

Let's put an END to Violence against Women

Factsheet | November 2019

Violence against women takes many different forms, ranging from intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and online abuse to honour-related violence, female genital mutilation and can ultimately lead to femicide. Gender-based violence takes place at home, at work, at school, in the street or online. It affects the victims' health and well-being, and it restricts their possibility to thrive in society, in education and employment. Combatting violence against women, through legislative and policy measures, financial support and awareness raising, is a priority for the European Commission.



1 in 3

women in the EU aged 15 or over
has experienced physical and/or
sexual violence



1 in 2

has experienced sexual
harassment



1 in 10

has faced
online harassment

There are many myths concerning violence against women. Let's get our facts straight:

MYTH 1: Domestic violence is a private issue and we should not get involved

Domestic violence is a crime. It is against the law and thus it is not a private matter. If you commit a crime in your own home, it is still a crime for which you can be prosecuted. Silence around domestic violence enables it to continue. Everyone, women included, has the right to be safe and free from fear everywhere, including in the domestic sphere.

MYTH 2: Addressing gender-based violence means imposing ideas and values onto other cultures

Violence is not a legitimate part of any culture. Gender-based violence exists in every country, culture or community and governments around the world have outlawed most acts of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence cannot be

allowed to be perpetuated. It is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today. Women are being harassed, raped, mutilated, beaten and even murdered. This must end.

MYTH 3: There would be fewer rapes if women refrained from risky behaviours (for example, revealing clothing, being drunk...)

The victim's behaviour can never be taken as a sign of consent to sexual activity. This victim blaming discourse perpetuates the idea that rape can be justified: 27% of EU citizens say non-consensual sex could be justifiable in certain situations. This shifts the blame to the victim/survivor, and minimises the perpetrator's responsibility.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOCUS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

What are the key actions the European Commission is doing to tackle the issue?

COMMITMENT AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The European Union signed the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women on 13 June 2017. The European Commission is working on concluding the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention, and encourages all Member States to ratify the Convention at national level.

AWARENESS RAISING

Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality dedicated 2017 to combating violence against women. Under the hashtag #SayNoStopVAW, the European Commission launched a social media campaign under the Year to take a clear stance against violence against women.

In April 2019, Commissioner Jourová and Commissioner Gabriel launched the #DigitalRespect4Her campaign to raise awareness about online violence against women and promote good practices tackling this issue. It was supported by public figures and included opportunities to exchange stories with others across the world.

POLICY MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is monitoring violence against women policy within the Gender Equality Index. It is collecting data on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide in the EU. Eurostat is developing an EU-wide survey to get updated prevalence figures on violence against women in the EU. The survey will be implemented in Member States from 2020 onwards.

FUNDING

Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, the Commission finances projects to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children. During the programme period of 2014-2020, the budget of these projects is approximately €105 million.



MAINSTREAMING EU ACTION TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The European Commission also focuses on violence against women in a range of other policy areas:

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

The EU and UN recently launched the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The EU contributes € 500 million.

HUMANITARIAN AID AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

The Commission is funding projects to combat sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings such as Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Bangladesh. During 2017 and 2018, it is estimated that the EU allocated more than €62m in humanitarian aid for the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT:

Ending discrimination and violence against women is the focus of a EU-UN Women programme in the Western Balkans and Turkey, and bilateral programmes in the Eastern Neighbourhood. In the Southern Neighbourhood, a regional campaign on VAW promotes gender responsive education, legislation and media.

TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS:

The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator continues to tackle the persistent pattern of women and girls remaining the vast majority of the victims of trafficking in human beings. Prevention remains at the core of all EU anti-trafficking action, including by countering the demonstrated impunity that fosters the crime.

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION:

The Common European Asylum System prescribes the need to take a gendered approach. The Commission supports measures taken in migrant reception centres to protect and support women and girls affected by violence.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION:

The European Social Fund supports targeted actions to combat violence against women, notably vulnerable women and those with disabilities. A focus is also put on the gender dimension of the European Structural and Investment Funds.

TRADE POLICY:

Under the Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance, the EU closely monitors human rights and violence against women records of trade partners.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS:

The Commission promotes inclusive growth, which averts economic hardship and, with it, social tensions and violence. Women's economic independence in particular is promoted as it is a precondition for empowerment.

REGIONAL POLICY:

The European Regional Development Fund supports women's economic and social empowerment and social infrastructure investments in women's shelters and safe public spaces for women and girls.

EDUCATION AND SPORT:

The Commission's good practice and peer learning work on violence against women and girls focuses on gender gaps in education, combatting bullying and gender-based violence in sport.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION:

The Commission funds research on gender-based violence, especially human trafficking. The 'Science with and for Society' programme will investigate gender-based violence in research organisations and universities.

TRANSPORT:

The Commission, with the support of other EU institutions, has launched the 'Women in Transport - EU Platform for Change', an action-oriented platform to strengthen women's employment and opportunities in the transport sector, but also address the problem of workplace violence. Several actions have already been presented to address this particular issue.

FUNDING ACTION TO COMBAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The European Commission regularly co-funds Europe wide, national and local projects to prevent violence against women and children and support victims. Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, it supports organisations that tackle the problem in a multitude of ways.

So far, this funding programme has provided funding for **173 projects**; through the call for proposals on preventing and combatting gender-based violence, violence against children and awareness-raising campaigns on national level. Some examples of the funded projects include:



DOCTORS AND NURSES IN FINLAND are trained to recognise signs of violence, to encourage disclosure and reporting of violence and to raise awareness of support services available.



A GERMAN-LED PROJECT has developed a multi-professional EU Roadmap for Referral Pathways on early or forced marriage or forced sexual relationships for frontline professionals throughout the EU.



A CAMPAIGN IN ITALY uses major football stadiums, televised matches and football programmes to reach men and boys with the message that violence against women is unacceptable.



IN THE NETHERLANDS, THE WOMEN'S SHELTER ORGANISATION KADERA is mobilising housing providers to help tackle domestic violence by training caretakers, maintenance workers and many others.



A UK-LED PROJECT trains young people and staff at universities to encourage disclosure of experiences of sexual violence and to support those affected in the best way possible.



JUDGES AND STATE ATTORNEYS FROM CROATIA are trained to address barriers to the legal protection of women who have experienced violence.



THE POLICE ACADEMY IN CYPRUS is incorporating specific training on violence against women in its curriculum with a focus on registration of complaints, investigation and prosecution.



"MEN SPEAK OUT" BY GAMS IN BELGIUM encourages men from communities practicing female genital mutilation to oppose such practices. Other GAMS projects work with survivors in the EU and abroad.



THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN GREECE is gathering expertise, facilitating collaboration, and offering practical advice in order to build a safety net for migrant and refugee women.