

**PROPOSED
MINIMUM STANDARDS AND
COMPONENTS OF CURRICULA
FOR POLICE AND JUDICIAL TRAINING
TO PREVENT AND COMBAT VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CSO

Civil society organization

DV

Domestic violence

GBV

Gender-based violence

GREVIO

The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

**Istanbul
Convention**

Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

M&E

Monitoring and evaluation

OSCE

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

VAWG

Violence against women and girls

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) conducted a mapping exercise of police and judicial training curricula on violence against women and girls (VAWG) as part of the project “WIN for Women and Men: Strengthening Comprehensive Security through Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality”. The mapping was conducted in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The mapping was also conducted in Kosovo.¹ The mapping exercise, which surveyed existing training curricula on VAWG, aimed to identify promising approaches and good practices as well as lessons learned and gaps in terms of the extent to which training activities adhere to international standards and integrate a victim²-centred approach.

In parallel with the mapping, a set of proposed minimum standards for and components of VAWG training curricula for the police and judiciary was developed in order to support policymakers and training institutions when designing and delivering training on violence against women and girls. The proposed minimum standards reflect the standards set forth in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention).

The standards also draw on Council of Europe explanatory reports on the Istanbul Convention and proposals and suggestions contained in the baseline evaluation reports³ of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), the body that monitors implementation of the Istanbul Convention. In developing the proposed minimum standards, the obligations set forth in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were referenced, in conjunction with the guidance contained in the following General Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women; General Recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women’s access to justice; and General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19.

Other sources of information that were consulted included the OSCE-led survey on violence against women,⁴ and relevant material from other international organizations, including UN Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

¹ All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, its institutions, or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

² Since the report focuses on the justice sector, the term “victim” is used to reflect the terminology used in the criminal justice system. Wherever multisectoral support is considered, however, this report uses the term “survivor”.

³ All of the States Parties that were included in the mapping exercise are parties to the Istanbul Convention, have submitted their (first) baseline reports to GREVIO and have been evaluated by GREVIO. GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report on North Macedonia is expected to be published in 2023.

⁴ The results of the 2018 OSCE-led survey on violence against women can be accessed at <https://www.osce.org/VAWsurvey/publications>.

Why minimum standards for professional training on VAWG?

Article 15 of the Istanbul Convention recognizes the significance of professional training and requires that governments and public institutions provide or strengthen appropriate training for professionals, including professionals working in criminal justice systems.

The proposed minimum standards cover the general approach to developing training programmes, training content, the competencies of trainers, funding, and monitoring and evaluation.

ISTANBUL CONVENTION, ARTICLE 15 – Training of professionals

- 1. Parties shall provide or strengthen appropriate training for the relevant professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators of all acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention, on the prevention and detection of such violence, equality between women and men, the needs and rights of victims, as well as on how to prevent secondary victimisation.**
- 2. Parties shall encourage that the training referred to in paragraph 1 includes training on co-ordinated multi-agency co-operation to allow for a comprehensive and appropriate handling of referrals in cases of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.**

→ THE DUE DILIGENCE STANDARD

The Convention obliges States Parties to take active measures to **prevent all forms of VAWG, protect victims, prosecute perpetrators and provide reparation for acts of violence.**⁵

The States Parties should ensure that victims of violence against women and girls receive maximum protection, that all allegations of such violence are fully and efficiently investigated, and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

Under international human rights law, the States Parties have both negative duties and positive duties. Government officials must respect the law and refrain from committing human rights violations and must also protect individuals from violations committed by non-State actors. Arguably, the obligation to provide professional

training could be conceived as a means by which governments exercise due diligence, by ensuring that specific professionals have the required competencies to prevent violence, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators.

Furthermore, training itself should be used as an opportunity to raise awareness of the States parties obligation to ensure that its authorities, officials, agents, institutions and others acting on its behalf refrain from acts of violence against women. In addition, capacity-building should inform professionals of their obligation to exercise due diligence in relation to acts covered by *lex specialis* perpetrated by non-State actors.

