

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002802/24
to the Commission
Eleonora Meletti (PPE)
(6 December 2024)**

Subject: Measures to combat domestic violence and protect children

Recently, two horrific cases have come to light in Greece. One involved instances of domestic and sexual abuse, with the accused — a police officer — alleged to have systematically abused his wife and minor children. In the other case, the perpetrator — a father of two children — violently killed his wife and hid her body in their home. He confessed to the crime seven days later.

The EU directive on combating violence against women, which proposes measures to prevent such violence and protect victims, is an important step. Nonetheless, as we can see, incidents of violence — which often even lead to the perpetrator taking the victim's life — continue to take place and the protection of victims, who are often minors, is imperative.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What specific measures does it propose, also in the context of implementing the aforementioned directive, to prevent domestic and sexual violence and, in particular, to protect and support child minors, who are the most vulnerable victims?
2. How does it intend to tackle the problem of unfit parents, protecting child victims of domestic violence, and does it intend to develop relevant guidelines?
3. Will there be funding and support for Member States to set up more accommodation facilities, helplines and child protection services?

Submitted: 6.12.2024

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(26 March 2025)**

Both Directive (EU) 2024/1385 ⁽¹⁾ and the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention ⁽²⁾ consider children who have witnessed domestic violence as victims of said violence themselves.

Specific requirements of protection and support under both instruments include specialised, age-appropriate medical and psychosocial care, as well as child-sensitive provision of shelters.

The directive requires Member States to ensure that authorities have access to relevant information when assessing the best interests of the child in civil proceedings concerning them, though decisions on parental custody lie with Member States, and to take the risk of child abuse when assessing the victims' protection needs ⁽³⁾.

In case an offender has rights of access, Member States must create safe spaces where such access can take place, under the supervision of trained professionals, where appropriate.

The recommendation on integrated child protection systems ⁽⁴⁾ calls on Member States to set up special support and early intervention programmes for child victims, their family and other caregivers as soon as the competent authorities have any indication of violence.

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) ⁽⁵⁾ programme funds activities such as the establishment of help centres and child helplines ⁽⁶⁾, improving accessibility of services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, training for professionals and exchanges of best practices at EU level.

⁽¹⁾ Directive — EU — 2024/1385 — EN — EUR-Lex <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj/eng>

⁽²⁾ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

⁽³⁾ Directive 2024/1385, Article 16(3), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj/eng>

⁽⁴⁾ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/1238 adopted 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=celex:32024H1.238>

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014, OJ L 156, 5 May 2021, 1-21 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2021:156:TOC>).

⁽⁶⁾ Child Helpline International (<https://childhelplineinternational.org/>) funded under the CERV programme, provides mental health support to children. This support can include emotional, psychological, and sometimes legal support for children who contact the helpline.

The Justice Programme ⁽⁷⁾ also supports the protection of children through child-friendly justice by strengthening capacities of specialised staff so that they are able to access child-friendly procedures ⁽⁸⁾, and raise awareness of concerned children, before, during and after judicial proceedings.

⁽⁷⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/693 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Justice Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1382/2013 (OJ L 156, 5.5.2021)- provides funding opportunities for stakeholders working to protect children and their rights in the area of justice.

⁽⁸⁾ Under an indirect management grant under the European Commission's justice programme to the Council of Europe, a joint European Commission and Council of Europe project will help to better protect children.