



WINNER VISION AWARD

The Council of Europe
Convention on Preventing
and Combating Violence
against Women and
Domestic Violence
(Istanbul Convention), 2011

The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention is the most comprehensive international human rights treaty on violence against women and domestic violence. This legally binding instrument explicitly defines violence against women as a human rights violation and a form of gender-based discrimination and includes a strong emphasis on prevention and survivors' rights. In addition to Council of Europe Member States, it can be ratified by the European Union and is open for accession by any State in the world.

Following two decades of work on violence against women and informed by a body of evidence developed by academics and women's rights NGOs, Council of Europe Member States decided that a legally binding treaty on all forms of violence against women and domestic violence was needed. Two years of negotiations led to the adoption of the Convention in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2011.

The Convention recognises unequal power relations between men and women as the root cause of violence against women and advocates for a gender-sensitive perspective in tackling it. It calls

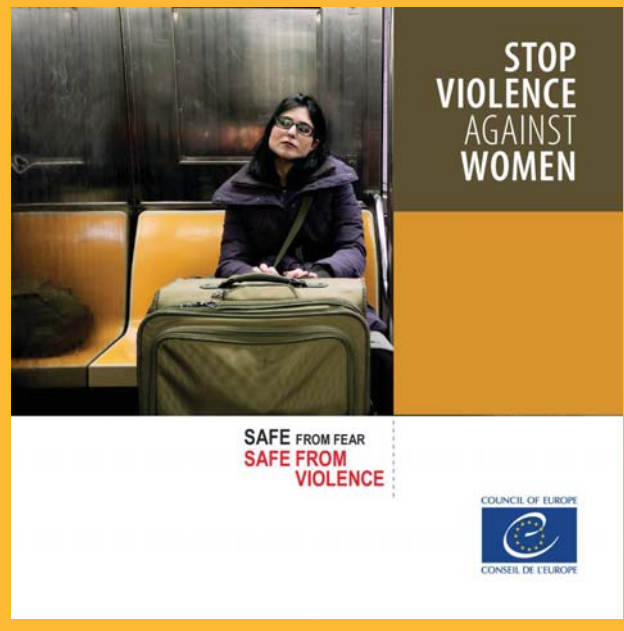
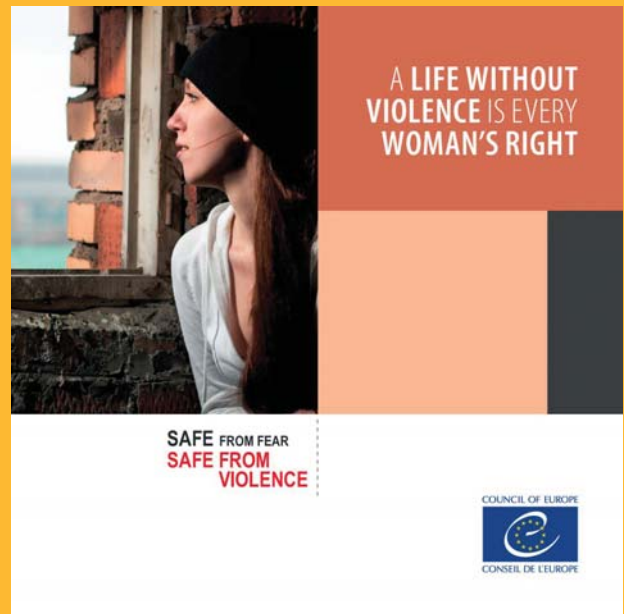
for the prosecution of an array of forms of violence against women and covers all forms of domestic violence, whilst clearly stressing that this disproportionately affects women. It places the due diligence principle as well as survivors' rights and needs at the core of all state response. Specifically, the needs of vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers and children affected by domestic violence are to be taken into consideration at all times.

In addition to appropriate responses for survivors of violence, the text focuses on prevention measures and requires States parties to develop comprehensive co-ordinated policies, to establish specialised institutions, partnerships with the non-governmental sector and the media, to ensure



substantial budget allocations, regular data collection and research for effective and sustainable implementation. It provides for a monitoring mechanism, which will include independent experts, to regularly assess States parties' progress in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

The Convention is detailed, and it can thus be used as a global standard for national law and policy making. Even before its entry into force, it has already inspired legislative reforms and policy improvements at national levels, including in countries which have not ratified it yet. Civil society organisations, which are invited to submit alternative reports to the monitoring body, will be key to ensuring States parties' accountability.



Adoption of the Convention at the 121st session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, May 10–11 2011, Istanbul, Turkey.