→ INSTITUTIONALIZATION

States parties are obligated to **provide and make available** professional training. Therefore, the institutionalization of professional training should be understood as a **comprehensive process** that includes, at minimum, the following elements:

- A special design for training courses that is responsive to the issue of VAWG
- The adoption of such courses by training institutions and inclusion in both mandatory and voluntary training programmes
- Delivery of training by trainers who have been specially certified with respect to violence against women and girls
- The adoption of clear minimal requirements for trainees to receive certification that are available in advance of the training, and
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of training

Long-lasting, comprehensive and regular training that contributes to changing the outlook and conduct of the relevant professionals with regard to victims⁶ can be achieved only when appropriate VAWG training is institutionalized. Occasional or ad hoc training delivered by or in close co-operation with international organizations and women's civil society organizations can be highly effective, but it is not part of a sustainable approach and may not have a long-lasting impact.

⁵ Article 5, Istanbul Convention.

⁶ Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2011, Explanatory Report, para. 98.

→ CONTEXTUALIZATION

The process of institutionalizing appropriate VAWG training should be carried out with an understanding of the specific local contexts and by adapting training courses accordingly. Contextualization of VAWG training acknowledges the domestic legal context, which stipulates the obligations and procedures relevant to the trainees and the need to implement international standards. In addition, training that is contextualized also recognizes that the response to VAWG is conditioned by the cultural, traditional, proprietary, political and moral values that are specific to a particular context and time and adequately addresses them. Training should be based on an analysis of the particular institutional context and the prevailing attitudes towards gender-based violence and gender equality.

For example, the mapping exercise indicated that the jurisdictions that were studied not only share a legal tradition, stemming from their history in the former Yugoslavia, but also have common social attitudes concerning gender equality, accompanied with a widespread culture

→ NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ideally, every training programme would be developed based on assessments and analyses of training needs. In particular, a needs assessment for VAWG training should consider **attitudes towards and perceptions of gender equality, gender roles and gender stereotypes; the knowledge and skills required by potential trainees in their professional work; and trainees' prior knowledge of and exposure to gender-related topics**. It is equally important that the assessment reflect on the needs of those who will come into contact with the trainees and thus will also be impacted by the results of the training. Whenever possible, needs assessments should include the needs and perspectives of a range of relevant professionals with whom the police and judiciary interact and who have experiences working with victims of VAWG, such as women's civil society organizations (CSOs), other entities that provide specialist support

of victim-blaming and the perception that violence perpetrated by men against women is an inherent aspect of traditional family values and that such violence can be justified if women do not exhibit obedience to men.⁷ Professionals from law enforcement and the judiciary are not outside of society, and in the absence of training and institutional policy that aims to eradicate prejudices and gender stereotypes, they may replicate them in their practice. Thus, training programmes that aim to institutionalize a gender-sensitive response to violence against women must address the specific social context in which the trainees operate, including common beliefs, values and stereotypes.

In order to effectively implement international standards at the national level, it is necessary to position such standards within the local context. Appropriate VAWG training requires compliance with international and regional standards, while also effectively countering social and cultural patterns, prejudices and biases that perpetuate notions of the inferiority of women and stereotypes about the roles of women and men.⁸

services to women victims of violence, and other institutions that are involved in prevention and protection.

Prevalence surveys, which are conducted on a regular basis and include assessments of beneficiaries' satisfaction with service provision on gender-based violence (GBV), can be especially useful tools when developing training courses.

In addition to questionnaires given to future trainees, needs assessments could include interviews and focus group discussions with other professionals that would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the training needs so that the training can be designed accordingly. The training needs assessment should not be understood as a one-off activity, but rather as an accompanying task that is undertaken regularly (for example, biannually) and reflects the context.

⁷ See, for example, GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Reports on Serbia, 2020 (para. 63), Montenegro, 2018 (paras. 68–70), Albania, 2017 (paras. 52–54); OSCE (2019); and OSCE, OSCE-led Survey on Violence against Women: Well-Being and Safety of Women – Main Report (Vienna: OSCE, 2019), p. 24. {It's unclear what "OSCE (2019)"

refers to.}

⁸ Articles 12 and 14, Istanbul Convention; Section C, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice.

