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MEPs vote for EU accession to the Istanbul Convention

Istanbul Convention

Today, Members of the European Parliament voted to give consent for the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (IC). All EU Member States have previously signed up to the convention but six countries have yet to ratify the accord. Following today's vote, the Council is expected to ratify the convention on behalf of the EU as a whole in June.

Dr. Sylwia Spurek MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the Istanbul Convention in the Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs committees, comments:

"With the European Parliament's vote today, we are sending a strong signal to all of EUs Member States that women's rights are human rights, and that all women and girls across Europe have the right to live free from gender based violence. It is crucial that we protect and strengthen the rights of survivors of gender based violence. It is time for the Member States to step up to the plate and commit to protect more women from becoming victims.

"The fight for women's rights is neverending, but today we have shown that tenacity pays off. Since 2017, the European Parliament has repeatedly asked the Council to move forward with the accession process. The Istanbul Convention is about saving lives not about ideology. Either you are on the side of women or you are on the side of perpetrators of violence. With the Court of Justice of the European Union ruling backing our position, we finally managed to push the Council to agree to the accession of the Istanbul Convention."

More:

The Istanbul Convention is the first instrument in Europe to set legally binding standards specifically to address violence against women and domestic violence. It was adopted on 7 April 2011 and came into force on 1 August 2014. All MSs have signed it, but as of today, 6 MSs – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia – have not ratified it yet. The EU accession to the IC was a priority in the EU 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy and it has been a repeated call from the EP.

In April 2019, the European Parliament, as called for by the Greens/EFA Group, sought an opinion of the

CJEU relating to the EU accession to the IC. The CJEU released its judgment on 6 October 2021 and stressed that the Treaties do not prohibit the Council from waiting for unanimity within the Council before adopting the decision of concluding the IC on behalf of the EU, but the common accord is not a mandatory requirement. Following this judgment, the European Parliament proceeded with an interim report which was voted on 15 February 2023, where it urged the Council to swiftly ratify the IC with a broad accession.

On 21 February 2023, the Council finally requested the consent of the EP to adopt two Council decisions on the conclusion by the EU of the IC, particularly in the areas of the EU's exclusive competences on judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement and the EU's Staff regulation. The Council is expected to approve the accession to the IC at the the Justice and Home Affairs Council in June. The affirmative vote by the Council would conclude the ratification procedure.

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Responsible MEPs



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