal file and given as feedback to the referring court or official. This ensures that using mediation does not result in decriminalisation, given that the official or judge still assesses to what extent a successful mediation outcome will be taken into account when settling the criminal case. Mediation is in that sense therefore not an alternative settlement but rather an additional instrument to allow greater individualisation of the settlement of a criminal case. This allows the damages to be dealt with and future-oriented agreements to be made.

Theme: Finances

Recommendation: Key role for non-governmental women's organisations	
Number	50
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	8
Responsible ministry	VWS

Description

GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to ensure, for all policies and measures which form part of the required comprehensive and coordinated approach to combating violence against women and domestic violence stable and sustainable funding levels based on separate budget and funding lines. Furthermore, GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to research into the levels of difference in funding made available for services and measures to prevent and combat violence against women at the local level and the reasons for it.

Response to the recommendation

The Dutch government has become decentralised on 1 January 2015. It made municipalities responsible for the approach to domestic violence and violence against women based on the Youth Act and the Social Support Act of 2015. To fund this approach, the central government makes resources available annually through a decentralisation budget and a general budget. As a result, municipalities are free to choose the manner in which they fulfil their obligations. This system makes it possible to develop an approach that is aligned with the local needs and options available in the region. This is one of the principles of the decentralised system in the Netherlands.

If it turns out that municipalities find the resources made available to them by central government insufficient to cover the approach to domestic violence and violence against women, discussions will be held on the matter. In recent years, this has led to various investigations and ultimately to a structural increase in the decentralisation budget, such as e.g. €38.6 million annually from 2019 onwards for the Safe Home organisations, because of a greater increase in the number of reports and advices than expected as a result of the new statutory reporting code. The way the approach is financed by national government is seen as being sufficiently stable and long-lasting.

Theme: Research

Recommendation: Research	
Number	79
Based on the Istanbul Convention, Article	11
Responsible ministry	VWS JenV OCW

Description

GREVIO strongly encourages the Dutch authorities to evaluate:

- i) the impact of the merger of the child protection and domestic violence services and the lack of a specific gendered approach within the national programme and institutions to establish whether these are in fact creating barriers to women’s access to prevention and safety mechanisms;
- ii) the implications for and impact on prevention, protection and prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence of the gender-neutral approach, given that the statistics make it overwhelmingly clear that women are significantly more likely to be victims than men and that where men are victims of this violence the perpetrator is most likely to be male; and
- iii) to ensure research is undertaken assessing victim’s experiences and satisfaction with the institutional response to the different forms of violence against women, including domestic violence.

Response to the recommendation

The ‘Violence does not belong anywhere’ programme continuously examines the assistance provided to victims by organisations like Safe Home. We think it is important to include gender aspects in the studies. Funded by the Ministry of VWS, the four large municipalities, nine regional municipalities and Augeo, a study was conducted on the lives of a number of victims of domestic violence and child abuse. This study investigated how victims progressed, whether violence diminished and the extent to which their well-being improved over time. This large-scale study has highlighted numerous aspects, including differences in effects between male and female victims. Additionally, a study was published in November which also took these differences into account. We also intend to include gender aspects in the near future in an ongoing study conducted by the Verwey Jonker Institute. Our aim is to have this type of research contribute to a more gender-sensitive approach of domestic violence by gathering knowledge about indicators that are relevant for a gender perspective.

The current assignment that is being carried out in response to the gender-sensitive recommendations focusses on the first two parts of the recommendation above. An assessment will be made of whether and where additional research is needed, depending on the outcome of the study.