

## Online Appendix for “Populist Challenge? Negotiating EU’s Accession to the Istanbul Convention in the Council”

1. Official documents - Istanbul Convention and EU’s accession
2. Positions of populist parties in government on the EU’s accession to the Istanbul Convention
3. Media analysis
4. Interviews

### Official documents - Istanbul Convention and EU’s accession

Council of Europe, [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (Istanbul Convention) and [Chart of signatures and ratifications](#)

#### *Parliament*

European Parliament, EPRS, [European added value assessment accompanying the legislative own-initiative report: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention](#), 2013

European Parliament, [Resolution of 25 February 2014 with recommendations to the Commission on Combating Violence against Women](#), 2013/2004(INL)

EP Legislative Observatory, [Procedure file on the Council decision on the Istanbul Convention](#), 2016/0062(NLE)

European Parliament, Resolutions of [24 November 2016](#), 2016/2966(RSP); [13 June 2018](#), 2018/2753(RSP); [28 November 2019](#), 2019/2855(RSP); [4 April 2019](#) (seeking an opinion from the Court of Justice), B8-0232/2019; [28 November 2019](#), 2019/2855(RSP); [21 January 2021](#), 2019/2169(INI).

European Parliament, [Interim resolution of 12 September 2017 on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \(COM\(2016\)0109\)](#)

European Parliament, [Resolution of 16 January 2019 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2017](#), 2018/2103(INI)

European Parliament, [Resolution of 13 February 2019 on experiencing a backlash in women’s rights and gender equality in the EU](#), 2018/2684(RSP)

European Economic and Social Committee, [Opinion: Combatting violence against women](#), 13 July 2022

LIBE and FEMM Committees, [Interim report on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \(COM\(2016\)0109 - 2016/0062R\(NLE\)\)](#), 2 February 2023

European Parliament, [Resolution of 15 February 2023](#) on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (COM(2016)0109 — 2016/0062R(NLE))

European Parliament, [Legislative resolution of 10 May 2023](#) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, 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 institutions and public administration of the Union (05514/2023 — C9-0037/2023 — 2016/0062A(NLE)); ... with [regard to matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement](#) (05523/2023 — C9-0038/2023 — 2016/0062B(NLE))

#### *Commission*

European Commission, [Roadmap: \(A possible\) EU accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women \(Istanbul Convention\)](#), October 2015

European Commission, [Roadmap](#) for Council decisions on the signing (2016/0063 (NLE)) and [conclusion](#) (2016/0062 (NLE)) of the Istanbul Convention by the European Union

European Commission, [Proposal for a Council Decision on the signing of the Istanbul Convention](#), COM(2016)0111

European Commission, [Proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of the Istanbul Convention](#), COM(2016)0109

European Commission, [Statement by Commissioner Dalli](#), EP Plenary session, sitting of 25 November 2021

European Commission, [Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), COM(2022) 105 final, 2022/0066 (COD), 8 March 2022

#### *Council*

Council, [Summary of discussions of the FREMP meeting](#), 16 December 2016

Council Legal Service, [Competence of the Union to become a party to the Istanbul convention](#), 13795/16, 27 October 2016

Council, Decisions of 11 May 2017 on the signing of the Istanbul Convention on behalf of the EU with regard to [judicial cooperation in criminal matters](#) (2017/865) and [asylum and non-refoulement](#) (2017/866)

Council Legal Service, Briefing of 11 November 2021 on the Opinion 1/19 of the Court of Justice 13800/21 (partially accessible to the public)

Agreement in principle and request for the consent of the European Parliament of 17 February 2023 regarding the Council Decisions on the conclusion of the Istanbul Convention, 6315/1/23 REV 1

Statements by Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland and a statement by Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Slovenia and Spain to the Agreement in principle and request for the consent of the European Parliament of 17 February 2023 regarding the Council Decisions on the conclusion of the Istanbul Convention, 6315/23 ADD 1 REV 2

Council, Decisions of 1 June 2023 on the conclusion, 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 [institutions and public administration of the Union \(2023/1075\)](#) and matters related to [judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement](#) (2023/1076)

[Declaration concerning the competence of the European Union](#) with regard to matters governed by the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence 2023/C 194/02

[Code of Conduct](#) laying down the internal arrangements regarding the exercise of the rights, and the fulfilment of the obligations, of the European Union and Member States under the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence 2023/C 194/03

Statements by Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Slovakia to the Council Decisions of 1 June 2023, 9252/23 ADD 1

*ECJ*

European Court of Justice, [Case File](#) / [Opinion of the Court \(Grand Chamber\), delivered on 6 October 2021](#)

**Positions of populist parties in government on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention**

In the table below, we list populist parties as well as their position in the government (major partner/minor partner/supporting party), period of being in power, and political ideology, based on the work of Paxton (forthcoming) combined with the authors' own analysis of MEPs voting behaviour to determine the positions on the Convention.

