



Plenary sitting

B9-0226/2019

25.11.2019

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to
combat gender-based violence
(2019/2855(RSP))

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on behalf of the ID Group

B9-0226/2019

European Parliament resolution on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence (2019/2855(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 3 and 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011 (hereafter the ‘Istanbul Convention’),
 - having regard to Council Decision (EU) 2017/865 of 11 May 2017 on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence with regard to matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters¹,
 - having regard to the Commission statement of 26 November 2019 on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence,
 - having regard to the Bulgarian Constitutional Court's declaration of 27 July 2018, which declared the ratification of the Istanbul Convention to be unconstitutional,
 - having regard to the Fundamental Rights Agency's 2014 study entitled ‘Violence against women: an EU-wide survey’,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas violence against women is widespread in the EU; whereas female victims reported their most serious incident of intimate partner violence to the police in only 14 % of cases;
- B. whereas one in three women in the EU aged 15 or over have experienced physical and/or sexual violence; whereas the majority of women in a professional job or top management have experienced sexual harassment; whereas one in ten women have experienced sexual harassment or stalking through the medium of new technologies;
- C. whereas violence against women takes many different forms (intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, stalking, honour-related violence, female genital mutilation), and can ultimately lead to femicide;
- D. whereas violence occurs in many different places (at home, at work, at school and in the street), making it difficult for victims to thrive in society, education and employment;

¹OJ L 131, 20.5.2017, p. 11.

- E. whereas combatting violence against women through legislation and policymaking and by providing financial support is a key priority for the Member States;
 - F. whereas trafficking and forced prostitution are among the worst human rights abuses possible, and are a threat to our cultures and a danger to women and girls;
 - G. whereas several Member States have expressed criticism of the scope of the Istanbul Convention, and have consequently stalled ratification or have expressed no interest in ratifying the convention;
1. Strongly condemns all forms of violence against women;
 2. Urges the Member States to support and take all effective measures to combat violence against women and girls; encourages the Member States to support initiatives that develop mutual respect between the sexes and identify non-violent conflict resolution solutions;
 3. Deplores the high number of femicides and other forms of violence still occurring across the EU;
 4. Calls on the Member States to assess the effectiveness of their current legislative frameworks in eliminating violence against women and to evaluate the possibility of improving existing measures;
 5. Stresses the need for more effective measures to prevent violence against women and the importance of offering better support to victims;
 6. Highlights the need to raise awareness among women in order to provide proper information about all the tools and measures available to victims at each stage of the process and to help them deal with any act of violence;
 7. Notes that violence against women is a crime cited in the national legislation of the Member States and falls within their competence, whether or not they ratify international treaties;
 8. Notes that not all Member States have ratified the Istanbul Convention, with their main concerns relating to a lack of predictability and uncertainty surrounding national competences;
 9. Calls on the Council and the Commission to allow the Member States to make up their own minds about the convention, and to not consider delaying the EU's accession until all of the Member States have chosen to ratify it of their own volition;
 10. Urges the Member States to reject the definition of 'gender' outlined in Article 3c of the Istanbul Convention, which redefines it as a social construct bearing no relation to biology; is concerned about the creation of a new 'gender identity' category, as proposed in Article 4(3) of the Istanbul Convention;
 11. Considers that the concerns of Member States relate to the legal basis of the Istanbul Convention and the lack of clarity it offers; considers that Parliament's request to the

Court for an opinion on the legality of extending the Council decision appears to be a measure designed to gain a legal justification beyond the provisions of the convention;

12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.