→ SEPARATE VAWG TRAINING PROGRAMME AND MATERIALS

The OSCE mapping exercise showed that modules on VAWG are often incorporated into training courses on such topics as criminal law or family law. A **separate VAWG training programme** for basic and in-service training⁹, however, is needed to increase the visibility and prioritization of the response by the police, prosecutors and judges, and to ensure that violence against women is treated as a serious crime. The existence of a separate VAWG training programme can serve to improve responses to VAWG, as well as to develop **systematic and consistent training programmes**.

A separate VAWG training programme should use high-quality **training manuals dedicated to the topic**. A training manual, formally adopted by the relevant training institution, is the basis for delivering systematic and consistent training. Such manuals can cover a range of topics and serve as a tool for interactive learning exercises and case studies that can be combined with on-the-job simulation training (for instance, training activities that use the actual premises where

VAWG cases are processed). A training manual is also a resource for trainers when planning and conducting interactive adult learning sessions for professionals on various subjects related to effective responses to VAWG, depending on the needs of the trainees. Specialized women's CSOs should be invited to contribute to the drafting of such manuals, the development of training programmes and the delivery of training.

Training should be supported and reinforced by **clear protocols and guidelines that set out the standards** staff are expected to follow in their respective fields.¹⁰ Such protocols and guidelines may take the form of standard operating procedures for law enforcement, and include relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights, legal opinions of higher domestic courts or judicial instructions for a multidisciplinary approach to violence against women that provide for standardized minimum measures for all professionals and reflect a gendered understanding of the forms of VAWG.

→ MANDATORY AND SYSTEMATIC TRAINING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Training that sensitizes police and judicial professionals to the causes, manifestations and consequences of all forms of VAWG should be mandatory and systematic, within the context of the specific training institution. **Mandatory training refers to both basic and in-service training for all professionals. Systematic training includes training that is ongoing and sustained with appropriate follow-up** to ensure that newly acquired skills are adequately applied.¹¹ With regard to training that will enable an effective response by developing and strengthening gender sensitivity and professional skills in responding to VAWG, it is important that the scope and content of in-service training

for law enforcement officers be based on their specific job profiles (meaning that the training should be adapted to their roles). Regarding in-service training for judges and prosecutors, it is a regional practice for judges and prosecutors to have autonomy in selecting the training courses they attend. However, this practice needs to be reconsidered without prejudice to the independence and autonomy of the judicial profession, including in organizing training.

It is equally important to develop training, or training modules within existing training programmes, for professionals who provide expert opinions to courts in cases related to VAWG.

⁹ Basic, or initial, training is provided to new recruits or newly employed professionals (police) and candidate judges and prosecutors. In-service, or continuous, training is for the education of justice sector professionals who already have work experience to improve their competencies.

¹⁰ Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2011, Explanatory Report, para. 99.

¹¹ Ibid., paras. 98–99.

→ GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Achieving gender equality is crucial for the elimination of violence against women and girls. Only substantive equality between women and men, in which women and men enjoy equal rights and have de facto equal protection of the law, the same opportunities and are equally valued and respected contributors to society, will lead to changes in power dynamics and attitudes and consequently to the elimination of violence against women and girls. Model training would aim to **change attitudes and eliminate stereotypes** not only at the level of individual

trainees but also within institutions. Training that improves the understanding of the phenomenon of gender-based violence should underline that **gender inequality is a primary motive for VAWG**. It is also important that training address the **impact of gender stereotypes and bias that perpetuate gender-based violence**. Training programmes should address gender stereotypes and prejudices as root causes of violence against women and, at the same time, challenge and deconstruct the gender stereotypes that exist in society.

→ GENDER-BASED APPROACH TO ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, INCLUDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As a standard, training should provide knowledge and skills that will result in a **gendered understanding of all forms of violence against women** that professionals should apply when implementing procedures for victim protection, such as risk assessments, emergency barring orders and protection orders, when deciding on issues of child visitation/custody and when making referrals. The Istanbul Convention imposes an obligation on State Parties to address **all forms of violence against women** and creates a comprehensive legal framework to tackle serious violations of women's human rights.

