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Gender-based Violence and Poverty in Europe

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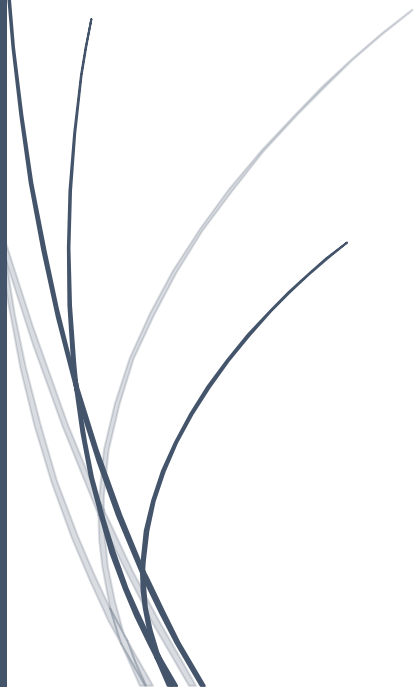

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Gender-based violence and poverty in Europe

100-word summary

Gender-based violence is a silent disease. It affects women and girls of all ages but is particularly hard with those who live in poverty and face social vulnerability.
In this report, we analyse the context, the typology and the features of this grave human rights violation, which has a big social and economic impact in Europe.
We present the situation of the EU28, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the candidate countries, including some good practices.
Finally, we analyse the EU role and the Istanbul Convention, recommending 15 measures that governments should implement in order to eradicate gender-based violence and promote the victims' human rights in Europe.

What are the purposes and scope of this paper?

Violence against women and girls is a global pandemic that has or will affect 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. Violence is not only a personal struggle for the victims, but also has severe consequences on social and economic outcomes.[1]

[1] In a 2015 video, Mr. Ijjasz-Vasquez, senior director of the World Bank, states that Brazil lost an estimated 1.2% of GDP in productivity do to violence against women. In the same video, Mr. Ijjasz-Vasquez says that violence brings to women "the perception that they cannot be equal financial partners with their husbands (a fact which) constraints their imagination and ability to develop as entrepreneurs and contribute to society. Girls grow in

As a leading European network on advocacy against poverty, EAPN is well positioned to reflect on and denounce violence against women and girls, as well as the inter-sectoral relation it has to poverty, around the EU.

This paper is drafted by the Gender and Poverty Group of EAPN in order to increase the awareness on gender-based violence and its effects on women's risk of poverty across Europe, among EAPN members, but also among key stakeholders at EU and national levels and broader public. With clearer insights into the importance, scope and impacts of gender-based violence on the economic situation and wellbeing of women and their children, the advocacy and lobbying activities of EAPN related to poverty reduction and improved social inclusion, as well as policy making at EU and national levels, will be able to more precisely focus on effective policies and programs.

This paper presents definitions, prevalence, characteristics, consequences of different forms of gender-based violence against women.

Its main focus is on intimate-partner violence against women, which is the most prevalent form of violence against them globally, with far-reaching consequences to their living standard and overall wellbeing.

The second focus is on trafficking and exploitation of women. In these conditions, poor women from the less developed countries are particularly vulnerable.

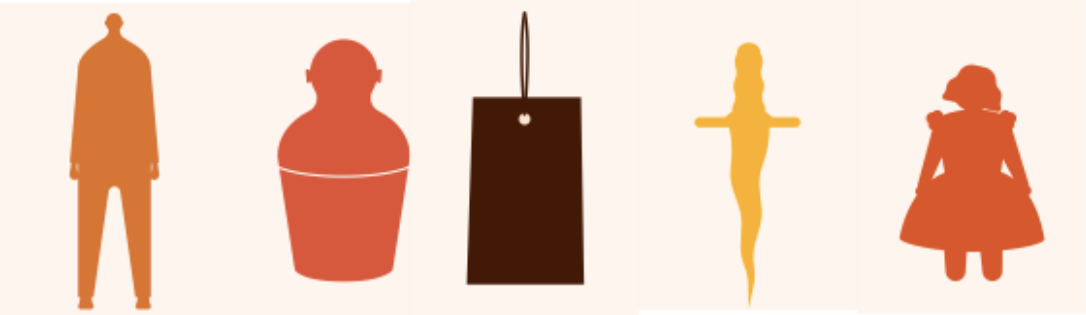
Within these two, sexual violence and harassment are considered. Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is another form of violence against women and girls, according to the United Nations (UN). FGM includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Beyond extreme physical and psychological pain, the practice carries many health risks, including death.

Another form is Child Marriage, which usually means an end to girl's education, vocation and her right to make life choices. Research confirms that girls who marry during their childhood are at greater risk for intimate partner violence than girls of the same age who marry later. These two forms are particularly significant in some Member States, and sometimes in concrete ethnic or cultural groups.[2]

environments that leads them to think that it is normal to be left behind." Watch the World Bank video: http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/11/25/to-end-poverty-eliminate-gender-based-violence

[2] UN WOMEN, Violence against women;
http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/infographic/violenceagainstwomen/en/index.html#childmarriage-2



Violence against women generates costs for the society as a whole. Causes of violence are often interrelated, with poverty, economic dependency, and being in an unequal position to men facilitating violence against women.

Poverty is by itself a form of structural violence, the one that is embedded in the social structures marked by inequalities. As J. Galtung stressed, resources are unequally distributed in the society and, moreover, the power to decide over the distribution of resources is unequally distributed. Therefore, structural violence which is grounded in gender inequalities, in discrimination and unequal chances to access resources is also a form of social injustice[3]. Structural violence that appears in the form of gender discrimination, exclusion of women from developmental processes, sectors and activities generating high economic values, with high rewards, or from social services crucial for achieving decent lives is considered as a very important form of violence.

Why is it important to focus on Gender-based Violence and Poverty?

