



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

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Estonia
Title:	Ratification of the Istanbul Convention
Date:	19 February 2018
Expert:	Anu Laas
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Estonia ratified the Istanbul Convention on 20 September 2017
Ground of discrimination:	Sex
Source:	Legislative development
Field:	Other
Applicable law:	The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

Content

Law development: The draft law on the ratification was prepared during the spring of 2017 by the Ministry of Justice, and was presented to the Parliament on 29 May 2017. The parliament's Legal Affairs Committee discussed the draft law in June and September 2017, and on 13 June and 20 September 2017 Parliamentary debates were held.

On 20 September 2017, the Estonian Parliament adopted the draft law on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The president proclaimed the law of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on 25 September 2017, and it entered into force on 6 October 2017.

Key points of analysis: The Istanbul Convention was signed by Estonia in 2014. In 2017, several amendments to the Penal Code and to the Victim Support Act were adopted. The Ministry of Justice has prepared amendments to the Penal Code (PC) concerning stalking, FGM, forced marriages and the prohibition of buying sexual services from victims of trafficking. Minimum requirements of the Istanbul Convention were taken into account. Sexual harassment is now defined as an offence against equality under the Penal Code, but it is seen as a misdemeanour and extra-judicial proceedings should be conducted by the Police and Border Guard Board. The coordinating body for the implementation of the IC is the Ministry of Justice.

Unfortunately, victims' related issues (protection, services, capacity, resources) were only briefly debated, but there are challenges and room for development.

Internet link source: Penal Code, RT I, 30.12.2017, 29,
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/509012018005/consolide>.
President of the Republic proclaimed the ratification of the Istanbul Convention,
<https://www.president.ee/en/media/press-releases/13591-president-of-the-republic-proclaimed-the-ratification-of-the-istanbul-convention/index.html>.

Shorthand reports: <http://stenogrammid.riigikogu.ee/et/201706131000#PKP-21201>;
<http://stenogrammid.riigikogu.ee/et/201709201400#PKP-21422>;
State Gazette, RT II, 26.09.2017, 1, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/226092017001>.