

**Question for oral answer O-000122/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 128

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Barbara Matera, Constance Le Grip, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Carlos Coelho, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mariya Gabriel, Francesc Gambús, Ingeborg Gräßle, Monika Hohlmeier, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Jeroen Lenaers, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Siegfried Mureşan, Alessandra Mussolini, Jan Olbrycht, Alojz Peterle, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Franck Proust, Sofia Ribeiro, Tokia Saifi, Csaba Sógor, Dubravka Šuica, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Romana Tomc, Vladimir Urutchev, Axel Voss, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Theodoros Zagorakis, Tomáš Zdechovský, Milan Zver

on behalf of the PPE Group

Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Iratxe García Pérez, Maria Arena, Birgit Sippel, Claude Moraes, Eric Andrieu, Lucy Anderson, Hugues Bayet, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Biljana Borzan, Viorica Dăncilă, Jean-Paul Denanot, Tanja Fajon, Ana Gomes, Sylvie Guillaume, Anna Hedh, Afzal Khan, Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Olle Ludvigsson, Edouard Martin, Maria Noichl, Péter Niedermüller, Emilian Pavel, Vincent Peillon, Pina Picierno, Kati Piri, Soraya Post, Evelyn Regner, Virginie Rozière, Liliana Rodrigues, Julie Ward

on behalf of the S&D Group

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Angelika Mlinar, Hilde Vautmans, Cecilia Wikström

on behalf of the ALDE Group

Jean Lambert, Ulrike Lunacek, Terry Reintke, Josep-Maria Terricabras, Ernest Urtasun

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Malin Björk, Patrick Le Hyaric, Kateřina Konečná, Kostas Chrysogonos, Kostadinka Kuneva, Merja Kyllönen, Jiří Maštálka, Marie-Christine Vergiat

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Helga Stevens, Julie Girling

Subject: The EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women

On the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the European Parliament notes that little progress has been made in combating violence against women and gender-based violence.

Violence against women and gender-based violence represent a violation of fundamental rights and an extreme form of discrimination, which is both the cause and the consequence of gender inequalities.

On 4 March 2016, the Commission proposed the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention, the first legally binding instrument on preventing and combating violence against women at international level. All the EU Member States have signed it, but only fourteen of them have ratified it. The EU accession will provide greater efficiency and coherence in its internal and external policies in combating and preventing violence against women and gender-based violence across Europe, and ensure better implementation of EU laws, programmes and funds adopted to that end. It will contribute to wider EU objectives on gender equality, anti-discrimination, public health and economic growth. It will enhance the EU's accountability and its role in combating violence against women and gender-based violence on the international stage. It will also ensure more and better data collection at European level on the nature and the extent of violence against women. Last but not least, the accession by the EU to the Istanbul Convention will exert renewed political pressure on the Member States to ratify this instrument.

– What is the state of play on the negotiation of the EU's signing and concluding of the Istanbul Convention?

What are the concrete actions that the Commission has taken to speed up negotiations in the Council?

- How long does the Commission consider it will take to arrive at the conclusion of the EU accession to the Convention?
- What role does the Commission envisage for the European Parliament in the Convention's monitoring process?
- What other concrete steps is the Commission taking to ensure that the Member States sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention? And in the case of the Member States that have already ratified it, what actions are envisaged for adequate enforcement of this instrument?
- What are the next concrete steps foreseen by the Commission with a view to eradicating violence against women and gender-based violence, in addition to the awareness-raising campaign in which the European Parliament is jointly engaged?

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Deadline for reply: 24.10.2016