21-22 September 2026
Implementing the Istanbul Convention
after the EU's Accession in the Academic System.
Backlash, Gaps and Institutional Responsibility

A Pan-European Conference

Working Group 1.3

Teaching the Istanbul Convention:

Curricula, Professional Training and Resistance within Academic Systems

Final Report

The Working Group brought together participants from different disciplinary and national backgrounds to discuss current experiences, barriers and priorities concerning the integration of the Istanbul Convention into universities and educational systems.

A first key issue was the continued reliance on **individual academic commitment**. Teaching and training on gender-based violence and the Istanbul Convention are still frequently based on the initiative of individual academics rather than being systematically embedded within university curricula and institutional programmes.

Participants stressed the need to move towards **structured, sustainable and institutionally supported education and training**, while acknowledging the challenges posed by academic autonomy and the difficulty of introducing mandatory

educational components. Stronger support from national and international institutions was therefore considered important in facilitating this transition.

A second major theme concerned the need for a **multidisciplinary approach**. Gender-based violence is still often addressed separately within medicine, law, social sciences and other disciplines. The Working Group emphasised the importance of overcoming these disciplinary boundaries and developing educational models that bring together different perspectives, knowledge and professional expertise.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of **starting prevention and education at an early age**. Prof. Lorella Franzoni presented an initiative developed by the University of Parma and implemented in primary schools, focusing on gender stereotypes and affective education. This experience highlighted how gender stereotypes may already be well established during childhood and reinforced the importance of introducing prevention and education from the earliest stages.

This perspective was shared by participants from different national contexts, including Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany. In the Italian context, parental-consent requirements for some educational activities addressing sexuality were discussed as a potential barrier to the development of early prevention initiatives.

Another relevant issue was the marked **gender imbalance in education and training on gender-based violence**, with women representing the large majority of participants in some postgraduate programmes. The Working Group highlighted the need to develop strategies to engage men more actively, both in education and training and as partners in prevention and cultural change.

Participants also underlined the persistent **gap between academic knowledge and professional practice**. Education should not be limited to theoretical knowledge but should contribute to developing concrete professional skills and effective institutional responses to gender-based violence.

The importance of **including the voices and lived experiences of women and survivors** in education and training was also discussed, together with the need to ensure appropriate support and safe learning environments for students, staff and those sharing their experiences.

Finally, **funding, institutional continuity and long-term sustainability** were identified as essential conditions for effective implementation. European monitoring mechanisms, including GREVIO, together with national and international institutional

support, may play an important role in encouraging universities to move from isolated initiatives towards sustainable educational structures.

Conclusions

The central question emerging from the Working Group was:

How can we move from individual initiatives to a structural, sustainable and shared academic responsibility?

The discussion highlighted that individual **academic commitment alone is not sufficient**. Effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention within academic systems also requires institutional and political support, multidisciplinary cooperation and stronger collaboration across universities, disciplines and national contexts.

The key message emerging from the Working Group can therefore be summarised as the need to move **from individual commitment to collective responsibility, and from good practices to structural change.**