

**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 Croatia, over 40 % of the population tend not 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 Croatia, 21 % of women have experienced violence, which is 12 % lower than in the EU overall (5).

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Croatia could amount to EUR 925 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, 1 in 5 women in Croatia have experienced physical and/or sexual violence and 31 % of women have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence <sup>(8)</sup>.
- 29 % of women in Croatia have a friend who is a victim of violence <sup>(9)</sup>.
- During the period 2000—2010, there were a total of 6 625 reported cases of sexual violence, between 461 and 761 cases per year <sup>(10)</sup>.
- In 2013, 8 women were killed by their intimate partners <sup>(11)</sup>.



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



## Is violence against women a crime in Croatia?

Although there is no specific law on violence against women in Croatia, in 2009, a new Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was enacted. It introduces 'economic violence' in the definition of domestic violence and expressly prohibits physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence. Rape and sexual assault are considered serious criminal offences and stalking (intrusive behaviour) is also illegal in Croatia.

In 2014, an updated Rules of Procedure in Cases of Sexual Violence aligned with recent amendments to the law was adopted by the Croatian government.

A new act on protection against domestic violence was drafted in 2016, which transposed the relevant provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

## What is being done to eliminate violence against women in Croatia?

The national strategy for protection against domestic violence 2011—2016 <sup>(12)</sup> aims to improve the overall legal framework on domestic violence, promoting better coordination among public bodies, ensuring gender-sensitive training of frontline professionals and improving services for the treatment of perpetrators.

The national plan for the prevention of trafficking in human beings 2012—2015 <sup>(13)</sup> included a set of measures providing assistance and support to victims of trafficking.

### Good practices show the way

On 29 November 2012, the Croatian government adopted the protocol of conduct in cases of sexual violence <sup>(14)</sup>. The objectives of the protocol are to introduce standardised conduct with victims, standardised methods of data collection, documentation and storage of physical evidence; to inform all relevant public bodies and chief security officers about their obligations and responsibilities regarding the victim; to ensure the provision of emotional support and quality medical care to victims; to promote an interdisciplinary approach in providing assistance to victims; and to ensure the confidentiality of the collected data <sup>(15)</sup>.

The national programme for protection and promotion of human rights 2013—2016 <sup>(16)</sup> also includes measures relating to victims of trafficking in women as well as victims of all forms of violence.

The national policy for gender equality 2011—2015 contained a separate chapter dedicated to the elimination of all other forms of violence against women, except family violence.

In 2011, Croatia adopted a national action plan (2011—2014) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, and related resolutions.

## How are women and girls protected?

Women victims of domestic violence in Croatia have legal access to protection measures under the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. These include orders prohibiting the perpetrator from approaching the victim, prohibiting harassment or stalking of the victim and removal of a perpetrator from the family home.

In 2013, the Croatian government signed, but has not yet ratified, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

In 2013, the national call centre for victims of criminal offences and minor offences was set up, which is free for users.



**There are 18 women's shelters in Croatia, seven of which are specialised women's shelters led by women's NGOs.**

## What help is available in Croatia?

The Autonomous Women's House Zagreb (0800 55 44) can be contacted by women throughout the country <sup>(17)</sup>.

The national helpline for victims of trafficking, SOS Helpline (0800 77 99) is run by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) PETRA and operates free of charge <sup>(18)</sup>.

There are 18 women's shelters in Croatia, seven of which are autonomous specialised women's shelters led by women's NGOs. The seven autonomous women's shelters currently have 267 beds <sup>(19)</sup>.



**SOS Helpline (0800 77 99)  
Women's House Zagreb (0800 55 44)**

## Endnotes

- (<sup>1</sup>) 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>
- (<sup>2</sup>) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey — Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- (<sup>3</sup>) European Commission (2016). *Eurobarometer*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeky/18/groupky/88>
- (<sup>4</sup>) 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>
- (<sup>5</sup>) Ibid. The level of disclosed violence in the EU overall is 33 %.
- (<sup>6</sup>) European Institute for Gender Equality (2014). *Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union — Report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0414745EN2.pdf>
- (<sup>7</sup>) *The cost of domestic violence in Estonia*. Available at: [https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla\\_hind.pdf](https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla_hind.pdf)
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- (<sup>9</sup>) Autonomous Women's House Zagreb (2003). *Economic aspects of domestic violence — societal costs of ignoring and tolerating violence against women*.
- (<sup>10</sup>) Mamula, M., Vukmanić, M., Hojt, A. and Zore, P., *Sexual Violence in Croatia 2000-2010*, Zagreb: Women's Room.
- (<sup>11</sup>) Joint Eurostat and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime data.
- (<sup>12</sup>) National strategy for protection against domestic violence 2011-2016, Official Gazette 20/11/ HR — Nacionalna strategija zaštite od nasilja u obitelji 2011-2016.
- (<sup>13</sup>) National plan for the prevention of trafficking in human beings 2012-2015/ HR — Nacionalni plan za suzbijanje trgovanja ljudima 2012-2015.
- (<sup>14</sup>) European Parliament (2013). *The policy on gender equality in Croatia — Update 2013*. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2013/493016/IPOLE-FEMM\\_NT\(2013\)493016\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2013/493016/IPOLE-FEMM_NT(2013)493016_EN.pdf)
- (<sup>15</sup>) [http://sexualrightsinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/Joint-stakeholder-ZenskaSoba-SRI-submission-for-Croatias-review-during-the-22nd-session-of-the-UPR\\_Final.pdf](http://sexualrightsinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/Joint-stakeholder-ZenskaSoba-SRI-submission-for-Croatias-review-during-the-22nd-session-of-the-UPR_Final.pdf)
- (<sup>16</sup>) National programme for protection and promotion of human rights 2013-2016 / HR — Nacionalni Program zaštite i promicanja ljudskih prava 2013-2016.
- (<sup>17</sup>) [http://files.wave-network.org/home/WAVE\\_Leaflet\\_2015.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/home/WAVE_Leaflet_2015.pdf)
- (<sup>18</sup>) [http://files.wave-network.org/home/WAVE\\_Leaflet\\_2015.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/home/WAVE_Leaflet_2015.pdf)
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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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Publications Office

Paper	MH-02-16-773-EN-C	978-92-9493-520-5	10.2839/047612
PDF	MH-02-16-773-EN-N	978-92-9493-522-9	10.2839/521586