Country	Party	Position in the Government	Ideology	Position on the accession to the Istanbul Convention by the EU
Austria	FPÖ	Minor partner (2017-19)	Radical right	Ambivalent
Bulgaria	GERB	Major partner (2009-13; 2014-17; 2017-21; 2023-)	Right	Against
	Ataka	Minor partner (2017-19)	Radical right	Against
	NFSB	Minor partner (2017-21)	Radical right	Against
	VMRO ITN	Minor partner (2017-21) Minor partner (2021-22)	Radical right Right	Against Against
Croatia	MOST	Minor partner (2016)	Right	Ambivalent
Czechia	ANO	Minor partner (2014-17); Major partner (2017-18; 2018-21)	Centre	Ambivalent
Denmark	DFP	Supporting party (2015-19)	Radical right	Against
Estonia	EKRE	Minor partner (2019-21)	Radical right	Against
Finland	Finns Party	Minor partner (2015-17; 2023-)	Radical right	Ambivalent
Greece	ANEL	Minor partner (2015-19)	Radical right	Ambivalent
	Syriza	Major partner (2015-19)	Radical left	In favour
Hungary	Fidesz	Major partner (2010-)	Radical right	Against
Italy	Lega	Minor partner (2018-19; 2021-22  2022-)	Radical right	Ambivalent
	M5S	Major partner (2018-19; 2019-21; 2021-22)	Mixed	In favour
	Fdi	Major partner (2022-)	Radical right	Ambivalent
	FI	Minor partner (2021-22; 2022-)	Right	Ambivalent
Lithuania	DP	Minor partner (2012-16)	Mixed	Ambivalent
	TT	Minor partner (2012-16)	Right	Against
Poland	PiS	Major partner (2015-17; 2017-19; 2019-23)	Radical right	Against
	SP	Minor partner (2015-17; 2017-19; 2019-23)	Radical right	Against
Slovakia	SMER	Major partner (2012-16; 2016-20)	Left	Against
	SNS	Minor partner (2016-20)	Radical right	Against
	OLaNO	Major partner (2020-)	Right	Ambivalent
	SR	Minor partner (2020-)	Radical right	Against
Spain	Podemos	Minor partner (2020-23)	Radical left	In favour
Sweden	SD	Supporting party (2022-)	Radical right	Ambivalent

The position of political parties in government during the accession procedure was determined based on policy statements, the voting behaviour of parties' members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and media coverage. The position was coded as "ambivalent" when no official position of a political party could be found, and our analysis showed that this party's MEPs voted inconsistently. Specifically, we consulted the following sources:

Freedom Party of Austria, Zusammen. Für unser Österreich. Regierungsprogramm 2017 – 2022, p. 105  
[https://www.fpoe.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/www.fpoe.at/dokumente/2017/Zusammen\\_Fuer\\_Oesterreich\\_Regierungsprogramm.pdf](https://www.fpoe.at/fileadmin/user_upload/www.fpoe.at/dokumente/2017/Zusammen_Fuer_Oesterreich_Regierungsprogramm.pdf)

Austria, Programme of the Austrian Presidency July-December 2018, p. 42  
<https://www.eu2018.at/agenda-priorities/programme.html>

Balkan Insight, Domestic Violence Treaty Falling Victim to Political Obtuseness, 4 August 2020  
<https://balkaninsight.com/2020/08/04/istanbul-treaty-falling-victim-to-political-obtuseness/>

Bulgaria, Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Presidency of the Council of the European Union January-June 2018, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/56264/2018-jan-jun-bg-programme.pdf>

Estonia, Bulgaria, Austria, Trio Presidency Declaration on Equality Between Women and Men, 19 July 2017 <https://www.mlsp.government.bg/uploads/1/eu2017eetrio1.pdf>

European Parliament, Minutes of Proceedings - Results of Roll-Call Votes, 10 May 2023, pp. 276-279 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2023-05-10-RCV\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2023-05-10-RCV_EN.pdf)

Expats.cz, Czechia Won't Ratify International Treaty Against Domestic Violence This Year, 31 January 2022 <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czechia-won-t-ratify-international-treaty-against-domestic-violence-before-january-2023>

