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NO.
NEIN.**

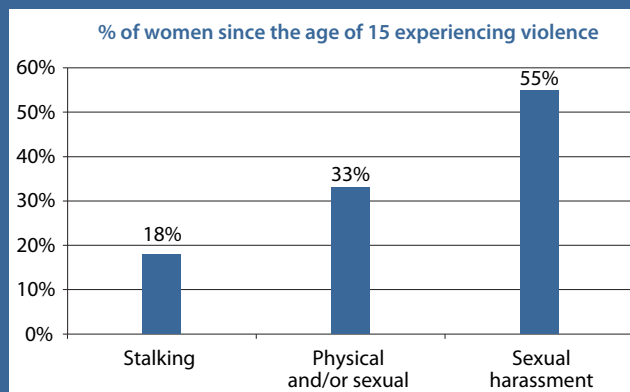
Say No!
Stop
violence
against
women

Violence against women is rooted in women's unequal status in society, and that status reflects the unbalanced distribution of social, political, and economic power among women and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women ⁽¹⁾. Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harms on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that one in three women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15 ⁽²⁾.

The full extent of violence against women is difficult to estimate. Violence against women continues to be under-reported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In a survey of public opinion across the EU, 71 % of those surveyed said they had a high level of trust in their police ⁽³⁾.

In EIGE's Gender Equality Index 2015 it was found that where people tend to have more trust in justice institutions, levels of disclosed violence are higher ⁽⁴⁾. Across the EU, 33 % of women have reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence ⁽⁵⁾.

What are the facts?



Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data, 2014 ⁽⁶⁾.

According to Eurostat, from 2010 to 2012, an estimated 2.0 per 100 000 people in the EU were registered as victims of human trafficking ⁽⁷⁾.

In 2014, EIGE estimated that ⁽⁸⁾:

- The costs of gender-based violence against women in the EU amount to billions, but budgets devoted to tackling this crime only amount to millions;
- Spending on specialised services for women represents just 3 % of the total cost of intimate partner violence against women;
- The loss to the economy through lost output as a result of injuries is around 12 % of the total cost of violence against women; services, especially criminal justice services, make up around 30 %.

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in the EU could amount to €109 billion per year ⁽⁹⁾.



Is violence against women a crime in the EU?

A number of EU directives play a significant role in framing the definitions of different types of violence against women and providing a structure for addressing the phenomenon in its different forms:

- In the following directives, the European Commission aimed to extend the principle of equal treatment beyond the sphere of the employment market and professional life to other areas of everyday life, and prevent discrimination, which includes sexual harassment: Directive 2004/113/EC⁽¹⁰⁾, Directive 2006/54/EC⁽¹¹⁾ and Directive 2010/41/EU⁽¹²⁾.
- Directive 2011/36/EU⁽¹³⁾ on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims includes provisions on law enforcement with regard to perpetrators of human trafficking, the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims.
- Directive 2011/92/EU⁽¹⁴⁾ on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography protects children across the EU from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Directive 2011/99/EU⁽¹⁵⁾ on the European Protection Order and Regulation (EU) No 606/2013⁽¹⁶⁾ on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters ensures that civil and criminal protection orders issued in one EU country can be recognised across the EU, meaning that women who have suffered domestic violence are protected from the perpetrators if the victims travel or move anywhere in the EU. Protection orders, especially emergency protection orders, offer women and children important protection in situations of immediate danger.
- Directive 2012/29/EU⁽¹⁷⁾ (Victims Right's Directive) on common minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims is important for victims of violence against women. Its aim is to strengthen the rights of victims of crime so that any victim in

Good practices show the way

The European Commission's Mutual Learning Programme (MLP) in Gender Equality provides an opportunity for the stimulation of debate and exchange of experience between governmental representatives, independent experts and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim to facilitate the dissemination of good practice on gender equality in Europe. Exchanges focus on policy measures as well as concrete and existing examples that promote gender mainstreaming in key priority areas of the Women's Charter and of the Strategy for equality between Women and Men 2010—2015. The MLP addresses both the opportunities and constraints for policy implementation and concretely highlights the possibilities and challenges for transferability to other countries.

The MLP has organised exchanges on tackling female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and other harmful practices, measures to fight violence against women focusing on the use of ICT for victim support and treatment programmes for perpetrators, as well as on good practice in awareness raising activities to fight violence against women and girls.

More information at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm

the EU can receive a minimum level of rights, protection, support, access to justice and restoration, whatever their nationality and wherever in the EU the crime takes place.

The EU is also a signatory to several International treaties and conventions framing the definitions to be used, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)⁽¹⁸⁾ and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)⁽¹⁹⁾.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)⁽²⁰⁾ is considered the most important and comprehensive legally binding instrument on violence against women in the EU. The Convention entered into force on 1 August 2014, has been signed by all 28 Member States and ratified by 14. On 4 March 2016, the European Commission adopted two proposals for a Council Decision on the signing of the Istanbul Convention on behalf of the European Union⁽²¹⁾; when ratified and applied, the Convention will improve the measurement of the extent and consequences of gender-based violence and domestic violence as it provides for common definitions.