Many women experience different forms of violence just because they are women. These include domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, sexual violence during conflict and harmful customary or traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages and honour crimes. Gender-based violence is rooted in and reinforces gender inequalities and it cannot be understood outside the social structures, gender norms and roles that support and justify it. Gender-based violence harms women, families, communities and societies. It is a human rights violation and one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based inequality. The elimination of violence against women involves challenging the unequal division of social, political, and economic power among women and men, and the ways in which this inequality is perpetuated through institutions at all levels of society.[4]

Gender-based violence encompasses both violence directed towards a person on the basis of his/her gender, and violence that disproportionately affects persons of a particular gender. Gender-based violence can be physical, sexual or psychological, or a combination of two or more of these forms. It includes domestic violence, sexual harassment and violence, harmful practices and cyber-harassment. Gender-based violence happens in every country, across the full spectrum of society, and in a myriad of locations.

[3] Galtung, J. (1969) 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 6, No. 3, pp: 171.

[4] http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence

Consequences of violence are diverse, and they range from chronic mental and physical health problems, injuries, exclusion from the labour market, community or other parts of society, poverty, threatened security and even loss of life.

FEANTSA: Domestic Violence, A Pathway into Homelessness. There are many different reasons why a person becomes homeless. Most (male) homeless people become homeless through a combination of personal problems, social protection gaps and service delivery deficiencies. **But for women, the single most common reason for becoming homeless is violence**. It is concern for safety that drives women to leave abusive partners when violence intensifies and often only when the safety of their children is at risk. Once they leave their home, they are homeless according to FEANTSA's ETHOS Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion. They might be staying for a short period at women's refuge or shelter. These are specific services providing shelter, advocacy and support for women who are victims of violence and their children. Women fleeing domestic violence also often stay in homeless shelters or in insecure accommodation temporarily with friends or family or, less often, sleep rough on the streets.

Gender-based violence is a violation of a person's fundamental rights and is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. There can be no real gender equality when there is wide-scale gender-based violence against women. It hinders women's active participation in the labour market, and in wider society. There are, thus, profound economic impacts of such violence, with gender-based violence against women estimated to cost EUR 226 billion each year, with the total cost of gender-based violence estimated at EUR 259 billion each year.[5] According to the Word Bank, one third of women worldwide have or will experience intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. This is not only a grave social issue, but one whose economic consequences contribute to ongoing poverty.[6] At the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995, the United Nations recognized that violence against women is an obstacle to achieving the goals of equality, development and peace and violates and impairs the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition, they broadly define it as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men.[7]

***"Women who experience violence suffer a range of health problems and their ability to participate in the public life is diminished. [...] Violence impoverishes women, their families, communities and nations. It lowers economic productivity, drains resources from public services and employers and reduces human capital formation"* (Istanbul Convention, article 33, 35 and 42.).**

[5] http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-violence/index_en.htm

[6] http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/11/25/to-end-poverty-eliminate-gender-based-violence

[7] Gender-based Violence is a violation of human rights. This is reflected in international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and emphasised in the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995.

What is Gender-based Violence?

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (Article 1) states that 'violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.'

In Europe, most relevant international Law that defines gender-based violence against women and requests adequate measures for its elimination and prevention, as well as for the protection of victims of violence, is the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in 2011 (henceforth Istanbul Convention). Violence against women a is defined as a ***'violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life***.' ***Domestic violence is defined as 'all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim***" (Article 3).

What are the dynamics of Gender-based Violence?

It is important to understand the dynamics of gender-based violence in order to prevent violence against women and to protect potential victims.

Apart from traumatizing situations experienced during childhood or alcoholism and drug addiction, which could explain violent behaviour in general, the international consensus is that there are a series of interrelated factors which are primarily "manifestations of historically unequal power relations between men and women".[8] In certain circumstances, cultural ideologies, as well as the patriarchal and sexist structure of society legitimate violence against women, and supporting a supposed inherent and necessary dominance/superiority of males.

Poverty can increase women's vulnerability to domestic violence

With no guarantee of being able to support herself and her children, it is very difficult for a victim of domestic violence to report her abuser to the judicial system. Often women affected by domestic violence are afraid that their children will be taken away from them – either by social services when

[8] Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ViolenceAgainstWomen.aspx

they disclose the domestic violence, or by their partner in a legal custody challenge after separation. Financial dependence in these cases is being used to deter the woman from leaving.

The personal histories of many of the women who turn to the Women's Crisis Centres in Italy tell us how they were forced to quit their jobs or to give all their earnings to their husband, companion, partner or even father. These women say that they could not keep any money, not even to buy milk or bread. In short, they were poor even if living in a rich or well-to-do family. Ms. Oria Gargano, President of BeFree - an Italian cooperative working with the victims of abuses, said: "*In our many years of activity, we have dealt with many women, some of whom even ended up in jail, whose men forced them to sign documents and papers that, at the end of the day, proved to be "monkey businesses" they knew nothing about*". Oria continues, "*The woman that finally presses charges against her abuser will meet with great difficulties to enforce a court order for her and her children's maintenance as many men, especially if in the liberal professions, manoeuvre in such a way as to become suddenly and falsely without means, job or house. Furthermore, it will be very difficult for them to find a job because they are single mothers*." In Italy, there are many studies analysing poverty and social exclusion as factors generating gender-based violence but almost no studies on gender-based violence generating poverty.

Poverty and unemployment are widely seen as contributing factors to domestic violence. Indeed, unemployment is often cited as a factor of domestic violence in two different ways. When the woman is unemployed (which may be the consequence of a vicious circle, whereby, due to the threat and fear of violence she does not look for a job), the lack of economic resources creates dependency and often deters the women from leaving. When unemployment affects the man, it can cause violence against the woman especially in the cases where she is the breadwinner, where her economic independence and social life may be seen as a threat.

