

**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 harms 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 Estonia, 79 % 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 Estonia, 33 % of women have experienced violence, which is the same as in the EU overall (5).

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Estonia could amount to EUR 287 million 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?

- The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results showed that:
 - since the age of 15, 33 % of women in Estonia have experienced physical and/or sexual violence and approximately 44 % of women have experienced some form of ‘threatening’ sexual harassment ⁽⁸⁾;
 - 39 % of people in Estonia said they knew a woman within their circle of friends and family who has been a victim of domestic violence.
- A 2016 population survey showed that most Estonian inhabitants are aware of intimate partner violence and 95 % consider domestic violence a crime ⁽⁹⁾.

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



Is violence against women a crime in Estonia?

Although there is no specific law on violence against women in Estonia, numerous forms of violence are covered by the Estonian Penal Code. The Penal Code covers physical violence and abuse, and trafficking in human beings. Rape and sexual assault are also criminalised, including within marriage ⁽¹⁰⁾. Aiding prostitution and pimping is also criminalised, and in the criminal statistics and according to the Victim Support Act, they are considered trafficking-related crimes.

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment is prohibited in Estonia and considered a form of direct discrimination based on sex.

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

In 2010, the Estonian government approved a national development plan for reducing violence, for 2010—2014 ⁽¹¹⁾. The development plan's stated goals were to prevent domestic violence by increasing public awareness and improving support for victims of domestic violence (including better training for professionals, better shelters, and medical, legal and psychological services).

Good practices show the way

During the period 2013—2015, a project entitled ‘Developing services for victims of domestic violence, strengthening cooperation between different institutions and raising awareness among victims and the general public’, was implemented by the Estonian Women's Shelters Union and funded by the European Economic Area and Norway Grants ⁽¹²⁾. The aim of the project was to reduce domestic and gender-based violence in Estonia through the improvement of support services and cooperation between relevant organisations and professionals, as well as awareness-raising.

The project resulted in the Estonian Women's Shelters Union adopting a systematic approach to improving the quality of victim support services. For example, through this project, the national women's helpline can now operate 24/7 and legal support can also be provided, including representing victims in court cases ⁽¹³⁾.

The Estonian Women's Shelters Union and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) were partners in the implementation of this project. NKVTS provided training and technical support to the Estonian shelter staff. Norway provided EUR 908 510 to this project through the Estonian domestic and gender-based violence programme ⁽¹⁴⁾.

The national strategy for prevention of violence 2015—2020 covers five areas: violence against children, violence between minors, domestic violence, sexual violence, and trafficking in human beings⁽¹⁵⁾. Specific government funds are allocated to women's shelters through the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs⁽¹⁶⁾. In addition, women's shelters have received funding from political parties and the Norwegian financial programme project, which is partly supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Services for prostituted women are financed by the state as well. One of the efforts aimed at preventing prostitution, domestic violence and other forms of violence against women is focused on awareness-raising projects funded by the state, such as the social media awareness-raising campaign, 'Ava Silmad — Open Your Eyes!' launched in November 2014⁽¹⁷⁾.

How are women and girls protected?

The Estonian Law of Obligations Act authorises victims of violence, including victims of domestic violence, to apply for civil restraining orders against perpetrators in cases of 'bodily injury, damage to health, violation of inviolability of personal life or any other personal rights'. The criminal court may issue a temporary restraining order against persons suspected or accused of committing a crime, and a longer term restraining order in cases where the perpetrator is convicted⁽¹⁸⁾.

Estonia signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in December 2014, 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 Estonia?

The national women's helpline, Tugitelefoni (1492), is free of charge and operates 24/7. It is a nationwide helpline for women experiencing physical, emotional, economic, and/or sexual abuse.

The helpline offers emotional support, provides information on accessing support services across Estonia, provides guidance on dealing with governmental agencies and legal counselling. It is run by the women's organisation, the Estonian Women's Shelters Union, and offers multilingual support in Estonian and Russian⁽¹⁹⁾.

There are 13 women's shelters in Estonia that operate 24 hours a day free of charge and there are 862 beds available⁽²⁰⁾.



There are 13 women's shelters in Estonia that operate 24 hours a day and are free of charge.



Tugitelefoni (1492) is free of charge and operates 24/7.

Endnotes

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Main findings available in English at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/eesmargid_ja_tegevused/Norra_toetused/Koduse_ja_soopohise_vagivalla_vahendamise_programm/soovagivalla_ja_inimkaubanduse_uuringu_2016_kokkuvote_eng.pdf
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- (¹¹) Estonian Ministry of Justice (2010). *Development plan for reducing violence for years 2010-2014*. Available at: <http://www.kriminaalpolitika.ee/et/development-plan-reducing-violence-2010-2014>
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- (¹³) <http://eeagrants.org/News/2014/Helping-Estonian-victims-of-domestic-and-gender-based-violence#story>
- (¹⁴) <http://www.naisteliin.ee/index.php?keel=2&id=62>
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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
Email: eige.sec@eige.europa.eu

Contact details

<http://eige.europa.eu> 
<http://www.twitter.com/eurogender> 
<http://www.facebook.com/eige.europa.eu> 
<http://www.youtube.com/eurogender> 
<http://eurogender.eige.europa.eu> 



Publications Office

Paper	MH-04-16-659-EN-C	978-92-9493-467-3	10.2839/448956
PDF	MH-04-16-659-EN-N	978-92-9493-468-0	10.2839/470205