

## Norway will continue to promote the Istanbul Convention

This week the President of Turkey issued a decree annulling Turkey's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence - the Istanbul Convention. Norway is deeply concerned by the decision, especially in the light of the substantial increase in reported violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic, which comes on top of already-existing high levels of violence.

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(Illustration: iStockphoto)

– The decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention is a step in the wrong direction, says Hilde Barstad, State Secretary for the Minister of Justice and Public Security in Norway.

The Convention is recognized internationally as the gold standard for tackling violence against women. The ground-breaking Istanbul Convention was the result of long multilateral negotiations among member states and is based on promising policies and legislations. The Istanbul Convention was adopted in 2011 under the then Turkish chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, and which Turkey was the first country to ratify. In 2017 Norway ratified the Convention to signal our intentions and to ensure progress in our work to protect our citizens from violence. Protection from violence is a core responsibility of every government, and this includes all forms of violence that harm women disproportionately.

Recently the State Secretary for the Minister of Justice and Public Security attended an EEA and Norway Grants meeting for governmental and non-governmental stakeholders working together for a Europe free from violence.

– The standards set by the Istanbul Convention strengthen governmental responses to eliminate violence against women – a precondition for healthy and strong family relations, said Hilde Barstad in her opening speech.

This week Norway also expressed its deep concerns for the ongoing mobilisation against the Istanbul Convention at an OSCE-meeting.

– There is no undertone or “hidden agenda” to the Istanbul Convention. We need more cooperation and commitment to prevent and combat violence against women and girls, not less, stated the Norwegian delegate. In that regard, Norway welcomed the interest of Kazakhstan in signing the Convention.

Hence, Norwegian Government will continue to promote the Istanbul Convention as an important tool for our common efforts to protect women and girls from violence. Violence against women and domestic violence is unacceptable and shall be addressed and sanctioned. It is not a private matter for the family alone to solve – it is a public matter - it is a state responsibility to provide safety and justice for all.

[The opening of the online meeting on the 18th of March 2021 for the EEA and Norway Grants SYNERGY Network against Gender-based and domestic violence](#)

[Statement in the OSCE regarding Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention](#)

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