Gender-based violence affects women of all ages. While gender gaps persist in the employment situation and salaries, they accumulate in high disadvantages for women in old age: the gender pension gap is at 39% and older women, especially very old women living alone, face higher risks of poverty and social exclusion. This reinforces older women's dependency on their partner even if they are in an abusive relationship. Women statistically also spend a larger proportion of their lives in ill health, according to the healthy life years indicator. As a consequence, women are more likely to be in need for care and assistance in old age, a situation where abuse and neglect is more likely to happen. In a 2011 study carried out in five EU countries, 28% of older women reported having been faced with violence and abuse in the previous 12 months.[9]

According to the last survey undertaken by UNICEF, an economic crisis leads to an increase in violent behaviour against women. Poverty increases risk through effects on conflict, women's power, and

[9] Luoma, M.-L. *et al.* (2011) : Prevalence Study of Abuse and Violence against Older Women. Results of a Multi-cultural Survey in Austria, Belgium, Finalnd, Lithuania, and Portugal. Finland: National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).

male identity. Violence against women is thus seen not just as an expression of male powerfulness and dominance over women, but also as being rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unattainable because of factors such as poverty experienced by men. Financial independence of women is protective in some settings, but not all circumstances in which the woman, but not her partner, is working convey additional risk.

To conclude, women who are more empowered educationally, economically, and socially are most protected, but below this high level the relation between empowerment and risk of violence is nonlinear. Violence is frequently used to resolve a crisis of male identity, at times caused by poverty or an inability to control women. Risk of violence is greatest in societies where the use of violence in many situations is a socially-accepted norm. Primary preventive interventions should focus on improving the status of women and reducing norms of violence, poverty, and alcohol consumption.[10]

[10] This entire part comes from the Study carried out by the European Parliament. DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES, POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY (2016), The Issue of Violence Against Women in the European Union, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556931/IPOL_STU(2016)556931_EN.pdf Information from Valencia, Spain: Moriana Mateo, Gabriela (2015), " Barreras para escapar de la violencia de género: la mirada de las profesionales de los centros de protección de mujeres", **Cuadernos de Trabajo Social** ISSN: 0214-0314, Vol. 28-1 (2015) 93-102, available at http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/CUTS/article/viewFile/44401/46005 Information from Serbia: Babovic, M, Ginic, K, Vukovic, O. (2010) **Mapping Domestic Violence against Women in Central Serbia**, UNDP, SZRN, Belgrade.

Trafficking in women / forced prostitution

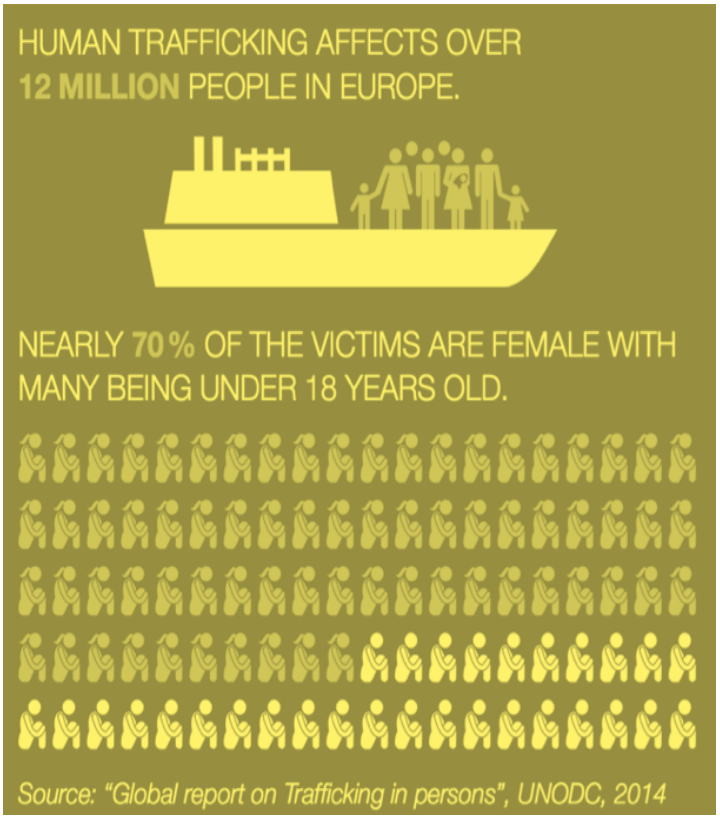
A particularly serious form of human rights violations on an international scale are trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution, which mainly affect women and girls. The victims mostly come from impoverished conditions, often have no legal residence and are brought into total dependency relationships.
Human trafficking is an international crime which according to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is defined as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threats or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”.

The European Union has issued two Directives on trafficking in human beings, the Council Directive 20004/81/EC of 29th April 2004 and the EU Directive Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims (Directive 2011/36/EU). The Directives recommend to the Member States to adopt a wider definition of Trafficking, including forced begging and exploitation for illegal activities. The number of unreported cases is particularly high in this area, and while it is assumed that high profits are made here, convictions are rare.

The International fight against trafficking

The "4P" paradigm – **prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership** – continues to serve as the fundamental international framework to fight trafficking of human beings.

Case study: Trafficking for sexual purpose in Italy



The International Organization for Migrations (IOM) as well as the organizations working in the landing ports, hotspots and Identification and Reception Centres in Italy record a growing number of victims of human trafficking among migrants and those who seek international protection arriving by sea along the Italian coasts. In 2016, most migrants arriving in Italy by sea were from Nigeria, with a particular increase of women and unaccompanied children (respectively 11,009 and 3,040 in 2016, compared to about 5,000 women and 900 unaccompanied children in 2015). IOM estimates that about 80 percent of Nigerian women and girls who landed in 2016 were likely to be victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Italy or in other countries of the European Union.

