

# What is gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls.

Gender-based violence and [T violence against women](#) are terms that are often used interchangeably as it has been widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men. However, using the 'gender-based' aspect is important as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men. The terms are used interchangeably throughout EIGE's work, reflecting the disproportionate number of these particular crimes against women.

[What forms of gender-based violence are there?](#)



The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and [T domestic violence](#)), as the benchmark for international legislation on tackling gender-based violence, frames gender-based violence and violence against women as a gendered act which is 'a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women'. Under the Istanbul Convention acts of gender-based violence are emphasised as resulting in 'physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercive or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.'

# Gender-based violence more common than you think

In the European Union, since the age of 15:

**1 in 3**

women has experienced  
**physical** and/or  
**sexual violence**

**1 in 2**

women has experienced  
**sexual harassment**

**1 in 20**

women has been **raped**



**1 in 5**

women has experienced  
**stalking**

**95%**

of victims **trafficked**  
for **sexual exploitation** in the EU are women

Sources: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey - Results at a glance*, 2014  
Eurostat, *Trafficking in human beings*, 2015

Image: Margaret Jone Wollman/Shutterstock.com

## EIGE's work on gender-based violence

Female genital mutilation in the EU



Analysis of EU directives from gender perspective



Administrative data collection on violence against women



Cyber violence against women



Risk assessment of intimate partner violence



Costs of gender-based violence in the EU



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## Metadata

TOPICS: Violence