Kofod, Peter, Written Explanation: EU Accession to the Istanbul Convention and other Measures to Combat Gender-Based Violence (B9-0224/2019, B9-0225/2019, B9-0226/2019), 28 November 2019 <https://parltrack.org/activities/197570/type/WEXP>

National Council of the Slovak Republic, Roll-call Vote Regarding the Istanbul Convention, 25 February 2020  
<https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=schodze/hlasovanie/hlasklub&ID=43645>

Politico, Bulgaria Backs Away from Treaty Opposing Violence Against Women, 15 February 2018 <https://www.politico.eu/article/bulgaria-istanbul-convention-backs-away-from-treaty-opposing-violence-against-women/>

### List of sources - media analysis

We collected media data by systematically searching for articles, editorials, and opinion pieces related to the topic from the selected mainstream newspapers in each country, where right-wing populist parties were coalition partners. For such analyses, it is customary to employ two quality newspapers (right and left of centre) and a tabloid for analysis of politicisation (see Lobo and Karremans, 2018), and we follow suit with the following selection:

Country	Quality newspaper (right)	Quality newspaper (left)	Tabloid
Austria	Die Presse/ Kronen Zeitung	Der Standard	Österreich
Bulgaria	Dnevnik	Duma	24 Chasa
Croatia	Večernji list	Jutarnji list	24sata
The Czech Republic	Lidové noviny	MF Dnes	Blesk
Denmark	Berlingske	Politiken	Ekstra Bladet
Greece	Kathimerini	To Vima	Proto Thema
Hungary	Magyar Nemzet	Népszava	Blikk
Poland	Rzeczpospolita	Gazeta Wyborcza	Fakt
Slovakia	Pravda	Sme	Nový Čas

Our data collection process involved identifying relevant articles using different search terms related to the EU's ratification of the Istanbul Convention in respective national languages, such as *"EU-Ratifizierung des Istanbuler Übereinkommens"* for German or *"Ratyfikacja Konwencji Stambulskiej przez UE"* for Polish. We then tried categorising the articles based on their format (reprint of EU news agencies or opinion piece/editorial) and the stance taken by the journalist or outlet (supportive, neutral, or critical). We also examined the tone and scope of coverage to understand how the issue was framed and whether it was politicised or perpetuated by right-wing populist governments. We also paid attention to any patterns or trends in the coverage that could shed light on the implications of the third tenet of unpolitics, namely the perpetuation of crisis and politicisation of the issue on a domestic level by populist actors.

The list of selected publications that illustrates our findings of no domestic politicisation of the EU's accession to the Convention is as follows:

Dimitrova, Y. (2023, February 21). ЕС даде ход на ратификацията на Истанбулската конвенция [EU gave impetus to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention]. Dnevnik.bg.

[https://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/2023/02/21/4452485\\_es\\_dade\\_hod\\_na\\_ratifikaciata\\_na\\_istanbulskata/](https://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/2023/02/21/4452485_es_dade_hod_na_ratifikaciata_na_istanbulskata/)

Gulyás, E. (2022, March 8). Nők elleni erőszak: megelégtelte a kibúvókat az Európai Unió, irányelvvel kényszerítené Magyarországot is az Isztambuli Egyezmény elfogadására [Violence against women: the European Union has had enough of the ugbegoes, would force Hungary to adopt the Istanbul Convention by a directive]. Népszava. [https://nepszava.hu/3149130\\_nok-eroszak-isztambuli-egyezmeny-europai-unio-iranyelv-magyarorszag](https://nepszava.hu/3149130_nok-eroszak-isztambuli-egyezmeny-europai-unio-iranyelv-magyarorszag)

Jourová, V. (2016). Gastkommentar: Mehr Sicherheit für Frauen. *WirtschaftsBlatt*, 5052, p. 18.

Die Presse. (2016, November 25). *Jeder Zweite hält Gewalt gegen Partner für legitim*. p. 9.

Der Standard. (2019, November 26). *Grüne fordern vollständige Umsetzung der Istanbul-Konvention*. p. 11.

Kokot, M. (2020, July 27). 'To krok wstecz' — Sekretarz generalna Rady Europy o planie wypowiedzenia konwencji antyprzemocowej przez Polskę. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,26163659,sekretarz-generalna-rady-europy-o-wypowiedzenie-konwencji-antyprzemocowej.html>

Czarnowska, M. (2020). „Eine unendliche Ressource“ namens Gleichheit. *Wiener Zeitung*, p. 5.

Tiroler Tageszeitung. (2021, March 12). *EU kann Konvention als Union beitreten*. Nummer 71, p. 14.

