

**NON.
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 harm on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 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, as it continues to be under-reported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In Germany, 80 % of the population tend to trust the 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). It is estimated that in Germany, 35 % of women have experienced violence, which is 2 % higher than in the EU overall (5).

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Germany could amount to EUR 17 billion per year. This figure was calculated according to the methodology used in EIGE's 2014 study (6), which Member States can replicate, as done by Estonia in 2016 (7).



What are the facts?

- 58 % of women in Germany have experienced some form of sexual harassment ⁽⁸⁾.
- It is estimated there are 19 000 women victims of female genital mutilation in Germany and an additional 4 000 girls at risk ⁽⁹⁾.
- In 2012, only 8.4 % of all reported acts of sexual violence were sentenced ⁽¹⁰⁾.
- During the period 2013—2015, authorities identified that there were 1 515 victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Germany, of which 96 % were women ⁽¹¹⁾.
- The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results found that in Germany, one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 and 38 % of people in Germany said they knew a woman within their circle of friends and family who has been a victim of domestic violence ⁽¹²⁾.

When trust in police is low, victims are less likely to report violence.



Is violence against women a crime in Germany?

Violence against women in the home is covered by the criminal law provisions contained in the criminal code and includes domestic violence and sexual offences such as sexual assault and rape. In September 2016, a reform of the penal code regarding the provision for rape and sexual violence was passed, bringing the German legislation into conformity with the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Stalking is criminalised under the criminal code and female genital mutilation is illegal even if it is committed outside the country.

The 'Offences Concerning Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual and other Exploitation' incorporated trafficking for sexual exploitation or prostitution as offences under German criminal law. In September 2016, the penal code was reformed regarding provisions for criminalising trafficking in persons, broadening the scope of conduct qualifying as trafficking in persons.

Good practices show the way

The 'Medizinische Intervention gegen Gewalt' (Medical intervention against violence - MIGG) project ⁽¹³⁾ developed unified standards for the treatment of women victims of violence in emergency rooms and specialist outpatient departments, and identified the main warning signs (known as red flags) that may indicate domestic violence and merit attention from health personnel. It also considered the needs of specific victim groups such as migrant women and women with a disability.

The main aim of the three-year project, which was piloted in five locations, was to introduce and test an intervention programme to train and raise the awareness of physicians in their own practices. It also tested the cooperation and networking between outpatient departments and regional emergency violence support centres.

MIGG created a medical intervention model to improve the health care treatment of women victims of domestic violence and to increase health care professionals' awareness of the issue. The project helped doctors to identify and address the consequences of violence, and to document evidence for use in court. It did this through conducting an intense exchange with universities and health care units, offering doctors support in documenting injuries for use in a court of law, giving specialist advice, distributing posters and information for patients to support health education, training and information events, and setting up an internet platform.

What is being done to eliminate violence against women in Germany?

The federal government's first action plan to combat domestic violence against women established a comprehensive approach to combating violence against women. It focused on prevention and legislation, but also on cooperation among institutions and projects, as well as nationwide networking of assistance services and awareness-raising measures⁽¹⁴⁾. The second action plan highlighted the fact that the majority of women victims experience violence in their own home. It also addressed migrant women and women at high risk⁽¹⁵⁾.

In 2008, Germany developed the national action plan to improve the situation of women victims of female genital mutilation and to protect girls in Germany⁽¹⁶⁾.

How are women and girls protected?

Women victims of domestic violence in Germany have legal access to protection measures. The police can order the offender to leave the home and prohibit him from re-entering. In some of the states the police are legally entitled to issue these bans for a couple of days, thus enabling victims to seek counselling and start civil legal proceedings to gain a barring order issued by court⁽¹⁷⁾.

In July 2016, the Federal Council of Ministers agreed on a bill to improve the protection in cases of stalking and forwarded the bill for deliberation to the Bundestag and Bundesrat. The bill is aimed at improving the efficiency of victim protection measures.

Germany was among the first countries to sign the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) on 11 May 2011, but has not yet ratified it. The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

What help is available in Germany?

The violence against women support helpline 'Hilfetelefon Gewalt gegen Frauen' (08000 116 016) is available nationwide, providing free and anonymous 24/7 support in 15 different languages from female professionals. The helpline is run by the Federal Office for Family and Social Affairs, under the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth⁽¹⁸⁾.

The helpline received 55 000 contacts in 2015 including 27 000 consultations, of which 96 % came from women⁽¹⁹⁾.

In Germany, women affected by violence and their children have access to 350 women's shelters and 40 safe flats, with more than 6 000 beds. In addition, there are 750 counselling services specialised in the diverse forms of violence against women⁽²⁰⁾.



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Hilfetelefon Gewalt gegen Frauen (08000 116 016)



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Endnotes

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- (¹⁹) Figures provided by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany.
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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.



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