

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Stef Blok
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The Hague, March 25th 2021
Refnr.21/03/NLR/mj/rp

Subject: The NVR condemns the President's Executive order of Turkey to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention

Your Excellency,

We are writing to you concerning today's EU Foreign Affairs Council, in which an exchange of views will be held on the Southern neighborhood and Turkey. We, the board off the Council of Women NVR, are writing you, as a member of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), and representing over one million women in the Netherlands.

The NVR would like to express its grave concerns and condemnation of the Presidential Executive order issued by President Erdogan on March 20 2021, announcing his intention to withdraw Turkey from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the Istanbul Convention. This shocking decision comes 10 years after Turkey, then also led by Prime Minister Erdogan's government, was the first country to sign onto the Convention, as a message to the world of its political commitment and ambition to eliminating male violence against women and girls

The Istanbul Convention is the most comprehensive legislative instrument to date, which provides measures to address all forms of violence against women and girls.

This decision which represents a clear regression on the rights of all women and girls cannot be tolerated, and is in direct contravention with EU fundamental values as per Article 2 TEU, Article 8 TFEU ('gender mainstreaming' clause) and in EU Charter for Fundamental Rights under Article 23.

This decision is a manifestation of the growing political backlash against women's rights in Europe, in which we, together with members of the European Women's lobby (EWL) Coordination for Turkey, have been fighting against at the forefront alongside the women's movement in Turkey and across Europe, within an increasingly shrinking space for civil society.

In light of this, the NVR recognizes that this decision to withdraw has yet to come into effect, and that Turkey still has the opportunity to reverse this decision and step up to actively ensure the protection of all women and girls from all forms of violence as per its current legal obligations to the Istanbul Convention.

Your Excellency, we call on you to urgently step up in this crisis and demand that the government of Turkey reverse its decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention. We urge you to call upon Turkey, to fulfill its current legal obligations to the Istanbul Convention and fully implement the provisions of the Convention without any reservations, in solidarity of upholding EU fundamental rights.

Yours sincerely,



Nenita La Rose
President

The Dutch Council of Women (Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad- NVR)