

**SAFE** FROM FEAR  
**SAFE FROM**  
**VIOLENCE**

## NEW APPROACHES IN VICTIM SUPPORT

**The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)**

Paula Krol  
Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Unit  
Directorate of Human Rights and Rule of Law  
Council of Europe



**SAFE** FROM FEAR  
**SAFE FROM**  
**VIOLENCE**

**Why a convention...**

**... on violence against women  
and domestic violence?**



**Britain's 100,000  
mutilated women**

**TEEN IDOL TIFFANY IN  
TERROR AS STALKER  
HAUNTS BIG COMEBACK**

**National Law School  
student gang-raped**

**Cases of violence against  
women on the increase**

Women's (dis)empowerment  
Lack of political will,  
resource constraint  
major factors

**How could Donna have  
protected herself?**

**Abducted, **raped**  
and robbed**

**Businessman in court for  
pulling gun on wife**

**No killer doing time**

# EUROPEAN CHALLENGES

- Male-oriented or gender-neutral laws not taking into account the realities of women
- Different levels of protection and support
- Insufficient funding of services
- Lack of multi-agency co-operation
- Protection and support services not meeting the needs of victims
- Negative and discriminatory attitudes towards women victims from the police, judiciary or social services.



# COUNCIL OF EUROPE WORK ON VICTIMS' RIGHTS

- Integration of the victims' perspective in our work since the 1980s
  - *European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes (ETS No. 116), 1983*
  - *Recommendation No. R (87) 21 on assistance to victims and the prevention of victimisation*
  - *Recommendation Rec(2006)8 on assistance to crime victims*
  - *Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence*



# CURRENT PROGRESS

✓ 25 signatures:

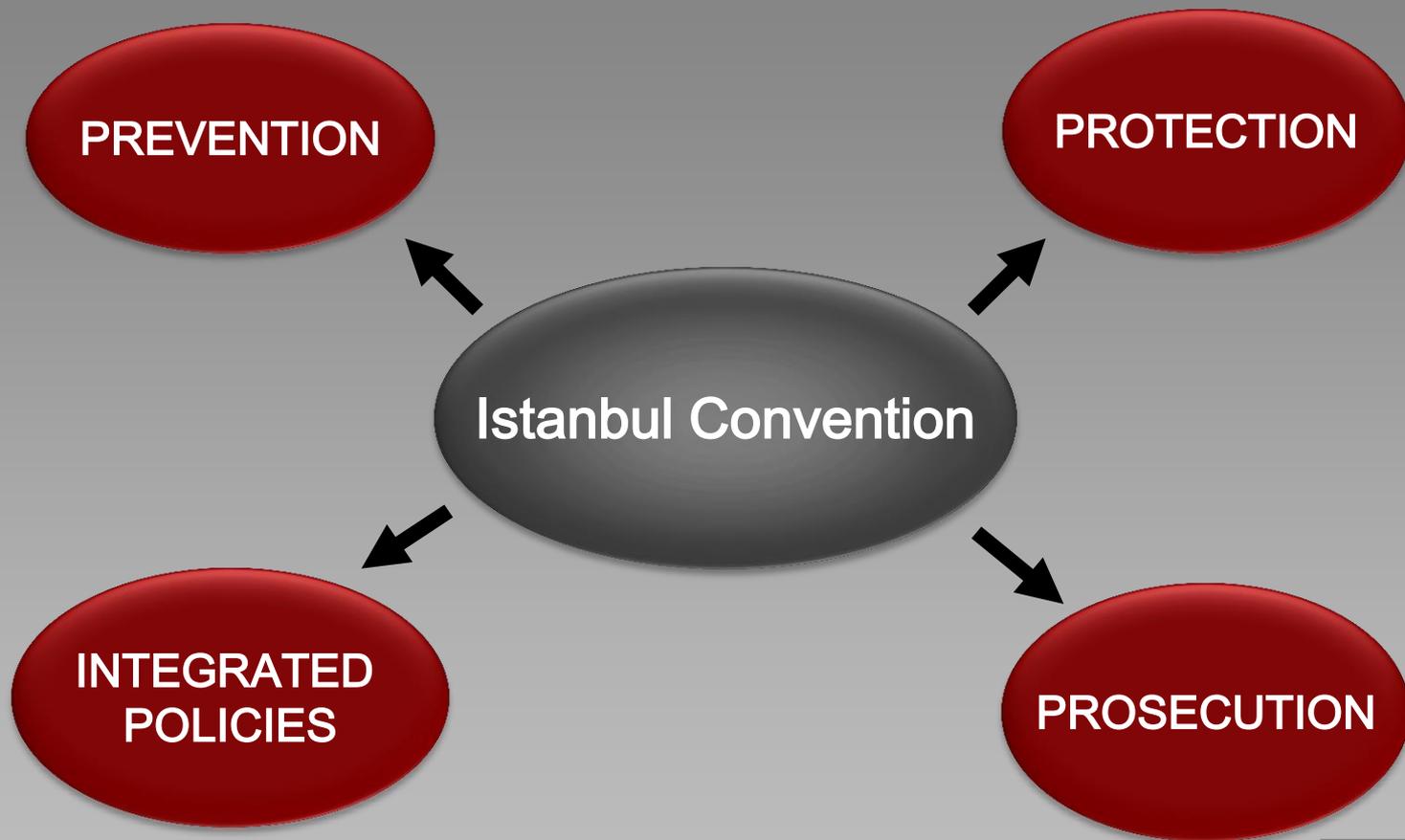
Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and UK

