
Brussels, 24 November 2014

Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality and Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development made the following statement:

Discrimination and violence against women continues around the world, in all societies and regions. Women are harassed, raped, mutilated, beaten or murdered, even in their own homes. In the EU, one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. Outside the EU, girls are prevented from going to school or forced to marry and sexual violence remains a deplorable and widely used tactic of war. Women human rights defenders are threatened and attacked for doing their work.

Combating all forms of violence against women and girls is a fundamental pillar of the respect for human or fundamental rights and remains a priority for the EU, both internally and externally. One year ago, the European Commission and EEAS jointly adopted the Communication on eliminating female genital mutilation, and we have continued our efforts in this area. The EU is funding projects promoting social change and preventing this practice, as well as providing support to victims and engaging with members of practising communities to advocate for attitudinal change.

This year marks the entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which represents a very important instrument to effectively combat violence against women at national and European levels.

The world will soon mark the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, and the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on the contribution of Women to Peace and Security. We will review the progress that we have made in implementing these important instruments and will reflect on further action.

In 2015 the European Commission will also formulate a new agenda for development for the coming years. Gender equality and women’s empowerment, the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls, the elimination of all harmful practices are a precondition for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The EU supports gender equality as both a stand-alone goal and its mainstreaming in the post-2015 framework for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

We strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls. From today until Human Rights Day on December 10, all EU Delegations around the world will also join the call for action of the ‘16-days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence’ international campaign of the UN Secretary General and will raise awareness on the issue.

Press contacts
Catherine RAY (+32 2 296 99 21)
Maja KOCIJANCIC (+32 2 298 65 70)
Mina ANDREEVA (+32 2 299 13 82)

General public inquiries:
Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email