"Once in Libya I've been taken in a shack where I lived for a month with other women and a bunch of men that made sure we would not go out…. One day we were picked up, left in a square from where an Arab man accompanied us to the boat and made us leave". (Inter/Rotte, Be Free, 2015)

Nigerians are not the only ones. According to the most recent inquiries women and, to a much smaller scale, transsexuals and men trafficked for sexual exploitation who work in Italy come from Nigeria (between 12 to 15 thousand women), Romania (between 8 to 10 thousand) and, but to a much smaller degree, other countries such as Brazil, Albania, Ukraine, China, Russia, etc. Forced prostitution involves between 35 and 44 thousand people in Italy.

The institutional response

Italy's regulatory instruments for the protection of victims of trafficking and the fight against this type of crime continue to be a point of reference for the whole European Union.
Article 18 of the Law on Immigration (No. 286/98) provides for the issuance of a residence permit in order to allow a foreigner to escape the violence of the trafficking organization and to participate in a program of assistance and integration. The permit is issued even if the victim does not bring charges against his/her exploiters or refuses to testify in a criminal proceeding. This article also covers "nationals of the Member States of the European Union", enabling them to participate in protection projects.

Law 228/2003 on "Measures Against Trafficking in Persons" redefined the crimes of trafficking in persons, slavery and servitude, stiffened the penalties, and established a special fund for the implementation of a short-term assistance program.

In 2014, Italy implemented EU Directive 2011/36, adopting a wider definition of "at risk and vulnerability", increasing protection for unaccompanied minors and establishing a National Plan Against Trafficking.

But as underlined in the January 2017 Report on Italy, by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Italy is far from solving the issue which is *"magnified by the substantial increase in the number of victims and potential victims of trafficking arriving in Italy. Victims of trafficking granted refugee status or subsidiary protection in Italy continue to face risks of re-trafficking in Italy and elsewhere in the EU."*[11]

NGOs - A Platform against trafficking of human beings

According to Federica Dolente, President of Parsec Associazione[12]: *"Starting in 2011, the fight against trafficking of human beings in Italy slowed down considerably. This was due, on the one hand, to the economic crisis and the subsequent cuts in social policies and, on the other hand, to the frequent changes in government which left the third sector alone, with no institutional partner. As a matter of fact, the cuts affected the initial contact with the victim and thus impoverished the cultural and strategic approach of harm reduction."*

During that period, by the time the third sector finally managed to establish some contacts with the minister in charge, the minister was out of office because of a change in government. It is not a coincidence that the first National Plan against Trafficking was published in 2016, 5 years after the EU Directive calling for it. The Plan, basically is a summary of all the good things done in the past, aims at continuing the work but does not guarantee enough funds, it actually decreases them.

"Always in those years the ways trafficking operated changed drastically. Some examples: the enlargement of the European Union to Bulgaria and Romania (2007) changed the status of these women that became EU citizens and can cross the frontiers with no problems. Women are still trafficked from those countries but how? Or, what about the Roma women, usually very young girls, often forced by their family, to move from begging to prostitution? Or, what about the extreme marginality of young disabled girls forced to work as prostitutes? In the face of these, and other, important changes the institutions did not have monitoring mechanisms or control strategies, they had lost the vision and the scope of the work that needed to be done", says Ms. Dolente.

In Italy, the Third sector, although under strain because of the cuts in social spending, is still very alert and attentive and responded to the institutional vacuum by joining forces, creating the National Platform against Trafficking that, by now, encompasses 75 entities working closely with law enforcement and the judiciary. Today, thanks to the good work of the Platform there are joint training sessions between the law enforcement officers and those from the Department for Equal Opportunities that is also in charge of the Anti-Trafficking Plan.

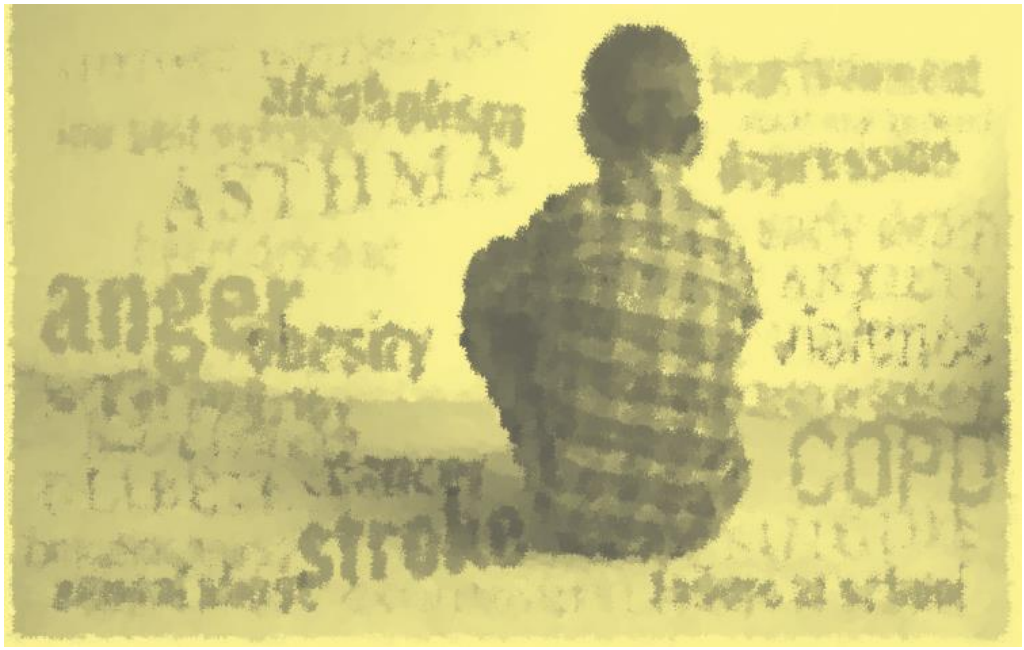
The way out of prostitution involves a personalized plan agreed by the woman, the organizations of the third sector and the local authorities, following the guidelines of their Regional Anti-Trafficking Plan. *"The weak point of all this - continues Ms. Dolente – is the integration in the labour market especially in a moment like this, when there are not enough jobs around. In the richest regions, as Emilia Romagna or Piedmont, there are extra funds and special agreements with the cooperatives but in Rome, for example, we always worked through person-to-person contacts such as asking the owner*

[11] GRETA monitors the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties

[12] Associazione PARSEC - ricerca e azione, has worked with migrants and trafficked human beings since 1994. For more information: www.parsec-consortium.it

of the coffee place you go each morning for breakfast if they can hire a victim…. But unfortunately - concludes Ms. Dolente – *there has never been any follow-up of these women's lives, now less than ever since there is no money and no research study is done, even if it would be of the utmost importance for continuing to have good results."*

What are the consequences of Gender-based Violence on children?



