



Provisional edition

Wednesday 23 June 2021, morning

Official report of debates

High Level Panel and interactive debate: Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention): 10 years on

Anca Dana DRAGU (President of the Senate of Romania): Thank you so much. I'm delighted to be here with you today celebrating 10 years.

But, as you also mentioned, it is maybe not a celebration; it is a time of reflection and of the fact that we are at a crossroads.

It is the moment we need to push for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Unfortunately, violence against women continues to be the most common violation of fundamental human rights worldwide. There are serious consequences for individuals and for families, for society, with huge social and economic costs.

We know that during the pandemic violence against women increased and that there are more vulnerabilities that have been developed during this period of time.

As you said, Romania signed the Convention in 2014 and ratified it two years later in 2016. It was the beginning of a very complex process in which the legislation was revised, legislation and public policies were adopted to this convention. We also budgeted for new partnerships which were created with civil society, which has a fundamental role in this phenomenon to diminish violence against women.

In terms of legislative developments, let me mention, for instance, the introduction of the provisional protection order, the specific legal provisions on cyberviolence and the offender electronic monitoring digital system to be used in judicial and criminal procedures, which entered into force just last month.

Of course, besides all the positive developments, much still remains to be done and new challenges must be addressed. Fighting violence against women should be a continuous joint effort involving all national actors, which is enhanced by international co-operation.

This is also my priority as President of the Senate. Also as the first woman ever elected in this office, from the very beginning of my mandate, I have initiated in-depth public debates on women's empowerment and participation in decision-making processes, including the introduction of electoral gender quotas, which follows the zipper principle and on ways to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and promote equal opportunities for men and women.

In this report:

1. Speeches in English, French, German and Italian are reported in full in English.
2. Speeches in other languages are summarised from the interpretation and indicated by an asterisk (*).
3. Speeches in German and Italian are available in full on the Assembly's website.
4. The text of the amendments is available at the document centre and on the Assembly's website. Only oral amendments or oral sub-amendments are reproduced in the report of debates.
5. Corrections should be handed in at Room 1081 not later than 24 hours after the report has been published.

By taking a zero tolerance approach against women, I am committed to encourage an open dialogue between all state institutions with responsibilities in this field, the civil society, international organisations, and to open new channels of inter-parliamentary co-operation at bilateral and multilateral levels.

Let me take this opportunity to commend the Council of Europe for its remarkable work in relation to violence against women, to diminish and to eradicate this phenomenon and domestic violence. At the same time, I want to congratulate the Parliamentary Assembly whose recommendations, tools and guidance have helped parliaments for many years now already.

Ladies and gentlemen, Romania is committed to continuing to implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention and encourages its signing and ratification by as many states as possible, so the remaining states should join the club.

This is a truly unique instrument.

If I were asked to sum up in two words why: I would say that the Istanbul Convention saves lives.

It saves the lives of women and ensures the future of children.

Our responsibility as parliamentarians is to integrate it in a comprehensive cross-sector national response to gender-based violence, including as part of the Covid-19 recovery process.

We should all be united to ensure that the Istanbul Convention will not be only words, but will turn into tangible actions with indicators, policy indicators, outcome indicators and specifically budget lines in our budgets.

We should all unite to eradicate this phenomenon and enable each and every woman to live safely from fear, and safely from violence.

Thank you for your attention.