



EU-wide civil law protection from stalkers

Committees: Committee on Legal Affairs / Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Victims of stalking, harassment or abduction who are granted protection in one EU Member State could get fully equivalent protection if they move to another under new rules approved by the Legal Affairs and Women's Rights committees on Wednesday. The draft legislation would add civil law protection to the criminal law rules already enforced under the European Protection Order (EPO) Directive.

A law that would eliminate all the formalities currently required to ensure recognition and enforcement of civil protection measures for people under threat who cross the EU's internal borders was approved by both committees in a unanimous joint vote.

Making protection easier to get

Under the new rules, any victim of gender violence, abduction or aggression, who has been granted protection in one EU Member State, would just need to fill in a standard and multi-lingual certificate to have his or her right to protection fully enforced throughout the EU.

MEPs amended the proposal to ensure that EPO rules cover all cases of danger to people's physical and moral integrity, including threats to dignity, security and personal freedom.

They also proposed that it should be possible to request the multilingual certificate online and that the cost of the recognition procedure should be waived for victims.

The proposed regulation on civil matters complements the European Protection Order Directive on criminal cases. Together, the two instruments would cover the broadest possible range of protection measures issued in the Member States. A typical example of such a measure would be an order requiring a stalker to stay away from places frequented by the victim and refrain from contacting her.

Next steps

The vote gives Antonio Lopez-Istúriz White (EPP, ES) and Antonia Parvanova (ALDE, BG), who are steering the legislation through the Parliament, a strong political mandate to negotiate with national governments an agreement that could be approved at the first reading by Parliament as a whole.

Committees on Legal Affairs and Women's Rights

In the chair: Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL, SE)

Procedure: ordinary legislative, first reading

Rapporteurs: Antonio Lopez-Istúriz White and Antonia Parvanova

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