A behaviour learned and reproduced

For a child, domestic violence lasts a life. Available studies show that gender-based violence can be absorbed through observation, personal experience and culture; it is learned within the family, in the community, at school, among friends, etc. Young people, living in homes where the father is violent towards the mother, are more likely to reproduce these behaviours. Witnessing domestic violence is also considered as a form of violence against children[13] and may generate attitudes that justify their own use of violence, and the perception that violence is acceptable, which may affect their behaviour in other interpersonal relationships. It can also be the opposite learning, assimilating that they can only relate to others by adopting behaviours of submission, self-blame, or giving up in the face of difficulties. In this way, violence can be perpetuated through the roles of abuser and victim, generating violent or submissive adults, potential abusers or victims.

Children also learn from their own experience, for example, by being themselves mistreated within the family or groups.

However, the relationship between these two issues is not cause-effect. Not all men who mistreat their partners have witnessed violence or have been mistreated, nor all men who have witnessed violence or been mistreated, assault their partners. In some societies, gender violence is naturalized

[13] Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Preamble.

within the so-called "cultural traditions" and there is a threshold of tolerance within the community, schools, friendships,... Violence can be aggravated (but not caused) by a number of elements: illness, alcohol and drug use, lack of self-control, economic problems, anger and stress, behaviour or problems in the relationship.

Children are often "invisible victims"

Some of the consequences of gender violence are known through the media, especially if the results are fatal, as in cases of femicide. However, they are less widespread in cases of suicide and, even less, in the case of maternal deaths, lack of medical care, or death due to having been infected with diseases such as HIV / AIDS by abusers. Non-fatal outcomes, such as physical problems (autoimmune diseases, for example), mental health, harmful health behaviours and poor reproductive health are hardly mentioned.

An added and important problem is the impact on children. Exposure to gender-based violence (as spectators and/or as victims) causes negative effects, regardless of the age of the children who suffer from it, ranging from physical problems (growth retardation, sleep disturbances and eating disorders), emotional alterations (anxiety, anger, depression, low self-esteem, posttraumatic stress disorder...), cognitive alterations (delayed language, impaired school performance..) and behavioural alterations (deficits in social skills, aggressiveness, attention-deficit hyperactivity, criminal episodes, toxic habits dependent, deficits in the development of empathy).

All these effects occur more intensely in those children who, in the context of gender violence, suffer direct violence and are victims of child abuse. Threats or harm to sons and daughters are also a form of control and submission.

Orphans from femicides are frequently forced into poverty, if governments do not provide (enough) benefits for them to survive and develop in their new, traumatic circumstances.

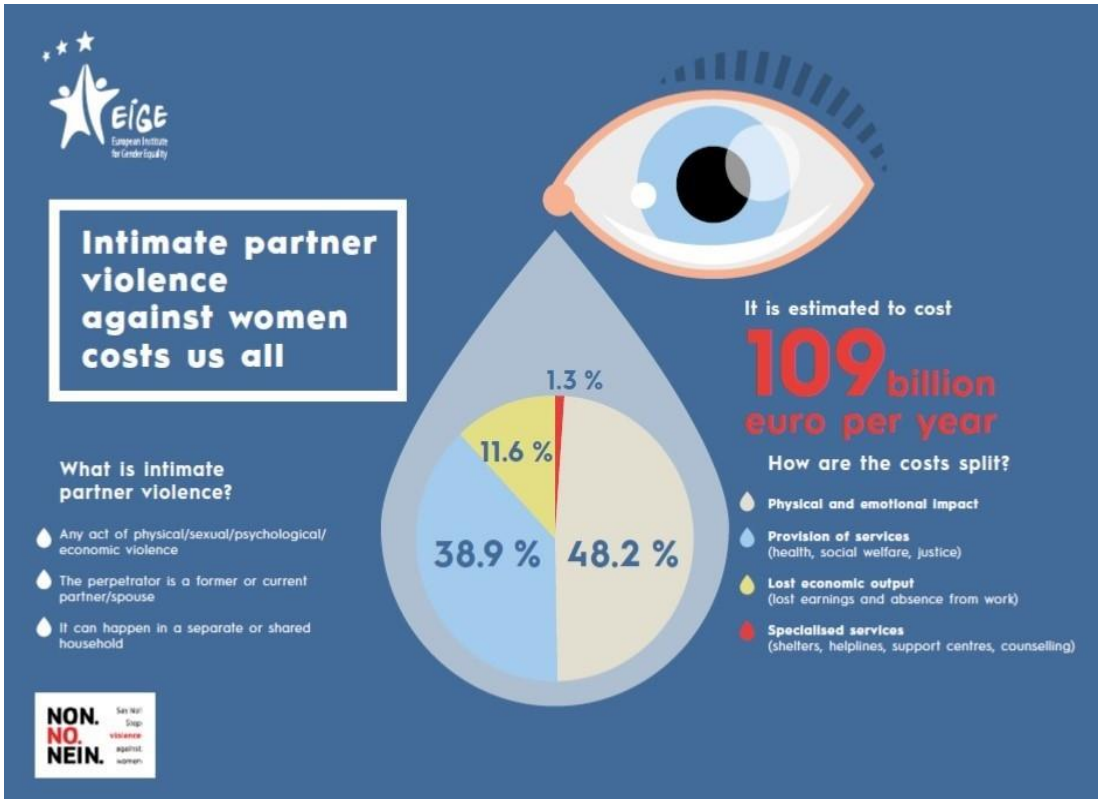
Gender-based violence - European countries

What is the prevalence of gender-based violence across Europe?

