

**Group of Experts on Action against Violence
against Women and Domestic Violence
(GREVIO)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Comments submitted by Netherlands
on GREVIO's final report on the implementation
of the Council of Europe Convention
on preventing and combating violence
against women and domestic violence
(Baseline Report)**

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Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,
Welzijn en Sport

Executive Secretary
Monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe convention
on preventing and combating violence against women and
domestic violence;
Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Sport Values;
Directorate General of Democracy;
Council of Europe

Address
Parnassusplein 5
2511 VX The Hague (NL)
www.rijksoverheid.nl

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Enclosure(s)

*Correspondence must only be
sent to the return address,
stating the date and the
reference of this letter.*

Date 16 January 2020
Subject GREVIO evaluation report on the implementation of the
Council of Europe convention on preventing and
combating violence against women and domestic
violence.

Dear sir/madam,

I am hereby sending you – on behalf of my colleagues at the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science as well – my reaction to the evaluation report by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) regarding compliance with the obligations arising from the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention, hereinafter referred to as the "Convention").

The Dutch government has drawn up a report at the request of GREVIO, which is the monitoring mechanism for the Convention, on the way in which the Netherlands complies with the Convention. Based on that report, GREVIO visited the Netherlands for an inspection in March 2019. The GREVIO committee has spoken with the responsible figures: policy-makers, administrators, experts and representatives of NGOs involved in combating violence against women and domestic violence.

GREVIO drew up a draft evaluation report based on the information collected and the Dutch government used this opportunity to give a response. GREVIO processed our response and presented the final version of the evaluation report to the Dutch government on 21 November 2019.

I will be presenting the report drawn up by GREVIO plus this letter to the Dutch parliament, in accordance with Article 70, paragraph 3 of the Convention. I would like to thank GREVIO for the evaluation report that was drawn up. The evaluation report offers insights into how the Dutch government is complying with the obligations arising from the Convention. The evaluation report also provides starting points for further refining the Dutch approach to violence against women and domestic violence.



Violence against women and domestic violence are problems, not only in the Netherlands but also elsewhere in Europe and beyond. Such violence has major consequences that are often lifelong. People who are abused often experience medical, social and psychological consequences. These are consequences that affect not only the perpetrators and the victims but also the children involved and others in the surroundings. In addition, they have a huge impact on society that includes social costs, care costs and absenteeism.

This makes domestic violence one of the biggest problems in our society. A powerful approach to violence against women and domestic violence is and remains necessary. That is why the Netherlands ratified the Convention on 18 November 2015. The Convention aims to make a powerful contribution to preventing, prosecuting and eradicating violence against women and domestic violence. On 1 March 2016, the Convention came into effect for the Netherlands.

GREVIO is generally positive about the efforts that the Dutch government has been making for decades, in both policy and legislation, in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. I read in the evaluation report that your committee's assessment of a number of aspects was positive. I am pleased to read that GREVIO recognises the political will of the Dutch government to deal with violence against women and domestic violence. I would like to thank GREVIO for the appreciation that this expresses. The positive items described in the report include the following:

- The new programme called "Violence does not have a place in the home" (Geweld Hoort Nergens Thuis), which addresses all core elements of the Convention: prevention, protection and prosecution.
- The significantly increased budget for combating violence against women and domestic violence.
- That the Dutch government is taking matters such as monitoring, research and evaluation very seriously.
- Conducting many campaigns in recent years tackling various forms of violence against women and domestic violence.

In addition to listing positive elements, GREVIO also makes recommendations for improvement. The recommendations that your committee has made in this context include:

- Strengthening the gender perspective.
- Guaranteeing sufficient financial resources by providing a separate budget.
- Defining the role of a coordinating body in the form of an institutionalised legal entity.
- Collecting data broken down by (inter alia) gender, age, and the relationships between perpetrators and victims.
- Systematically training all relevant parties in tackling violence against women and domestic violence.
- Bringing temporary domestic exclusion orders into line with the Convention.

Based on these recommendations and the explanation and substantiation given, the Dutch government can further optimise its approach to violence against



women and domestic violence. I am therefore very grateful to GREVIO for the evaluation report. Together with the other departments involved, I will be working on the recommendations in the coming period.

The initial step will comprise carefully assessing and investigating the recommendations. The questions examined in this phase will at least include questions such as which recommendations fit within the current policy and which require further exploration of possibilities. After the end of that phase, I want to be able to make substantiated choices about which recommendations are to be followed and which are not. Where applicable, the recommendations will be discussed with external parties such as other experts and NGOs. Several recommendations described in the evaluation report are currently already being implemented. In the stage during which we are carefully assessing and investigating the recommendations, I want to take account of the current state of affairs for the various recommendations that are already being implemented.

This will let me do justice to the care with which your committee has drawn up the evaluation report, the commitment shown by the many parties preparing the evaluation report and the efforts already being made to follow up on several of the recommendations. My aim is to share the outputs of this phase with you by the autumn of 2020.

Yours sincerely,

the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Hugo de Jonge', written over a blue horizontal line.

Hugo de Jonge