



# **VIU PhD academy Preventing and combating violence against women**

**Preventing and combating violence against women –  
the Istanbul Convention after EU accession**

**January 26-30, 2026**

**Venice International University  
Isola di San Servolo, Venice**

# VIU International PhD Academy

## **Preventing and combating violence against women – the Istanbul Convention after EU accession**

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Venice International  
University

Scientific Coordinators:

Sara De Vido

Ca' Foscari University of  
Venice

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University of Milano-  
Bicocca

Zeynep Gülru Goker,  
Sabanci University

The purpose of this Academy, in cooperation with UNIRE network and OCEAN, is to provide the participants with an in depth and highly qualified legal, philosophical, sociological and political analysis of the content, interpretation, implementation and application of the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence more than ten years after its entry into force, and especially in aftermath of the EU accession. Participants will acquire knowledge on how the landscape concerning violence against women has changed with the adoption of the Convention and with the consequent accession by the EU.

The PhD Academy will delve into:

a) the text of the Convention and the relationship of this instrument with other legal instruments in other human rights systems, like the Inter-American one;

b) its implementation by GREVIO;

c) the interpretation of the Istanbul Convention provided by the European Court of Human Rights;

d) the EU accession and legal consequences of it, including the adoption in 2024 of the Directive on countering violence against women and domestic violence that comprises the important dimension of cyber violence;

e) the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the EU mentioning the Istanbul Convention;

f) the contemporary politics of the Istanbul Convention;

g) anti-gender politics and democratic backsliding (comparative perspective across Europe as well as focus on Turkey);

h) the aftermath of the withdrawal from the Convention;

i) social movements and feminist institutional responses anti-gender movements that hinder the application of the Convention;

j) the Istanbul Convention, populist masculinities and political homophobia;

k) the Istanbul Convention and the protection of refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

Intersectionality will be a cross-cutting issue (homeless women, women with disability, migrant women, for example);

l) socio-political-cultural impact and public debates in EU countries about the application of the Istanbul Convention;

m) missing aspects of the Convention (sexual and reproductive health and digital violence, including the use of artificial intelligence) will be covered.

Thanks to the knowledge of the professors, including the editors of the first commentary to the Istanbul Convention (Elgar Publishing, 2023), the academy will be the first to be focused to this fundamental legal instrument, which is considered as a comprehensive and gold standard in the field of preventing violence against women and domestic violence. They will also learn what a gender-sensitive approach and awareness campaigns mean and how they affect policies and decisions also at the judiciary level and in training in a continuous dialogue between institutions, experts and association of the civil society. The academy will be under the auspices of the Academic Network UN.I.RE. (UNiversità In REte contro la violenza di genere), composed of universities, research centres and researchers who share the goal of implementing the Istanbul Convention starting with the academic system, and OCEAN, the Open Council of Europe Academic Networks which aims at sharing and creating knowledge around the Council of Europe's more than 200 conventions in European academia through teaching and research networks.

This PhD Academy is led by:

- Ca' Foscari University of Venice
- University of Milano-Bicocca
- Sabanci University

### **Faculty**

Sara De Vido, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Marina Calloni, University of Milano-Bicocca

Zeynep Gülru Goker, Sabanci University

Sara Dal Monico, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Daniela Belliti, University of Milano-Bicocca, UNIRE network

Ayşe Betül Çelik, Sabanci University

Cenk Özbay, Sabanci University

Micaela Frulli, University of Florence

Olaf Köndgen, Council of Europe, OCEAN network

### **Topics**

- Gender-based violence against women
- Stereotypes
- Anti-gender movements
- Digital violence
- Gender-based violence against women during migration
- Intersectionality

### **Learning outcomes for participants**

- 1) They will know the Istanbul Convention and the European system of protection of women, including at the intersection of different grounds of discrimination, from gender-based violence;
- 2) They will be able to use their knowledge in the academia (for their PhD), but also in professional contexts such as NGOs, international organizations, European Union agencies, etc.), especially with reference to the protection of fundamental human rights;
- 3) They will acquire the ability to identify and interpret relevant legal instruments (both hard law and soft law) in light of current challenges, so as to develop legal reasoning aimed at reflection on relevant legal and socio-political-cultural issues;
- 4) They will be able to critically analyse decisions and legal documents on countering violence against women and domestic violence;
- 5) They will understand what it means to apply an intersectional perspective;
- 6) They will be able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- 7) For lawyers, judges, and interested scholars they will develop a gender sensitive approach that is crucial for eradicating stereotypes and prejudices that are commonly entrenched in the judiciary and court judgments;
- 8) For participants coming from countries that are not party to the European system, the academy will be very helpful in providing tools for comparing different systems of protection of women from gender-based violence.

### **Who can apply?**

This international PhD Academy is offered to PhD students, post-docs, and junior researchers with background in Law, Social and Political Philosophy, Social Sciences, Sociology, Gender Studies. Open to candidates from all the VIU Member Institutions; applications from excellent candidates from non-member institutions will be also considered and evaluated.

### **Fees & Grant Support**

Full fee waiver scholarships are available for students from VIU member institutions. In addition, grant support is available to support partially or fully the costs of international travel. Accommodation is provided free of charge. The participation fee for students of non-member institutions is Euro 1.100 (incl. VAT). The fee is

inclusive of tuition, course materials, accommodation, lunches, social events, and taxes. Students from non-member institutions are not eligible for VIU grant support.

VIU Alumni are eligible for a reduced fee.

### **Call for applications**

**June 10 – September 30, 2025**

**via the VIU website**

Applicants must submit the (1) application form, (2) a letter of motivation – which should include a short bio and a brief description of the candidate's research project, (3) a curriculum vitae and (4) a photo.

For further information: [phdacademy@univiu.org](mailto:phdacademy@univiu.org)

### **VIU International PhD Academies**

Venice International University is a consortium of 22 institutions, representing 14 countries throughout the world.

The mission of VIU is to foster cooperation among VIU member institutions while facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas, by developing, promoting, and organizing joint academic, research and training/capacity-building program. Students from non-member universities may participate in selected academic programs.

The academic programs at VIU are distinguished by a markedly interdisciplinary approach to the topics, and by the international perspectives that the participants contribute to the discussions. The VIU campus is on the island of San Servolo in Venice, Italy.

Venice International University holds two/three International PhD Academies each year. They are intensive training opportunities open to PhD candidates from the member universities of VIU.

A PhD is the highest diploma awarded by universities in the world, and PhDs are naturally expected to take on major responsibilities in their professional life. Apart from the disciplinary scientific skills acquired during doctoral study and research, it is the ability to respond to the requirements of creativity, innovation, and project management, that produce the significant added value of a doctoral degree.

Whether they will work within or outside academia, PhDs must be able to develop a

forward-looking vision of the challenges they have to face. The interdisciplinary approach of all VIU activities is adopted also in the PhD Academy, where the participants have the opportunity to meet their peers from all over the world, and to tackle transversal topics.

[www.univiu.org/study/phd-academy](http://www.univiu.org/study/phd-academy)

### **Location**



### **Venice International University**

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