

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (ISTANBUL CONVENTION)

The Istanbul Convention requires countries to provide appropriate protection and support to victims of violence against women and domestic violence, by **putting their needs and rights at the heart of all services.**

What does this mean for victims?



Social services, police, the justice system, women's support services and any other agency supporting victims, will be **mindful of the complex trauma** violence against women and domestic violence causes victims.

Access to specialist support services such as rape crisis centers, women's only shelters and counselling centers makes the recovery process for victims easier and quicker, and ensures they can **access their social, economic and legal rights.**

Treating victims who experienced violence against women and domestic violence **with respect and empathy** is essential in ensuring their recovery, facilitates their reintegration into the community, and contributes to their long-term empowerment.

A **prompt response in situations of immediate danger and free, confidential access to practical advice, psychological counselling and legal support** should be available to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence.

To avoid re-traumatizing a victim, state agencies should work in partnership with victims they support, in which their knowledge and personal experience of violence against women and domestic violence is heard and respected.