This means that all forms of VAWG should to be addressed from a perspective "that recognizes the gendered dynamics, impact and consequences of these forms of violence, and which operates within a gender equality and human rights framework".¹² The requirement for an **integrated human rights-based approach**

aims to integrate prevention, protection and prosecution. Any measures taken to support and protect the victim should be focused on the victim's human rights and safety, taking into account "the relationship between victims, perpetrators, children and their wider environment to avoid the risk of addressing their needs in isolation or without acknowledging their social reality".¹³

In 2022, the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women published a thematic paper on the **digital dimension of violence against women** that, inter alia, identifies gaps in the provision of training on this emerging form of VAWG among legal and criminal justice personnel.¹⁴ There is a need to include both recognition of and the specific response required to digital violence within training for the police and judiciary.

¹² Ibid., para. 115.

¹³ Ibid., para. 116.

¹⁴ Council of Europe, "The digital dimension of violence against women as addressed by the seven mechanisms of the EDVAW Platform", 17 November 2022, p. 27

→ VICTIM-CENTRED APPROACH

A victim-centred approach places the **needs and rights** of women victims and their children at the centre of all measures. In order for victims to receive the most effective support possible, their rights, needs and safety must be placed at the forefront of all interventions. This means offering protection and support while also **treating victims with respect and sensitivity and empowering** them to make informed decisions that best reflect their interests. Training should contribute to a non-discriminatory attitude and understanding that some circumstances may make certain victims particularly vulnerable. This means that particular emphasis should be placed on the concept of **intersectionality**.¹⁵ Namely, professionals should gain an understanding of how risks and experiences of violence intersect with a number of identities of women and girls

— for example, women and girls with disabilities, those who live in rural areas, older women, adolescent girls, women in prostitution, women and girls living with HIV and AIDS, women and girls from ethnic minorities (such as Roma women and girls) and religious minority groups, and women and girls with a legal or any other status or identity that can exacerbate the risk of violence and create barriers to accessing protection mechanisms and justice.¹⁶ Victim-centred approaches **prioritize safety concerns in all decision-making** during an investigation, the pre-trial procedure, at trial and sentencing and post-trial, and in all confrontations with the perpetrator. Training should pay particular attention to **eliminating victim-blaming attitudes** or holding victims' responsible for their experiences of violence.

→ CO-ORDINATED AND MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH

Due to the complex nature of violence against women, including domestic violence (DV), training should include as a topic co-ordinated and multi-agency co-operation, which is required for the comprehensive and appropriate handling of referrals in cases of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.¹⁷ Training should include **identifying entry points for the co-ordination of referrals and follow-up actions** between diverse bodies, both within and outside of the justice system. Co-ordination and a multi-agency response should be approached with adequate

documentation of the violence in question, with due respect for the survivor's privacy and confidentiality and with the survivor's free and informed consent. The role of the relevant governmental services, and also of women's CSOs, in providing services to survivors should be addressed in training activities so that police and justice professionals become aware of where to refer survivors. Training on a multi-agency approach should include topics on the co-ordination of safety measures, as well as co-ordinated protection and support services.

¹⁵ Meghan Campbell, "CEDAW and Women's Intersecting Identities: A Pioneering Approach to Intersectional Discrimination", Oxford University Working Paper Vol. 2, No. 3, February 2016. Available at <https://globalnaps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/cedaw-and-women-s-intersecting-identities-a-pioneering-approach-to-intersectional-discrimination.pdf> (accessed 17 January 2022).

¹⁶ Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Explanatory Report, para. 87.

¹⁷ Article 15, para. 2, Istanbul Convention.

→ THE EFFECT OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN AS VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

At minimum, training should address the **needs and rights of children** regardless of whether a child is a direct victim of or witness to VAWG, including domestic violence. In some cases, violence is directed at both women and children. In other cases, children are not targeted themselves but witness violence against their mothers, themselves or other family members. Due attention should be paid to **interview**

techniques, recognizing the signs of trauma and avoiding the secondary victimization of children. Special training on the process of determining child custody and visitation rights that takes into consideration incidents of VAWG is recommended. Such training should also emphasize that a parent's visitation and custody rights must not jeopardize the rights¹⁸ and safety of the victim or their children.¹⁹

→ DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Certain forms of violence, exploitation or abuse may be considered cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment and breach international human rights treaties.²⁰ Among those particularly affecting women with disabilities are forced, coerced and otherwise involuntary pregnancy or sterilization, as well as any other medical procedure or intervention performed without free and informed consent, including those related to contraception and abortion; invasive and irreversible surgical practices, including female genital mutilation or surgery or treatment performed on intersex children without their informed consent. Sexual violence against women with disabilities includes rape. Sexual abuse occurs in all scenarios within States Parties and non-State institutions, the family and the community.

