

White Ribbon Campaign

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Supporters across the world

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Actions

6 actions you can take

- 1 | Learn about the violence and threats women face from men.
- 2 | Challenge sexist language and jokes in your workplace, school and family.
- 3 | Examine how your own attitudes and behaviour might contribute to the problem.
- 4 | Be a role model for boys. Show that being a man does not mean controlling or dominating others.
- 5 | Tell your friends and family about the Campaign.
- 6 | Raise awareness on violence against women in your workplace or school.

Background information on violence against women

'Gender-based violence' and 'violence against women' are terms that are often used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is inflicted by men on women and girls. However, it is important to retain the 'gender-based' aspect of the concept as this highlights the fact that violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men. The terms are used interchangeably throughout this website and EIGE's work, as it is always understood that gender-based violence means violence against women and vice versa.

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence gives definitions for the purpose of Convention in Article 3:

- “violence against women” is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;
- “domestic violence” shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or

between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim;

- “gender” shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men;
- “gender-based violence against women” shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately;
- “victim” shall mean any natural person who is subject to the conduct specified in points a and b;
- “women” includes girls under the age of 18.

Frequently Asked Questions

1 **What is the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC)?**

The White Ribbon Campaign is one of the largest efforts in the world to end men’s violence against women and girls. The Campaign aims to raise awareness about the scale and severity of the problem. The white ribbon is a symbol of men’s opposition to men’s violence against women.

The Campaign was formed by a group of men in Canada in 1991, and has spread to many countries around the world. Within the European Union, there are specific White Ribbon Campaigns in several countries – and activities inspired by White Ribbon in many others.

2 **What do national White Ribbon Campaigns do?**

Each year, White Ribbon urges men and boys to wear a white ribbon, starting on November 25, the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women. The ribbon is worn as a personal pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. White Ribbon Campaigns and their activities vary from country to country, but their main focus throughout the year is on: educational work in schools, workplaces and communities; support for local women’s groups; and speaking out on issues of violence against women.

3 **What role does EIGE play the campaign?**

We engage political leaders across the European Union to stand up and speak out against violence against women.

- We encourage all men to adhere to the principles of the campaign and act.

- We increase awareness of the role that men can and should play in addressing violence against women.
- We draw attention to EIGE's research on gender equality and violence against women.

4 **How does White Ribbon engage with women's groups and other campaigns on violence against women?**

White Ribbon Campaign is part of EIGE's work on violence against women. EIGE works together with partners to raise awareness on this issue. The campaign complements other women-led initiatives and international campaigns, including the UN Women-led 'HeforShe' and '16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence.

5 **Who should get involved?**

The campaign is open for everyone who shares its principles. As men are part of the problem they are important part of the solution. We believe that all men have an important role to play in ending violence against women.

6 **What is the extent of violence against women in the EU?**

In 2014, key findings from a large-scale survey of women in the EU by the Fundamental Rights Agency revealed that:

- 33% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. That corresponds to 62 million women.
- 22% have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner.
- 5% of all women have been raped. Almost one in 10 women who have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner, indicate that more than one perpetrator was involved in the most serious incident.
- 43% have experienced some form of psychological violence by either a current or a previous partner, such as public humiliation; forbidding a woman to leave the house or locking her up; forcing her to watch pornography; and threats of violence.
- 33% have childhood experiences of physical or sexual violence at the hands of an adult. 12% had childhood experiences of sexual violence, of which half were from men they did not know.

Notably, the majority of physical and sexual violence reported in the survey was carried out by male perpetrators. Among its conclusions, the FRA report states that: *"In parallel with campaigns and responses directed at women, men need to be positively engaged in initiatives that confront men's violence against women."*

7 | **Is men's violence against women the only concern?**

Although ending men's violence against women is the main focus of the White Ribbon Campaign, all forms of violence are wrong.

8 | **Are all men naturally violent?**

Men are not 'naturally' violent – and the majority of men are not violent. Ideas of 'natural masculinity' are a way of excusing men's violence, whereas in reality men who are violent are in part acting out what they have been conditioned to believe is 'normal' male behaviour. Within such a culture, many men have learned to express their anger or insecurity through violence. Many men have come to believe that violence against a woman, child or another man is acceptable.

9 | **Why should men take action to tackle violence against women?**

Violence against women is not only a 'women's issue', and calling it such makes it possible for men to ignore it. Violence against women must be re-framed as an issue for men as it's nearly always perpetrated by them. It is men's wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends whose lives are limited by violence and abuse. And often it's men's male friends, relatives, and colleagues who condone violence or make jokes about it.

It's also a men's issue because it is up to the majority of men to help create a culture in which violence against women is unacceptable and every man takes responsibility for preventing it. White Ribbon Campaigns recognise the positive role that men can play in tackling violence against women and encourage male participation in its prevention.

Men are part of the problem and they should be part of the solution.