Eastham, J. (2023, February 16). EU-Abgeordnete drängen EU zur Ratifizierung der Istanbul-Konvention. *www.euractiv.de*. <https://www.euractiv.de/section/antidiskriminierung/news/eu-abgeordnete-draengen-eu-zur-ratifizierung-der-istanbul-konvention/>

Die Presse. (2023, February 18). *FPÖ stimmte gegen mehr Frauenrechte*. P. 9.

Dudek, A. J., & Waloch, N. (2023, May 10). PE ratyfikował konwencję stambulską. Spurek: Historyczny moment. *wysokie obcasy*. <https://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/7,163229,29744378,pe-ratyfikowal-konwencje-stambulska-spurek-historyczny-moment.html>

Ordo Luris. (2023, May 11). *Konwencja stambulska przyjęta przez UE jedynie w części, bez postanowień promujących ideologię gender* | ordoiuris.pl. <https://ordoiuris.pl/rodzina-i-malzenstwo/konwencja-stambulska-przyjeta-przez-ue-jedynie-w-czesci-bez-postanowien>

EU tritt endlich Istanbul-Konvention zum Schutz von Frauenrechten bei. (2023, June 2). *Der Spiegel*. <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/eu-tritt-endlich-istanbul-konvention-zum-schutz-von-frauenrechten-bei-a-dfe405ca-70f2-490c-b411-0a12e8a47394>

Bulgarien verschärft Gesetz gegen häusliche Gewalt. (2023, August 8). *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. <https://www.nzz.ch/international/bulgarien-bekommt-schaerferes-gesetz-gegen-haeusliche-gewalt-ld.1750591>

## Interviews

The interviews were conducted under the condition of personal and institutional anonymity. While it imposed limitations on the presentation of the findings, the anonymity condition was sine qua non for most of the interviewees for participation in the study, given the sensitive nature of the file and allowed them to be frank about their reflections on the process without risking reputational and other costs for their institutions or themselves. The sample reflects the Member States' positions on the topic, including representatives of populist and mainstream governments and governments in favour, against, and ambivalent about the accession. The interviews were conducted in July 2023, right after the EU ratified the Istanbul Convention. This timing allowed the interviewees to reflect on the entire process. Most interviewees did not participate in the whole process (2015-2023), and although they had institutional memory of earlier stages of the negotiations, they might have been influenced by the recency bias. The first author gathered the interviews. The data includes 15 interviews. A few interviews included several interviewees, which accounted for 19 interviewees, including eleven women and eight men. Both co-authors coded the data, and the codes were compared, ensuring inter-coder reliability.

### *List of interviews*

Interview 2 - Interview with a representative of member state 2 (mainstream government with a populist minor partner) via videoconference

Interview 4 - Interview with a representative of member state 4 (right-wing populist government), Brussels, 19 July 2023

Interview 5 - Interview with a representative of member state 5 (mainstream government), Videoconference, 19 September 2023

Interview 6 - Interview with a representative of member state 6 (mainstream government), Brussels, 5 July 2023

Interview 7 – Interview with a representative of member state 7 (mainstream government), Brussels, 10 July 2023

Interview 8 - Interview with two representatives of member state 8 (mainstream government), Brussels, 10 July 2023

Interview 9 - Interview with a representative of member state 9 (right-wing populist government), Brussels, 11 July 2023

Interview 10 - Interview with a representative of member state 10 (mainstream government), Videoconference, 11 July 2023

Interview 11 - Interview with a representative of member state 11 (mainstream government), Videoconference, 12 July 2023

Interview 12 - Interview with a representative of member state 12 (mainstream government), Videoconference, 13 July 2023

Interview 13 - Interview with a representative of member state 13 (mainstream government), Written exchange, 20 September 2023

Interview 14 - Interview with a representative of member state 14 (right-wing populist government), Brussels, 20 July 2023

Interview 15 - Interview with a representative of EU institutions, Brussels, 13 July 2023

Interview 17 - Interview with a representative of a non-EU organisation, Brussels, 17 July 2023

Interview 18 - Interview with four representatives of EU institutions, Brussels, 5 July 2023

### **Reference list**

1. Lobo, M. C., & Karremans, J. (2018). Revisiting the politicization of the EU. A three-dimensional approach. *Changing Societies: Legacies and Challenges. Citizenship in Crisis*, 51–71. <https://doi.org/10.31447/ics9789726715047.02>
2. Paxton, F. (forthcoming). The Impact of Populist Parties in Government. In R. A. Huber & M. Jankowski (Eds.), *Populism: An Introduction*. London: SAGE.
- 3.