Some women with disabilities, particularly deaf and deaf-blind women and women with intellectual disabilities, may be at further risk of

violence and abuse because of their isolation and dependency or due to oppression.²¹

Training on VAWG and domestic violence should increase the capacities of relevant professionals to adopt a **disability-inclusive approach**. This means providing protection to women with disabilities who have survived violence. Additionally, training should not be limited to concepts of disability inclusivity but should also focus on skill development and practical experience. Trainees should acquire knowledge of and the ability to apply specific mechanisms and techniques to ensure that all justice system processes are accessible to victims with disabilities. When conducting such training, the trainers should invite specialists with a disability or in-depth knowledge of the intersections of VAWG and disability. Including this perspective increases the effectiveness of the training and contributes to a shift in power dynamics that otherwise might contribute to stigma and discrimination.

¹⁸ Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right of every child to live free from violence. The Convention also deals with the rights of the child (not the right of the parents) to maintain contact with both parents if this is not contrary to the best interests of the child.

¹⁹ Article 31, Istanbul Convention.

²⁰ See, for example, Article 6, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and CEDAW Committee General Recommendations No. 19 and No. 35.

²¹ Acts of violence, exploitation and/or abuse against women with disabilities can include, but is not limited to, physical force; economic coercion; trafficking; deception; misinformation; abandonment; the absence of free and informed consent and legal compulsion; neglect, including withholding or denying access to medication, removing or controlling communication aids or refusing assistance to communicate, denying personal mobility and accessibility such as removing or destroying accessibility features such as ramps, or

assistive devices such as a white cane or mobility devices such as a wheelchair; refusal on the part of caregivers to assist with daily living such as bathing, menstrual and/or sanitation management, dressing and eating, thus denying the right to live independently and freedom from degrading treatment; denial of food or water, or threat of any of these acts; bullying, verbal abuse and ridicule on the grounds of disability causing fear by intimidation; harming or threatening to harm; removing or killing pets or assistance dogs or destroying objects; psychological manipulation; controlling behaviours involving restricting face-to-face or virtual access to family, friends or others; forced, coerced and otherwise involuntary pregnancy or sterilization. Sexual violence against women with disabilities includes rape. UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 3 (2016), Article 6: Women and girls with disabilities, 2 September 2016, CRPD/C/GC/3. Available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57c977344.html> (accessed 17 January 2022).

→ SPECIALIZED AND DEDICATED TRAINERS

In addition to the general criteria for the selection of trainers in training institutions, **all VAWG trainers should have specialized VAWG knowledge**. For example, the qualifications for VAWG trainers might include requirements for education on VAWG including DV, with a focus on law enforcement and the justice system; a minimum of five years' experience conducting VAWG training with law enforcement and the judiciary; experience in addressing gender bias and stereotypes; specialized capacities such as victim-centred interview skills; and proven specialized knowledge of relevant topics such as multisectoral response. It is also important

to involve professionals who provide specialized support services to victims so that they can introduce victims' experiences and needs in the training course.

The trainers' **personal attitudes and commitment to zero tolerance for VAWG** are especially important. It can be effective to involve mixed-sex trainer teams to further strengthen the notion that VAWG is not exclusively a women's issue but that men should also be involved. Particular attention should be given to teaching trainers methods to counter resistance and possible sexism among trainees.

→ INTERACTIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING METHODS

VAWG training should apply gender-transformative methods that aim to challenge gender stereotypes and internal prejudices that police and justice sector professionals might subscribe to. Adult learning principles should be observed. In particular, learning activities should be tailored to the trainees' internal motivations and interests. Reflective teaching techniques should be used to help trainees to discover and question their unconscious biases. Training should be designed to build upon trainees' previous knowledge and to value trainees as collaborators.

