

Policy Context

According to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), Violence against Women (VAW) is understood as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women'. All forms of violence against women seriously violate and impair or nullify the enjoyment by women of their human rights, more specifically, the fundamental rights to life, security, freedom, dignity and physical and emotional integrity, and cannot therefore be ignored by governments.

The Council of the European Union has adopted three sets of Council conclusions

- In 2010, the Council emphasised the need to strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls.
- In 2012, the Council called Member States to 'ensure that support services for victims of violence are in adequate supply and apply a gender equality perspective' and called upon/requested the Commission to consider additional legal instruments and to develop a European strategy on combating gender-based violence.
- In 2014, the Council called Member States to tackle the issue of under-reporting, improving access to services and setting up appropriate and sustainable funding for combating gender-based violence and female genital mutilation.

Directive on common minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crimes (Directive 2012/29/EU)

- Recognises violence against women as gender-based violence, and emphasises the need for specialised services for vulnerable groups of victims, such as women victims of sexual violence.

Directive on the European protection order in the area of administrative, civil and criminal law

- Ensures that restraining and protection orders issued in one EU Member State can be recognised across the EU. Women who have suffered domestic violence are protected from their perpetrators if they travel or move anywhere in the EU.

Regulation 606/2013 on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters.

The European Commission

- Has funded numerous European projects aiming at eliminating violence against women within the Daphne III and the PROGRESS program and will continue through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, supplemented by funds under the Justice programme.
- Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence is a priority area of the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men for 2010-15.
- In 2013, the Commission announced the policy communication on eliminating female genital mutilation (FGM) and a series of actions, and also called for concrete measures in the Member States.

The strategic objectives of the BPfA and the EU indicators

- D.1.** Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- D.2.** Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventative measures.
- D.3.** Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and human trafficking.



The Council of the EU endorsed a set of indicators in this area proposed by the Spanish and Danish Presidencies in 2002 and the Irish Presidency in 2004. In 2012, the Cypriot Presidency reviewed an indicator on victim support. There are currently 10 indicators in this area, which mainly address domestic violence against women and/or intimate partner violence as well as sexual harassment at the workplace.

The database, Women and men in the EU - facts and figures, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality provides the latest data and information, available at:

<http://eige.europa.eu/content/women-and-men-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures>

Findings from EU-wide data

Gender-based violence is increasingly prioritised in Member States

Since the last overall review of the BPfA within the EU, Member States have made significant progress in this area in terms of adopting new legislation and developing and implementing new measures addressing various forms of violence. Several Member States have taken actions to introduce definitions of gender-based domestic and intimate partner violence in criminal law.

In the last five years, there has been a clear EU consensus to adopt and implement National Action Plans to end violence against women and the majority of Member States have adopted such plans. The majority of national plans and strategies address domestic vio-

lence, and also other forms such as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, stalking, female genital mutilation, femicide and sexual harassment at workplace.

Insufficient specialised support for women survivors of violence

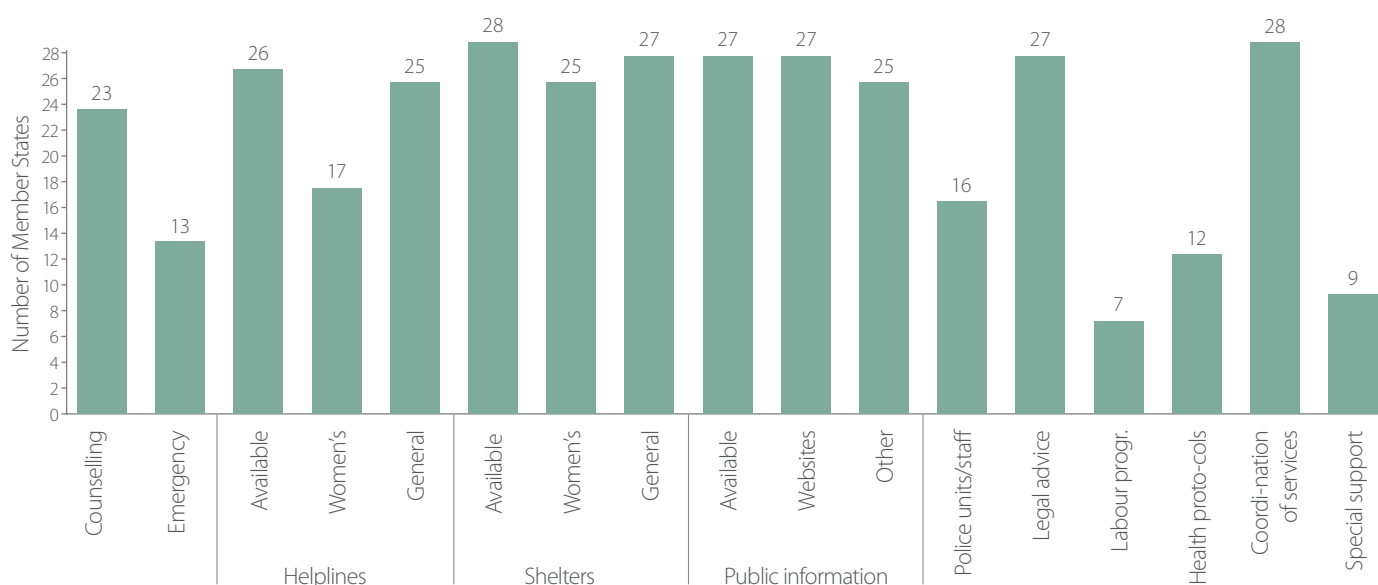
Women's support services are not only offering support to individual women but also play a major role in raising awareness and changing attitudes in society. In 2012, 17 Member States provided a national women's helpline and 25 Member States provided specialised women's shelters.

