

**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 France, 81 % 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 France, 44 % of women have experienced violence, which is 11 % 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 France could amount to EUR 14 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?

- In 2012, it was estimated that there were 61 000 women victims of female genital mutilation in France ⁽⁸⁾.
- On average, a woman dies every 3 days as a consequence of intimate partner violence ⁽⁹⁾.
- It is estimated that during the years 2007—2008, 150 000 women in France aged 18 to 75 suffered at least one rape ⁽¹⁰⁾.
- In the years 2011—2012, it is estimated that there were 2 131 victims of human trafficking in France, of which over 95 % were women and girls ⁽¹¹⁾.
- The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results showed that since the age of 15, 44 % of women in France have experienced physical and/or sexual violence and 52 % of people in France 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 France?

French national legislation on violence against women covers many forms of violence against women. Domestic violence is criminalised and covers psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Rape within marriage is also recognised as a crime. Stalking is criminalised and covers harassment perpetrated by a current or former partner. Female genital mutilation is a crime and is punishable with a prison sentence of up to 15 years. Aggravating circumstances apply to physical violence offences when the perpetrator is the partner of the victim, or when the perpetrator's motivation is based on the victim's opposition to marriage or partnership. Forced marriage itself is also illegal.

Since 2012, French legislation has been considerably reinforced regarding sexual harassment ⁽¹³⁾, human trafficking and female genital mutilation ⁽¹⁴⁾, protection for women victims of violence, including domestic violence ⁽¹⁵⁾, and victims of prostitutional exploitation ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Good practices show the way

In 2010, a coalition of 25 associations put together a year-long campaign on violence against women, funded by the French government ⁽¹⁷⁾. Its immediate aim was to raise awareness among the public, perpetrators and victims that violence against women is not acceptable. More specifically, it wanted to make violence against women visible; to address inequalities between women and men, and social gender relations between girls and boys; to promote support structures for women; and to strengthen support for associations involved in the fight against violence across France.

Media channels used included television, cinema and radio adverts, radio interviews on 120 stations, publications, a film, public events and a website. As part of the 2010 campaign, the government ran information campaigns on the national helpline number (3919), extending its scope to cover all types of gender-based violence. Along with this it improved information for victims through the website www.stop-violences-femmes.gouv.fr to help them to quickly find sources of support. The website also proposes resources such as training for professionals. The number of calls to the national helpline doubled during the campaign periods.

The campaign was accompanied by a new law (of 9 July 2010), which strengthened the protection of victims and children.

Since 2010, the existing tools (the helpline and the website) have been further reinforced, and the government has taken the lead in organising a number of ad hoc campaigns using different media and communication resources: posters placed in private businesses and public services, TV adverts, social media, etc. Campaigns are organised on an annual basis and launched around the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November).

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

The French government adopts action plans every 3 years to reinforce the implementation of laws on violence against women. The fourth national action plan (NAP 2014—2016) addresses several forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence, rape and sexual violence, sexual harassment at school, at university and in sport, and traditional harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The current NAP doubles the funding allocated to combating violence. The fifth NAP (2017—2019) will also include combating the prostitution system as a new action strand. Responsibility for the action plan is with the service for women's rights and gender equality, a department of the General Directorate for Social Cohesion within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Ministry for Families, Children and Women's Rights.

In 2013, the inter-ministerial mission for the protection of women against violence and the fight against trafficking in human beings (MIPROF) was established. It is responsible for creating a database on victims of gender-based violence, promoting the development of good practices to end violence against women, promoting the training of professionals and strengthening protection mechanisms for victims of human trafficking.

How are women and girls protected?

Victims of violence against women in France have legal access to protection measures in cases of domestic violence. The family court may issue an emergency protection order following petition by the victim and where the victim and/or her children are in immediate danger. A protection order can have a maximum duration of four months ⁽¹⁸⁾.

France ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in July 2014. The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.



In France there are 42 women's shelters. In 2010, 2 514 women and 2 581 children found safe shelter there.



What help is available in France?

The Violence Femmes Info helpline (3919) is free of charge and provides multilingual support. It was established in 1992 as a helpline supporting victims of domestic violence. Since then, it has been further developed and addresses all forms of violence against women. The helpline is run by the Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes (FNSF). The helpline receives some public, as well as private funding ⁽¹⁹⁾.

The SOS Viols Femmes helpline (0800 05 95 95) is a free-of-charge rape and sexual assault crisis helpline operated by the non-governmental organisation Collectif Féministe Contre Le Viol (CFCV).

There are 42 women's shelters in France with at least 1 563 shelter places. In 2010, 2 514 women and 2 581 children were accommodated in women's shelters ⁽²⁰⁾.

**Violence Femmes Info helpline (3919)
SOS Viols Femmes helpline (0800 05 95 95)**

Endnotes

- (¹) Council of Europe (2011). *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and its explanatory report*. Council of Europe Treaty Series No 10. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210>
- (²) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey — Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
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- (⁴) European Institute for Gender Equality (2013). *Gender Equality Index — Report*. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf>
- (⁵) Ibid. The level of disclosed violence in the EU overall is 33 %.
- (⁶) European Institute for Gender Equality (2014). *Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- (⁷) *Cost of Domestic Violence in Estonia*. Available at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla_hind.pdf
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- (¹⁰) https://virage.site.ined.fr/fichier/s_rubrique/20838/working_paper_2014_212_gender_violence.fr.pdf
- (¹¹) Eurostat (2015). *Trafficking in human beings*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eurostat_report_on_trafficking_in_human_beings_-_2015_edition.pdf
- (¹²) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey — Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- (¹³) The law of 6 August 2012 on sexual harassment has consolidated the definition of harassment and made it more effective. The penalties have been reinforced and measures have been taken to protect victims from discrimination; the French parliament adopted Law No 2012-954 on 6 August 2012. Available at: <https://www.bryancave.com/images/content/1/8/v2/1837/ClientAlertHarc-lementENG.pdf>
- (¹⁴) The law of 5 August 2013 has transposed the legal definition of trafficking in French law, following the ratification of the Council of Europe's Convention No 197. It has also created new criminal offences punishing whoever incites or pressures another person to undergo female genital mutilation.
- (¹⁵) The law of 4 August 2014 has reinforced the provisions regarding protection orders in case of domestic violence and forced marriage. The law of 17 August 2015 has reinforced protection measures for victims of violence, including violence against women during investigations and court proceedings. The law of 7 March 2016 on the rights of non-nationals in France includes protection measures for victims of violence.
- (¹⁶) The law of 13 April 2016 combating the prostitutional system reinforces the support provided to victims of prostitutional exploitation. In addition, the law makes the purchase of sexual acts an offence. In cases of physical violence, the fact that such acts are committed while purchasing sexual services becomes an aggravating circumstance. Available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000032396046&categorieLien=id>
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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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