It is also important to create a collaborative learning environment in which trainees have a safe space to exchange ideas and information. It is useful to use small-group activities that enable doing, talking, listening, seeing and discussing. This can be achieved by applying the 70–30 rule in which trainees talk, see and do for about 70 per cent of the time, and the trainer speaks for about 30 per cent of time. A range of materials and exercises can support interactive approaches,

such as materials from hypothetical or real proceedings that were held in public (including videos or transcripts of victims' testimonies), handouts, PowerPoint presentations, role play, moot court exercises or other types of simulation-based exercises. Given the complexity of VAWG training, it can be useful to organize such training across several sessions.

Whenever possible, it can be very effective to organize **training within the premises of the police or judiciary so that professionals can learn by doing** and can develop ownership of the new approaches they will learn. For example, it is recommended that police trainees conduct risk assessment training in victim-friendly rooms, where applicable. Likewise, in-court training sessions can be organized for judges and prosecutors using practical case studies of victims' statements or testimony (provided such statements were given during hearings that were open to the public or can be anonymized).

→ FUNDING

An effective response to violence against women can be achieved, inter alia, by appropriate training²². In order to meet the obligation to introduce and implement appropriate training on VAWG, the States Parties must allocate sufficient funds regularly and in a timely manner. Sustainable and systematic implementation of VAWG training may be supported, in part,

by international or national organizations, but it should be conducted under the leadership of and in close co-operation with relevant and certified institutions for professional training. While collaboration with other organizations can enhance training, it is nevertheless the obligation of the States Parties to ensure that training on VAWG is sufficiently and consistently funded.

→ MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The need for evaluation is twofold. **Regular and institutionalized monitoring and evaluation** of knowledge gained through training is a priority for both basic and in-service training.²³ It can be carried out by using standardized monitoring and evaluation questionnaires as well as pre- and post-training tests, evaluation exercises or other methods that serve to evaluate and measure participants' knowledge levels before and after the training and the new knowledge and skills acquired.

Furthermore, a set of indicators should be put in place to measure the impact of training on professional conduct that enhances victims'

safety and increases victims' trust in justice sector institutions. Such evaluations should be conducted periodically and at regular intervals (for example, every four years) by external evaluators who are certified and have the necessary skills to conduct evaluations on issues related to VAWG. Evaluations should review such areas as the effectiveness of the methods used and the impact of the training on improving the effectiveness of the trainees' response to VAWG.

Regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) also provide the evidentiary base for updating and developing future training programmes.

²² Article 8, Istanbul Convention.

²³ Article 6, Istanbul Convention.

TABLE:

Action points and recommendations for VAWG training curricula for the police and judiciary in the South-Eastern Europe region

BASIC MINIMUM STANDARDS	SOURCE OF STANDARDS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW	REGIONAL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES	SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE REGION
<p>→ DUE DILIGENCE STANDARD</p>	<p>Article 5, Istanbul Convention</p>	<p>Not all States Parties have included the due diligence principle in their respective legislation.</p> <hr/> <p>States Parties in the region have not included the due diligence principle in DV or VAWG training that has been organized thus far.</p>	<p>Amend legislation to include the due diligence principle.</p> <hr/> <p>Training for both law enforcement and the judiciary should elaborate on the due diligence principle.</p>
<p>→ INSTITUTIONALIZATION</p>	<p>Article 15, Istanbul Convention</p> <p>CEDAW Committee General Recommendation Nos. 19, 33 and 35</p>	<p>Legal provisions on DV largely take a gender-neutral approach.</p> <p>States Parties have gender-neutral laws against discrimination or laws on equal treatment.</p> <hr/> <p>VAWG training is not institutionalized or systematized for either the police or the judiciary.</p>	<p>Develop gender-sensitive legislation.</p> <hr/> <p>Impose legal obligations for standardized and regular VAWG/DV training.</p> <p>Adopt standardized requirements for licensed VAWG/DV training for both the police and the judicial sector.</p> <p>Adopt standardized capacity-building programmes with adequate certification for the police and the judiciary.</p>

→ **CONTEXTUALIZATION**

Article 3, Istanbul Convention

VAWG is still not recognized as a form of GBV or as sex-/gender-based discrimination.

Contextualize VAWG training to the social context and develop an understanding that VAWG is conditioned by cultural, traditional, proprietary, political and moral values.

Training is not generally adapted to the specifics of each context, nor does it address local social and cultural patterns, prejudices or stereotypes.

Organize appropriate training and institutional policy aimed at eradicating prejudices and gender stereotypes.