The 2014 survey on violence against women (VAW) of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) showed that violence against women is a widespread problem in the EU. The report based on interviews with 42,000 women across the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) shows that violence against women, and specifically gender-based violence that disproportionately affects women, is an extensive human rights abuse that the EU cannot afford to overlook.

The survey asked women about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence ('domestic violence'), and also asked about stalking, sexual harassment, and the role played by new technologies in women's experiences of abuse. In addition, it asked about their experiences of violence in childhood.

What emerges is a picture of extensive abuse that affects many women's lives, but that is systematically under-reported to the authorities.[14]



[14] FRA, Violence against Women: an EU-wide survey, Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 2014, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14_en.pdf

Main findings from the FRA Survey[15]

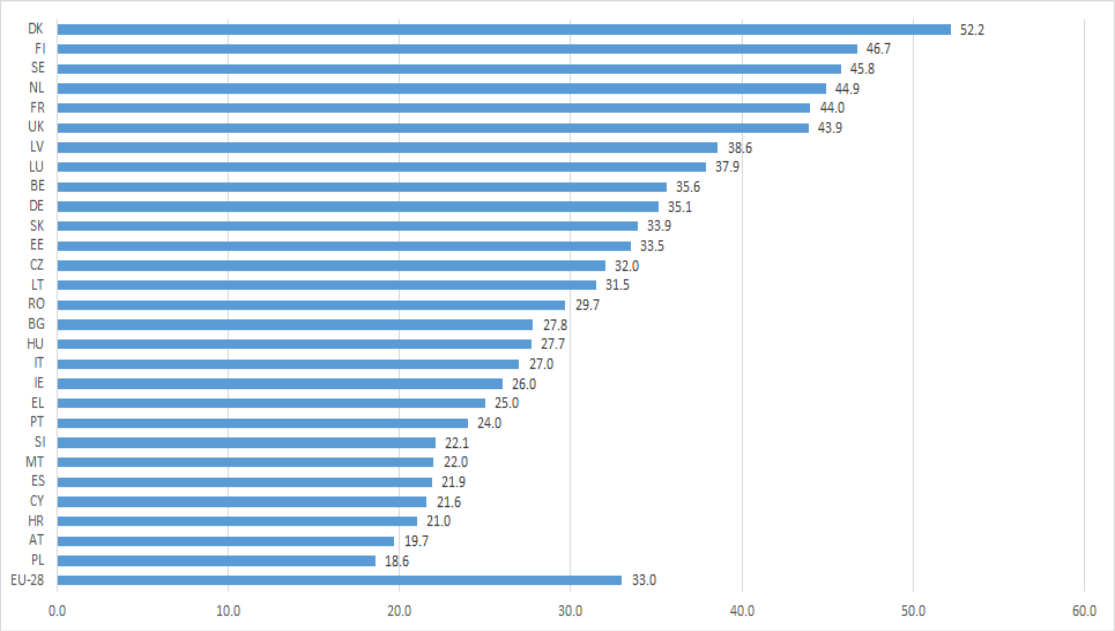
Extent of the problem:

- An estimated 13 million women in the EU have experienced physical violence in the course of 12 months before the survey interviews;
- An estimated 3.7 million women in the EU have experienced sexual violence in the course of 12 months before the survey interviews.

Overall prevalence of physical and sexual violence:

- One in three women (33%) has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from the age of 15;
- Some 8% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months before the survey interview;
- Out of all women who have a (current or previous) partner, 22% have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15.

Figure 1. Percentage of women having experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, EU, 2012



Source: FRA Survey, EIGE's calculation[16]

Characteristics of physical violence

• Some 31% of women have experienced one or more acts of physical violence since the age of 15. While women are most likely to indicate that they were pushed or shoved, excluding this form of violence has only a limited effect on the overall prevalence of physical violence, bringing it down from 31% to 25%. This result reflects the fact that many women who say they have been pushed or shoved have also experienced other forms of physical violence.

[15] FRA (2014) Violence against Women: and EU-Wide Survey, Luxembourg, p. 24.

[16] http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/violence

Characteristics of sexual violence

• In total, 11% of women have experienced some form of sexual violence since they were 15 years old, either by a partner or some other person.

• One in 20 women (5%) has been raped since the age of 15.

• Of those women who indicate they have been victims of sexual violence by a non-partner, almost one in 10 women indicates that more than one perpetrator was involved in the incident when describing the details of the most serious incident of sexual violence they have experienced.

Details of intimate partner violence

• One third of victims (34%) of physical violence by a previous partner experienced four or more different forms of physical violence.

• The most common forms of physical violence involve pushing or shoving, slapping or grabbing, or pulling a woman's hair.

One in 19 women has experienced some sort of sexual violence since the age of 15, and one in 20 has been raped.

Over one in five women has experienced physicial and/or sexual violence from either a current or previous partner.