✓ 4 ratifications: Albania, Montenegro Portugal and Turkey

**Entry into force: 10 ratifications**



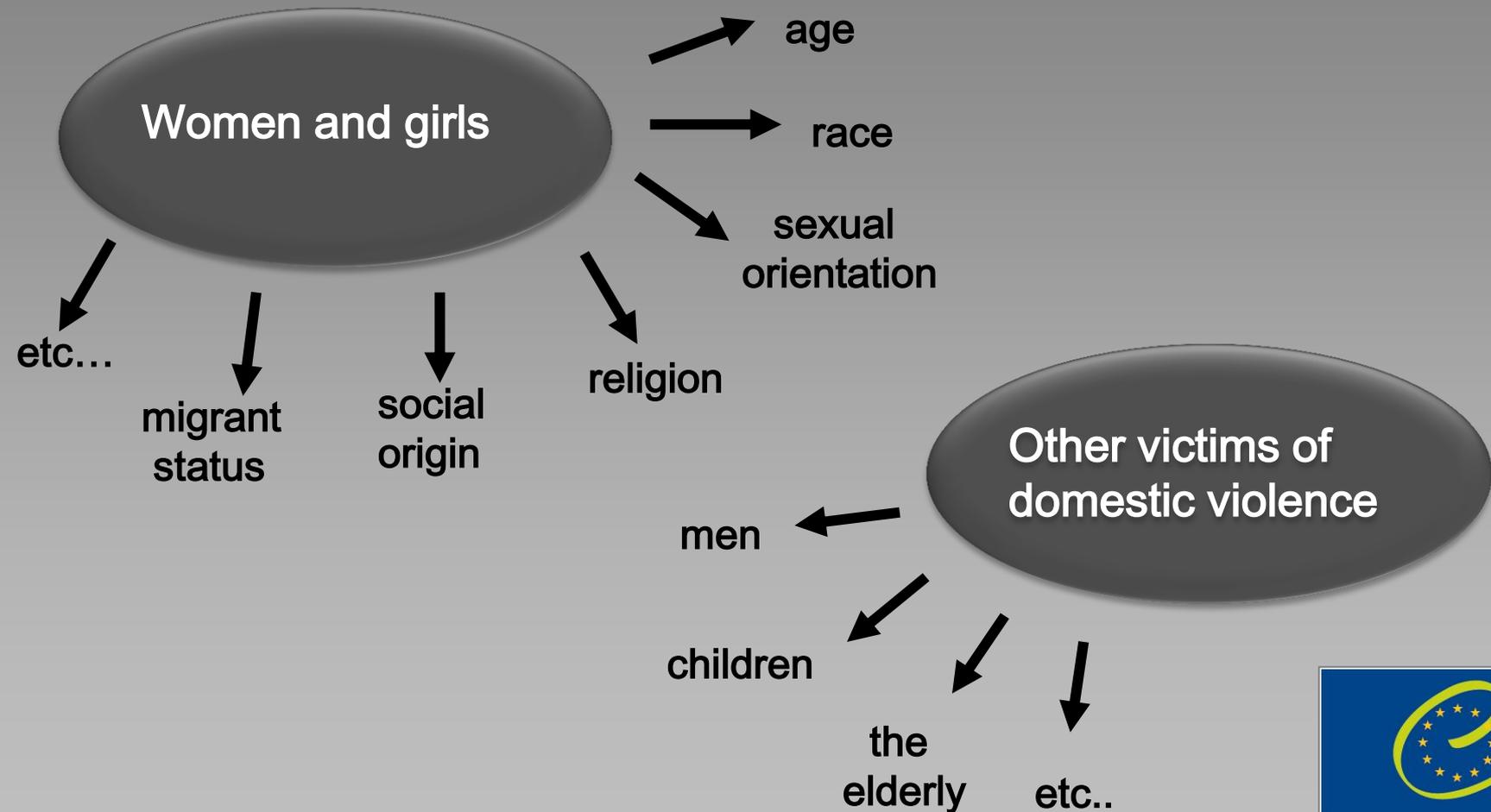
# HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMBATING VIOLENCE



# FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Criminalises the following forms of VAW:
  - Domestic violence: physical, sexual and psychological
  - Sexual assault and rape
  - Stalking
  - Sexual harassment
  - Forced marriage
  - Female genital mutilation
  - Forced abortion and forced sterilisation
- Tackles crimes in the name of so-called “honour”

# WHO IS COVERED BY THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION ?



# PRIMARY PREVENTION

- Regularly run awareness-raising campaigns
  - Tackle attitudes, prejudices, gender roles and stereotypes through teaching material
  - Actively engage men and boys
  - Work closely with NGOs, the private sector and the media
- ➔ Address a culture where acts of violence against women are justified and condoned



# SECONDARY PREVENTION

- **Allowing reporting: by individuals and by professionals**
- **Ensure the safety of the victim at all times**
- **Standardised risk assessment and risk management**
- **Provide for restraining, protection and emergency barring orders**
- **Set-up treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and for sex offenders**
- **Train professionals in close contact with potential victims**

# PROTECTION & SUPPORT

Call for help

Investigation  
& criminal  
proceedings

Rebuilding/  
resuming  
life

Reporting  
an act of  
VAW

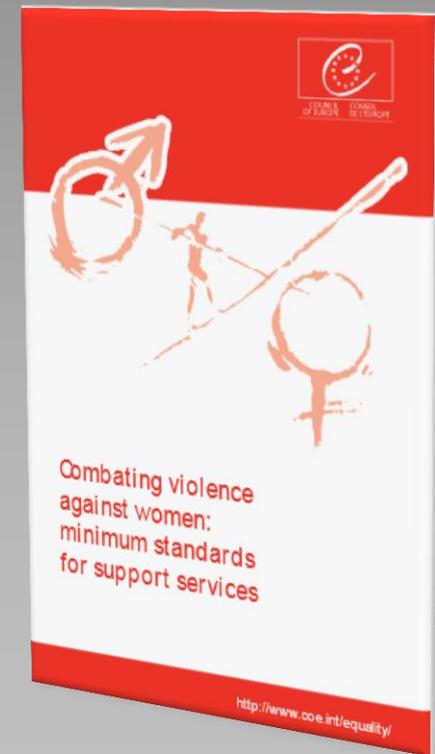
Closing of  
case

# PROTECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- Set-up shelters in sufficient numbers and in a wide geographic distribution
- Ensure that general support services can support or refer victims of all forms of violence against women
- Introduce free of charge 24/7 telephone helplines that ensure confidentiality
- Ensure access to clear information in several languages
- Set-up specialist support services
- Set-up rape crisis centres or sexual assault referral centres
- Provide support for child witnesses

# MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

- 1 rape crisis centre per every 200'000 inhabitants
- 1 shelter place per 10'000 inhabitants
- safe, clean and comfortable environments
- ensure confidentiality
- services 24/7, year round
- efficient referral protocols
- free of charge



# IMPROVING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- 1) Introduce specific criminal provisions, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions and ex-officio and ex-parte prosecution
  - 2) Enhance levels of professionalism and awareness:
    - Train professionals in close contact with victims
    - Systematically take into consideration, at all stages of victim's needs and safety
    - Adopt a gender-based understanding of violence
- Time is important: Immediate response, prevention and protection!



# IMPROVING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- 3) Empower victims during investigations and judicial proceedings and ensure their active participation
- ✓ Ensure victims are safe from intimidation, retaliation, repeat victimisation
  - ✓ Inform victims of follow-up given to their complaint and progress of investigations/proceedings
  - ✓ If in danger provide information on the status of the perpetrator
  - ✓ Ensure that contact between victim and perpetrator is avoided
  - ✓ Allow victims to testify without being present
  - ✓ Protect the privacy and the image of the victim

# IMPROVING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- ✓ Provide competent interpreters
- ✓ Ensure access to free legal aid
- ✓ No mandatory mediation or conciliation
- ✓ Allow evidence on the sexual history of the victim only if relevant to the case
- ✓ Allow victims to be assisted by victim support centres or advisors during investigations and judicial proceedings

# MONITORING

- independent group of experts (GREVIO)
- report-based procedure
- possibility of country visits
- country-specific and general recommendations
- reception of information from NGOs, national parliaments and bodies under other international instruments



**SAFE** FROM FEAR  
**SAFE FROM**  
**VIOLENCE**

**conventionviolence@coe.int**

**[www.coe.int/conventionviolence](http://www.coe.int/conventionviolence)**

**CONTACT**

**INFORMATION**

