



European Commission

Let's put an end to Violence against Women



Factsheet | November 2020

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. Sexual violence can even be used as a war weapon. 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.



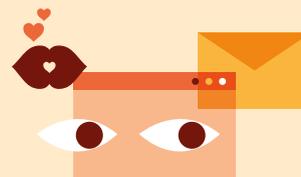
1 in 3

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



1 in 2

women in the EU have experienced sexual harassment



1 in 10

women in the EU have 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 should 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 at home. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that for some women, home is far from being a safe place.

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 continue. It is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the 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, while the fact is that the only person responsible for rape is the perpetrator.



EUROPEAN UNION FOCUS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

What is the European Union 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 committed to concluding the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention. In case of no progress, the Commission will propose measures to achieve the same objectives as the Convention.

Together with Member States the Commission co-leads the UN's Action Coalition on countering gender-based violence under the Generation Equality Forum.

COMMITMENT AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The European Commission committed to better protecting victims of crime and achieving gender equal Europe.

Among others, the Commission will present a new legislative initiative on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence and launch a campaign to address stereotypes.

Already now, the Commission is leading a social media campaign #SayNoStopVAW to stop violence against women.

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 figures on violence against women in the EU. The survey will be run in Member States from 2020 onwards and results are expected in 2023.

FUNDING

Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, and its successor, 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 fight against violence against women is reflected in a range of other policy areas:

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

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

HUMANITARIAN AID AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

During 2018 and 2019, the EU allocated more than €62 million in humanitarian aid for the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide. The Commission is also an active member of the global initiative Call to Action on Protection of Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT:

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

TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Women and girls remain the vast majority of the victims of trafficking in human beings, and are disproportionately targeted for sexual exploitation. The EU anti-trafficking legal and policy framework addresses the gender dimension of 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.

COHESION POLICY:

The European Regional Development Funds supports women's economic and social empowerment and social infrastructure investments in women's shelters and safe public spaces for women and girls. The European Social Fund supports targeted actions to combat violence against women, notably women in vulnerable socio-economic situations, including women with disabilities.

TRADE POLICY:

Under the Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+), the EU closely monitors human rights violations and violence against women in beneficiary countries.

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.

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.

EDUCATION AND SPORT:

The Commission's work on violence against women and girls aims to reduce gender gaps in education, for instance by encouraging women's participation in and career development in STEM and IT subjects.

In addition, by the end of 2021/22, experts will make proposals to the Commission, Member States and sport organisations in the area of gender equality in sport. Topics related to girls and women's participation in sport, female coaches, women's representation in decision-making processes, media coverage as well as gender-based violence will be addressed. The Erasmus+ Sport Chapter finances projects aimed at fighting gender-based violence in sport.

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 co-funds a number of Europe-wide, national and local projects to prevent violence against women and children and to support victims. The Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme has provided funding

for over **200 projects** which focus 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 out to men and boys with the message that violence against women is unacceptable.



THE PIE4SHELTERS PROGRAM AIMS AT IMPROVING THE CAPACITY OF HOMELESS SERVICES to support women with the experience of gender-based violence, highlighting the under-addressed intersection of homelessness and gender-based violence.



THE FRENCH-LED CEASE PROJECT created an additional front line in the battle against intimate partner violence, integrating companies as new actors.



IN CROATIA, A NEW NATIONAL HELPLINE INCREASES EFFECTIVE PROTECTION AND SUPPORT for gender-based violence victims by tackling under-reporting and promoting multi-disciplinary cooperation among professionals.



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.



SAFERCITIES IS A CROWD-MAPPING WEBSITE that enables young people, especially women to identify and share public spaces that make them feel uneasy, scared or happy and safe, in six cities in Belgium and Spain.



CYBERSAFE PROMOTES HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND TACKLES ONLINE VIOLENCE against women and girls through an innovative educational prevention programme available in eight languages.