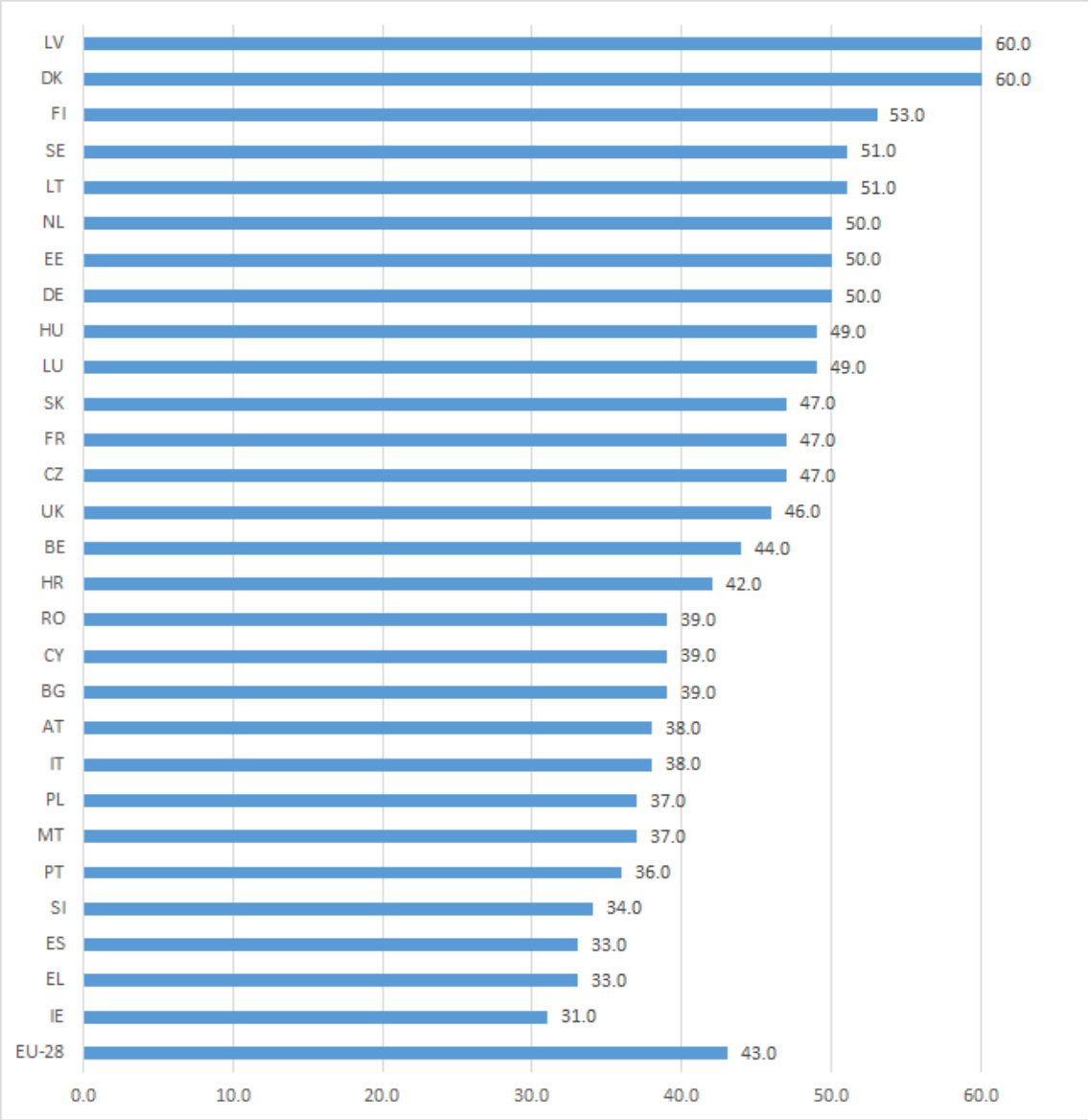
Over one in 19 women indicates that they have experienced some form of sexual violence by and adult before they were 15 years old. Yet, only 14% of women reported their most serious incident of intimate partner violence to the police, and 13% reported their mos serious incident of non-partner violence to the police

EIGE, the European Institute for Gender Equality, conducted a study that estimated the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union. Three main types of costs were identified: lost economic output, provision of services, including health, legal, social and specialized; and the personal (physical and emotional) impact on the victim.

- Gender-based and intimate partner violence place large costs on economy and society. It is likely that an increase in the currently small amount spent on prevention and mitigation of harms, by increasing spending on specialized services, would lead to a decrease in the extent and impact of the violence.
- Costs of gender-based violence against women in the EU can be estimated to almost 256 billion euros.
- The loss to the economy, through lost output as a result of injuries, is around 12%. Services, especially criminal justice, make up around 30% of the cost of the violence. Just under half the

cost is a result of the public estimation of the value placed on the physical and emotional impact that the violence causes.[17]

Figure 2. Percentage of women having experienced psychological violence by a current or former partner, EU, 2012



Source: FRA Survey, EIGE's calculation[18]

[17] EIGE, http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/eiges-studies-gender-based-violence/estimating-costs-gender-based-violence-european-union

[18] http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/violence

The perception of gender-based violence in the European Union

According to a 2009 Eurobarometer on Gender Equality, 62% of Europeans think that gender-based violence should be a priority action in the area of gender inequality, and 92% believe that there is an urgent need to tackle it.[19]

In November 2016, Special Eurobarometer #449 assessed the perceptions of EU citizens about gender-based violence. Among others, it explores the following topics:

- Opinions about and attitudes towards gender-based violence;
- Perceptions of the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual harassment;
- Personal knowledge of a victim of domestic violence, and to whom people speak in the case of knowledge of domestic violence; and
- Whether a range of acts of gender-based violence are wrong and are, or should be, illegal.[20]

74% of respondents think domestic violence against women is common in their country. At least half in every Member State think this way.

Almost three in ten say domestic violence against men is common in their country (29%), but this masks a wide range of results across Member States, from 61% in the UK to 8% in Bulgaria.

Women are more likely than men to say domestic violence against either gender is common.

Almost all respondents (96%) say domestic violence against women is unacceptable, although 12% do not think it should always be punished by law.

More than nine in ten (94%) also say domestic violence against men is unacceptable, with 14% of the opinion it should not always be punished by law.

