



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Slovakia
Title:	New government postponed ratification of the Istanbul Convention and adoption of the Act on Prevention and Elimination of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence
Date:	20 September 2016
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Postponement of the ratification of Istanbul Convention
Ground of discrimination:	Sex
Source:	legislation, policy development, miscellaneous
Field:	Other

Content

Policy development: On 8 June 2016, the Ministry of Justice requested, from the Prime Minister, the postponement of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention until 30 June 2017. Subsequently, the draft Act on Prevention and Elimination of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence was not included in the Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government for June to December 2016, adopted by the government on 16 June 2016.

After election to the National Council of the Slovak Republic held on 5 March 2016, 29 women passed to the Parliament (i.e. their number increased by two as compared to the period of 2012 – 2016) and a new coalition government was formed, with two women out of fifteen members. The new government adopted the Manifesto 2016-2020, in which it undertook, among others, in the area of social policy:

- to create conditions for the harmonious development of families through a set of comprehensive measures from education of children to support of young families and the foundation of functional pre-school establishments;
- to increase maternity benefits and create legislative conditions for development of social services for families with dependent children, with emphasis on children below 3 years and on the support of harmonisation of family life and professional life;
- to pay special attention to reducing inequalities between men and women in all domains of public and private life in compliance with the adopted strategic documents and Slovakia's international commitments;
- to specifically focus on combating violence against women, for example, by developing services and measures to prevent and punish violence against women and domestic violence, as well as by **encouraging a society-wide discussion on international documents that address marriage, family and violence against women and children;**
- to continue strengthening the mechanisms for complying with the principle of equal treatment and prevention and prosecution of discrimination with a special focus on

- the implementation of measures to improve the enforcement of antidiscrimination laws, including an effective use of temporary positive actions and the consistent monitoring of discrimination prohibition in all areas.

The Manifesto is missing the promise to adopt a new Act on Prevention and Elimination of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence, which is based on the Istanbul Convention requirements. In early June 2016, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family submitted a draft "Report on Implementation of Measures and Tasks resulting from the National Action Plan for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women 2014 – 2019" for an interministerial comments procedure. The purpose of the "draft report" was to inform about fulfilment of tasks in the years 2014-2015, as resulted from the Resolution of Government of the Slovak Republic No. 730/2013 of 18 December 2013. The "draft report" is based on the evaluation of tasks imposed by this Resolution on individual entities of state administration, and of recommendations for local and regional self-government, research and the academic community for the years 2014 and 2015, as well as on evaluations of NGOs that fulfil a unique function in the cross-sectional addressing of the issue of elimination of violence against women.

In the interministerial comments procedure, the Government accepted the proposal of the Ministry of Justice in Task No. 2 of the document, entitled "To prepare ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic Violence", to omit the following text: "The Ministry of Justice prepares a document Proposal for ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence for interministerial comments procedure". The Ministry proposed it be replaced by the following: "On 8 June 2016 the Ministry of Justice of SR requested the Prime Minister by letter No. 43773/2016/13 for postponement of the implementation of the task until 30 June 2017. The reason for postponement is the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic 2016–2020, indicating the need of society-wide discussion on international documents that address violence against women and children.

On 16 June 2016, the Government adopted the Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government for June to December 2016. The draft Act on Elimination of Gender-Based Violence was not included in this plan. This means that its adoption is again postponed by at least one year. Although the previous Government declared the intention to ratify the Convention in 2012 and the task to ratify the Istanbul Convention was incorporated into the National Action Plan to prevent and eliminate violence against women for 2014 – 2019 (NAP), the ratification has been postponed several times. The new Government thus did not comply with recommendations of the Slovak National Centre for Human rights No. 35 to complete ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the determined date and No. 39 to adopt new legislation in the area of protection of women against violence.

Key points of analysis: In spite of the proclaimed support of the elimination of violence against women in the Manifesto, the coalition partners agreed not to ratify the Istanbul Convention in 2016 and not to adopt the Act on Prevention and Elimination of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence based on the Istanbul Convention requirements.

Internet link sources:

<http://www.vlada.gov.sk/members-of-the-government/>
<http://www.vlada.gov.sk/manifesto-of-the-government/>
<http://www.rokovanie.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=25633>
<http://www.rokovanie.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=25473>
<http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=23121> in
 Slovak,
http://www.gender.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/NAP_VaW_2014-2019_EN.pdf,
 all last accessed 5 September 2016.