Between 2012 and 2013, some positive changes have been observed as new shelters have been opened throughout the EU. However, almost all CEDAW reports indicated that funding for specialist women's services has been reduced, insufficient or unsustainable. The funding to ensure high quality and sustainable women's services is not yet in place across the EU and is highly necessary.

Healthcare systems increasingly address violence against women

The need to organise an effective healthcare response to violence against women has become more widely recognised in the EU in the last five years and was confirmed by the FRA survey, showing that the majority of women survivors initially turn to the healthcare sector for assistance. In addition to providing training, guidelines and protocols that include referrals are crucial for the health sector. To enable referrals, a sustainable service centre for women victims of violence must exist. Currently, only 12 Member States have such protocols in place.

SPECIALISED SERVICES FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN EU-28, BY TYPES OF SERVICES, 2012



Source: EIGE, Violence against women - victim support, 2012



Member States support the work of improving the availability, quality and comparability of data on violence against women

Between 2000 and 2014, all EU Member States conducted at least one prevalence survey addressing violence against women. Administrative data sources on different forms of violence against women are most commonly available from the police, followed by justice system (court statistics) and other sectors (health, social services).

With the publication of the EU-wide survey on prevalence of violence against women by the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2014, a major milestone was reached in estimating the prevalence of violence against women in the EU. According to the survey, one in three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in the EU since the age of 15, which amounts to 62 million women. One in 10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence and one in 20 has been raped since the age of 15.

Programmes for perpetrators are gaining more recognition

The Istanbul Convention (Article 16) requires the setting up of programmes for perpetrators of violence against women aiming at teaching them non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural pat-

terns. The majority of Member States offer perpetrator programmes, most of which focus on psychological or psychiatric treatment, counselling and therapy.

Training for professionals is more widely available

Integration of concepts of violence against women into the basic training of professionals and development of clear policies and guidelines for professionals are needed to effectively support survivors and to implement existing measures. While the majority of Member States have recognised the importance of training, only a small number of them fund regular training in this area. A substantial share of the training is conducted by NGOs, sometimes with no funding allocated to their work.

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Findings from EIGE's work on good practices

Specialised training on domestic violence for Grand Duchy future members of police forces — Luxembourg

In 2003 Luxembourg adopted a law on domestic violence, which includes provisions to evict perpetrators of domestic violence from the family home. The law also established the Cooperation Committee of Professionals on Fighting Violence, which brings together the actors concerned (ministries, law courts, police and NGOs working on domestic violence). As the next step NGOs and the Grand Duchy's police force developed a special training module for all new police officers as part of their basic training, that has also been delivered to employed officers during in-service training tools for police officers, such as guidance on report writing for submission to the public prosecutor and an information card for victims and perpetrators complemented the trainings. In 2004, 36 week-long training sessions were delivered to groups of 20 to 30 participants (1 000 police officers in total). Since then a regular training of 60 police staff has been carried out yearly.

The CAADA IDVA training — UK

Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) has developed a training course to raise professional qualification for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), who work with victims at greatest risk of harm. The qualification is endorsed by the UK Home Office and accredited by the Open College Network (OCN) at level 3. Since 2005, CAADA has trained over 1 700 IDVAs, to equip professionals with the skills to make victims of domestic abuse and their children safer. The training takes place over 14 days, organised in five classroom blocks, and gives professionals the opportunity to develop an essential 'IDVA toolkit' of skills including motivational interviewing, applying the stages of change, active listening, assertiveness, negotiation and pro-social modelling. Of the 2 500 victim cases analysed in CAADA's 2012 report, A place of greater safety, 63 % of victims reported that the abuse stopped after the intervention of an IDVA, and 71 % of victims said they felt safer. The most significant reductions were noticed on sexual abuse. Victims also reported improvements in their well-being following the intervention of an IDVA: 69 % said that their quality of life had improved and 77 % were confident in how to access support in the future.



ADVANCEMENTS AND OBSTACLES IN AREA D: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

ADVANCEMENTS

- Increased visibility of violence against women in the last few years.
- New research and data has been collected on violence against women.
- Member States have taken actions to strengthen the legislative and institutional framework to combat violence against women.
- Existing measures and actions can be built on and improved to combat violence against women with the aim to meet the minimum standards across the EU.

OBSTACLES

- Violence against women is both wide scale and complex: significant political will and funding is needed to combat it.
- CEDAW reports indicated that funding for specialist women's services has been reduced.
- Specialised support for women survivors of violence is still insufficient.

The way forward for the EU

- There is a need to ensure that significant political will and funding is in place to build on existing measures and actions to combat violence against women, and to improve those measures in a way that ensures the meeting of minimum standards of support for survivors of violence in all Member States.
- Collecting prevalence and administrative data of adequate quality is crucial for monitoring and implementation processes regarding VAW.
- Direct forms of violence against women should be addressed in connection to norms, attitudes and stereotypes (that result in indirect forms of violence) which underpin violence against women and gender inequality in general.
- Combating violence against women cannot be effective without engaging and involving men. As patriarchal culture, constructions of hegemonic masculinities and gender norms underpin the issue of gender-based violence; it can only be addressed with the involvement of men and a critical assessment of patriarchal structures and hegemonic masculinities.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

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

More information: <http://eige.europa.eu>

The Resource and Documentation Centre (RDC) of the European Institute for Gender Equality is an innovative and practical tool developed to assist in locating key resources on gender equality, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among those with an interest in gender equality policies and practices and to offer an online space for discussion and debate.

More information: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/rdc>



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