Address stereotypes, prejudices and bias that pose challenges to implementing gender-sensitive responses to violence against women.

→ **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Articles 10 and 11, Istanbul Convention

There is a lack of a structured, regular/periodic, knowledge-based evaluation of the VAWG/DV capacity-building programmes in the States Parties in the region.

Regularly undertake needs assessments as an activity to accompany training.

Conduct assessments of the attitudes to and perceptions of gender equality, gender roles and gender stereotypes, as well as the knowledge and skills needs of the potential trainees and their prior gender knowledge.

Assess the needs of the target population in terms of the support required from the relevant professionals.

Assess how other institutions that are involved in prevention and protection view the functioning of law enforcement and judicial institutions in terms of victim protection and support.

→ **SEPARATE VAWG
TRAINING
PROGRAMME AND
MATERIALS**

**Article 15,
Istanbul
Convention**

**CEDAW Committee
General
Recommendation
Nos. 19, 33 and 35**

**GREVIO General
Recommendation
No. 1 on the digital
dimension of
violence against
women**

There is a lack of training on all forms of VAWG, and on its causes and consequences, including a deficiency of systematic and standardized multisectoral basic and in-service training for police and justice professionals in the region.

Develop and introduce a separate VAWG training programme to address all forms of VAWG, underling gender power dynamics as a primary motive for VAWG.

Develop training curricula that are updated regularly and reflect both international standards and the domestic context (legal and social/cultural).

Develop VAWG training manuals.

Develop training and training modules on the digital dimensions of VAWG.

Develop training that underscores the interconnectedness of gender equality and VAWG.

Include modules and develop tools for strengthening victims' safety and conducting risk assessments.

Establish multisectoral co-ordination as well as a set of measures to strengthen co-ordination (including through joint training, protocols and standard operating procedures).

→ **MANDATORY AND SYSTEMATIC VAWG TRAINING**

Article 15, Istanbul Convention

All States Parties included in the mapping have designated institutions responsible for conducting basic (initial) and in-service (continuous) training.

Develop and introduce training to address all forms of VAWG.

There is a lack of systematic and standardized multisectoral initial and in-service training for police and justice professionals.

Develop standardized and systematic multisectoral initial and in-service training.

Initial training includes DV within various modules, but there is a lack of a gendered understanding of the phenomenon of VAWG in training programmes.

Develop initial training on DV that addresses the gendered nature of this specific form of VAWG.

VAWG training should also be available to professionals that participate in court proceedings and provide expert opinions.

→ **GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Article 3, Istanbul Convention

CEDAW Committee General Recommendation Nos. 19 and 35

VAWG training in the region is organized on an ad hoc basis and has not been standardized through training institutions.

Develop appropriate training that will challenge prejudicial attitudes and eliminate stereotypes not only at the level of individuals but also at the level of institutions.

DV training in the States Parties in the region is organized as initial training but without a gendered understanding of the phenomenon, including an understanding of power relations between men and women.

Training materials should present the gendered nature of VAWG and how gender-based violence both stems from and perpetuates inequality.

→ **GENDER-BASED APPROACH TO ALL FORMS OF VAWG INCLUDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Article 3, Istanbul Convention

Initial training for police and the judiciary includes DV within various modules, but there is a lack of a gendered understanding of the phenomenon of VAWG in training programmes.

Introduce training that addresses all forms of violence against women. Ensure that training on DV addresses the issue in all its forms (which can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence). In addition, DV should be presented as a form of violence that disproportionately affects women and is therefore gendered.

Introduce training on a rights-based approach that aims to integrate prevention of VAWG, protection of victims and prosecution of perpetrators.

→ **VICTIM-CENTRED APPROACH**

Articles 4, 12 and 18, Istanbul Convention

CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 35 on minority women

In the region, training programmes for both law enforcement and the judiciary lack a victim-centred approach that promotes respect and equality for women and girls who have experienced violence by offering practical tools to ensure their safety and empowerment.

Training needs to include clear guidance on understanding the needs of victims and treating victims with respect and sensitivity, including empowering them to make informed decisions that best reflect their interests.

Training should contribute to a non-discriminatory attitude and understanding that some circumstances may make certain victims particularly vulnerable. Particular attention needs to be given to how factors that increase vulnerability intersect.