Although not all Member States have specific laws on violence against women, the majority have criminalised most forms of violence against women⁽²²⁾:

- Both rape and sexual assault are classified as criminal offences in all Member States. There are nevertheless wide disparities in the definitions underpinning rape as an offence, notably when it comes to the use of force and/or to lack of consent (lack of consent on its own is a requirement in only three Member States).
- Whether intimate partner violence is criminalised as such under national law varies: 10 Member States treat intimate partner violence (or domestic violence) as a specific criminal offence under their national law. In Member States that have not criminalised intimate partner violence as a specific offence in the criminal code, this form of gender-based violence can be prosecuted under a number of other offences (such as harassment, abuse, rape and murder).
- Definitions of sexual harassment vary widely: it is a criminal offence in only 12 Member States. Not only is sexual harassment rarely, and only recently, criminalised but it is also often subject to strict limiting requirements; for example it is often considered specifically within the context of employment, as opposed to a stand-alone offence, or requires a subordinate position of the victim.

What help is available in the EU?

The level of support for women victims of violence is variable across the EU.

For women and children experiencing domestic violence, collectively within the Member States there are approximately 1 488 shelters with 20 831 beds⁽²³⁾. Only four of the EU Member States meet the Council of Europe's minimum standard of 1 place per 10 000 inhabitants⁽²⁴⁾.

Across the EU there are an estimated 515 specialist services for women victims of rape and sexual assault⁽²⁵⁾.

Within the EU there are national women's helplines in 19 countries; 10 of these helplines operate 24/7 and are free to call, and 16 offer support in multiple languages⁽²⁶⁾.

- Stalking is not considered as a separate crime in all Member States. Some Member States have a dedicated law and some prosecute stalking under other crimes in the criminal or penal code.
- Across EU Member States there has been a trend to recognise female genital mutilation (FGM) as a criminal act and in some countries a specific criminal law has been introduced to address FGM (27).
- To date, no EU countries have incorporated a definition of femicide into criminal law. Intimate partner/family-related homicide disproportionately affects women: two thirds of its victims globally are female (43 600 in 2012) and one third (20 000) are male. Almost half (47 %) of all female victims of homicide in 2012 were killed by their intimate partners or by family members, compared to less than 6 % of male homicide victims (28).

Differences in the legal definitions of forms of violence against women and other related terms, and methods of data collection across EU Member States (including, in the case of FGM, a general lack of systematic data collection) makes it challenging to obtain a comprehensive, accurate and comparable picture of the nature, extent and consequences of violence against women across the EU (29). Yet the Council of the European Union recognises and underlines the importance of addressing this challenge, and efforts at both Member State and EU level are increasingly prominent (30).

What is being done to eliminate violence against women in the EU?

One of five key priorities in the European Commission's strategy to achieve equality between women and men (31) identified in the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016—2019) is to combat gender-based violence and protect and support victims. The Commission has explicitly addressed the issue of violence against women through various political instruments, mainly the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010—2015, which follows the Women's Charter (2010) and the Roadmap for Equality between women and men 2006—2010 (32). Eurostat is coordinating a multi-disciplinary

task force to conduct an EU-wide prevalence survey on gender-based violence against women and men (33).

EU agencies are also instrumental to the implementation of the European Commission's strategy (2016—2019):

- The European Agency for Fundamental Rights conducted the first EU-wide survey on violence against women in 2014. The results of the survey have been widely used, demonstrating a high level of public interest in comparable data on violence against women (34).
- The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has produced gender-specific guidelines for asylum seekers and migrants and continues to ensure gender mainstreaming in its development of training tools (35).

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has been tasked by the Commission to identify the major gaps and challenges in the collection of harmonised data across the EU. To this end, EIGE has conducted important studies and developed tools (36) to support both Member States and EU institutions to overcome these challenges, thus contributing to the development of appropriate policies, legislation and services in response to violence against women (37). Specifically, on combating female genital mutilation, EIGE conducted the first EU-wide study on FGM (38) followed by a pilot study in three Member States to develop a methodology to estimate the numbers of girls at risk of FGM; this study will be extended to a further six Member States in 2017. In 2017 the Institute will finalise a measurement framework of violence against women for the Gender Equality Index, to aid common definitions and harmonised indicators across the EU-28 (39).

The EU has expressed a strong commitment to eliminating female genital mutilation (FGM). The European Commission Communication on eliminating FGM sets out a list of measures that the Commission will take in the coming years (40).

The EU raises awareness by co-funding campaigns run by national governments and supports transnational projects run by non-governmental organisations combating violence against women, children and young people (41). In particular, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme funds projects to prevent violence against children, young people, women and other groups at risk (formerly the Daphne Programme) (42).

Endnotes

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- (²⁴) *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- (²⁵) *Ibid.*
- (²⁶) *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- (²⁷) <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/eiges-studies-gender-based-violence/female-genital-mutilation-european-union>.
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- (³⁰) As can be seen in the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) (18), adopted at ministerial level by the Council of the EU in March 2011 (Council conclusions of 7 March 2011), which calls for actions to reduce all forms of violence against women, encourages both the Member States and the Commission to further develop existing statistics and indicators disaggregated by sex.
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- (³⁷) Detailed information on EIGE's mandate can be found in the Strategic Framework on Combating VAW, 2015-2018. Available at: http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/amended_vaw_strategic_framework_2015-2018_approved_20160610.pdf
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- (⁴⁰) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/131125_en.htm
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European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.



European Institute for Gender Equality, EIGE
Gedimino pr. 16 LT-01103
Vilnius, LITHUANIA
Tel. +370 52157444
E-mail: eige.sec@eige.europa.eu

Contact details

<http://eige.europa.eu> 

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