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Press Release

Cost of Violence against Women largely underestimated

The estimated personal and societal cost of Violence against Women is alarmingly high. Direct and indirect costs of violence against women and intimate partner violence affect the victim, their immediate family, society and economy to the extent of slowing down their normal functioning. These are the sad results of the “Study on estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the EU” released by the European Institute for Gender Equality.” Designing adequate EU-policies however, urgently requires quantitative and qualitative data to measure the real cost of violence against women. The results call for urgent coordinated actions to help women and men on the way to a society free from violence against women“, claims Virginija Langbakk, Director of EIGE.

In recent years the European Institutions strengthened their efforts to combat violence against women (gender-based violence). For policies to be efficient they need evidence in the form of comparable and harmonised data. Further, adequate methods are needed to measure the real cost of violence against women in order to address the consequences of this violence more efficiently.

The cost of violence against women faced by public bodies, women, and society as a whole is significantly high. Direct costs incurred by a victim are medical attention, legal services and victim support programmes. Indirect costs relate to the negative effect on the economy and society and economic loss to the victim. “We are facing a very unhealthy effect on society and economy”, Director Virginija Langbakk tells us: “Victims often suffer long term physical and psychological damage that disables their normal lives and decreases their chances of economic participation.” Estimating these costs is a challenging task. The different approaches taken by the Member States to measure the cost make the comparison very difficult. Moreover, there are very limited data available on the precise

economical, physical and emotional impact of violence on women. Worse even, the data that are available are not comparable across the EU. In the UK it is estimated that almost 13% of the costs to society of violence against women is reflected in a loss to the economy and almost 26% is estimated to be the cost of services. Most resources are spent on criminal justice services, then health services and social welfare. Based on the UK model, theoretical estimates are provided for other Member States for comparative purposes. The report “Study on estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the EU” was prepared by Prof. Sylvia Walby, and Philippa Olive, Senior Research Associate, from Lancaster University.

“Study on estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the EU”

<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/estimating-the-costs-of-gender-based-violence-in-the-european-union-report>

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens’ awareness of gender equality.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right, principle and core value of the European Union. Therefore ‘Making equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans and beyond’ is the vision of the European Institute for Gender Equality.