Training should pay particular attention to eliminating victim-blaming and attitudes that hold victims responsible for acts of violence.

→ **CO-ORDINATED AND MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH**

Articles 7, 15 and 18, Istanbul Convention

Not all States Parties in the region have developed a protocol for multisectoral co-operation or standard operating procedures for VAWG/DV cases.

Establish a system for multisectoral co-ordination on VAWG/DV.

Organizing training on multisectoral co-operation and referrals on a regular basis is still a challenge in most of the States Parties studied.

Introduce regular mandatory training on multisectoral co-operation for the relevant actors in the system.

Emphasize the role of women's CSOs in providing services to victims in training activities so that police and justice professionals are able to make appropriate referrals for victims.

→ **EFFECT OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN AS VICTIMS AND WITNESSES**

Article 31, Istanbul Convention

CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 35

Article 19, Convention on the Rights of the Child

Training in the region on the topic of VAWG or DV generally does not cover issues concerning child victims or witnesses or the need for special approaches for the protection of children in these cases.

Training should include a separate module on interview techniques, and on how to recognize the signs of trauma and avoid the secondary victimization of child victims or witnesses of VAWG.

Special training is needed on determination of child custody and visitation rights that takes into consideration incidents of VAWG and that ensures that the exercise of visitation and custody rights does not jeopardize the rights and safety of the victim or children.

→ **DISABILITY-
INCLUSIVE
APPROACH**

**Article 6,
Convention on the
Rights of Persons
with Disabilities;
General Comment
No. 6 (2018) on
equality and non-
discrimination,
Committee on the
Rights of Persons
with Disabilities**

In the region, there is a lack of VAWG- and DV-appropriate training that increases the capacities of justice sector professionals to ensure that issues of disability are considered while protecting victims with disabilities who have experienced VAWG.

Develop specialized training that addresses different forms of disability to ensure that victims of VAWG and DV have access to justice.

Training needs to focus on skill development and practical experience and not be limited to concepts of disability inclusivity only.

**CEDAW Committee
General
Recommendations
Nos. 18 (on
disabled women),
19 and 35.**

When conducting VAWG and DV training, the trainers should invite specialists with a disability or in-depth knowledge of VAWG and disability

→ **SPECIALIZED
AND DEDICATED
TRAINERS**

**Article 15, Istanbul
Convention**

There is no pool of specialized VAWG trainers in the region, although there are initiatives to train trainers on certain topics, mainly on domestic violence.

All VAWG trainers should have specialized VAWG knowledge.

Trainers on VAWG should make a personal commitment to zero tolerance for VAWG.

Set up clear and legally defined criteria for the selection and certification of trainers.

Involve professionals who provide specialized support services to women victims that can share victims' experiences with trainees.

→ **INTERACTIVE AND
TRANSFORMATIVE
TRAINING
METHODS**

**Article 15, Istanbul
Convention**

There are no regulations in the region about the suggested distribution of interactive and theoretical parts to be used in developing and delivering training.

Set up clear criteria applying adult learning principles in all VAWG training, including specifying the distribution between theoretical and practical learning.

Incorporate gender-transformative methods that aim to challenge gender stereotypes and internal prejudice in all VAWG training.

→ **FUNDING**

**Article 8,
Istanbul
Convention**

The training processes for the police and judiciary are mainly funded from the budget of the respective training institutions, with training focused almost exclusively on DV.

Secure stable funding for VAWG/DV training.

VAWG/DV training has traditionally been conducted and financed by women's rights CSOs and international donors.

Secure sustainable funding to monitor and evaluate the quality of the implemented training. Also, invest in independent external audits of that training.

→ **MONITORING AND
EVALUATION**

**Articles 6 and
15, Istanbul
Convention**

None of the States Parties in the region have established regular and institutionalized M&E of knowledge gained through basic and in-service training.

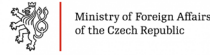
Develop standardized data collection on basic, in-service and multisectoral training.

Organize regular and standardized M&E of all basic and in-service VAWG/DV training.

Use a unified M&E methodology to follow trends and behavioural changes among professionals who have participated in training.

Organize independent, external evaluations at pre-set intervals.

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