Around one in six (15%) respondents across the EU consider domestic violence to be a private matter that should be handled within the family. Respondents in Eastern areas of the EU are generally the most likely to agree with this view.

At least half of the respondents in each Member State say domestic violence against women is common in their country, with proportions ranging from 93% in Portugal and 90% in Italy to 50% in Bulgaria and 51% in the Czech Republic.

[19] Quoted by EIGE, http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence

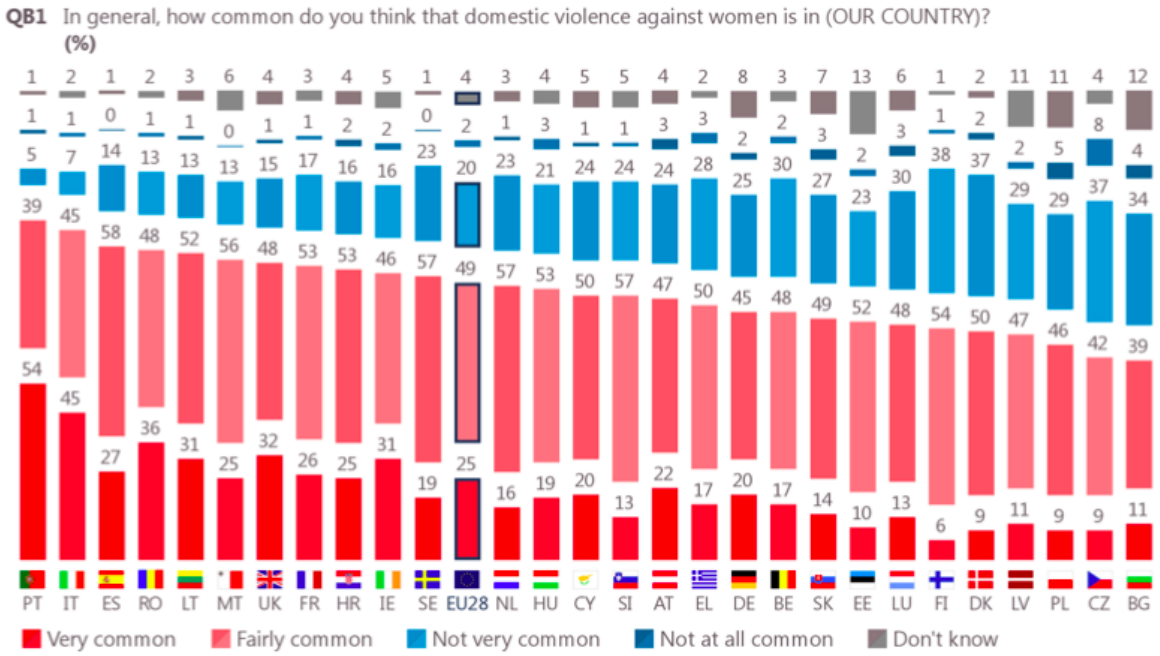
[20] Geographical coverage: France, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Italy, Hungary, Sweden, Poland, Croatia, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Czech Republic, Finland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Malta, Denmark, Lithuania, Estonia, Portugal, United Kingdom.
https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2115_85_3_449_ENG

Looking at the results in more detail shows Portugal is the only country where at least half respondents say domestic violence against women is very common (54%), followed by 45% of respondents in Italy and 36% of those in Romania. In contrast, only 6% of respondents in Finland and 9% in Denmark, Poland and the Czech Republic say the same.

In 14 Member States, at least half say domestic violence against women is fairly common – most notably respondents in Spain (58%), Sweden, the Netherlands and Slovenia (all 57%). This compares to 39% of respondents in Bulgaria who say the same.

Respondents in Finland (38%), Denmark and the Czech Republic (both 37%) are the most likely to say this kind of violence against women is not very common, while the Czech Republic is the only country where at least one in twenty say it is not common at all (8%).

Figure 3. In general, how common do you think that domestic violence against women is in your country?



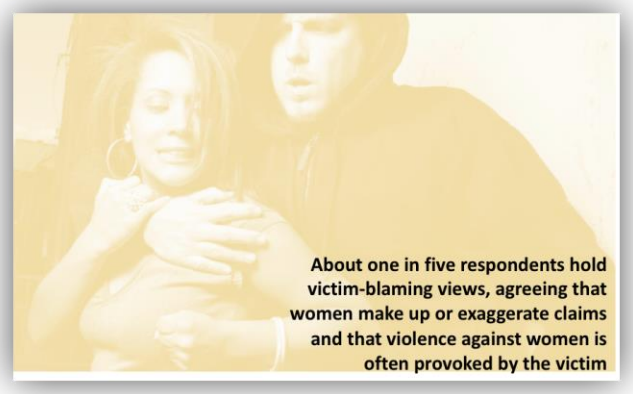
Base: All respondents (n=27.818)
Countries ranked in order of the combined proportion saying very or fairly common

Although 70% think sexual harassment of women is common in their country, this mask a wide range of opinion across Member States – from 89% in Italy to 32% in Estonia.

Women are more likely to say this is common, compared to men, and this pattern occurs across all demographic groups.

86% say violence against women is most likely to occur at home while 19% say in public places or online, and 17% mention the workplace.

31% agree with the saying that women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know, this number increases with respondents in Eastern areas of the EU.



22% agree women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape, with proportions varying from 47% in Malta to 8% in Sweden.

17% agree violence against women is often provoked by the victim, with respondents in Eastern areas of the EU the most likely to agree.

Overall, 27% say sexual intercourse without consent may be justified in at least one of the situations proposed. Respondents are most likely to say this about being drunk or on drugs (12%), voluntarily going home with someone (11%), wearing revealing, provocative or sexy clothing or not clearly saying no or physically fighting back (both 10%).

Respondents in Romania and Hungary are consistently amongst the most likely to say each situation may be a justification for sex without consent, while those in Sweden and Spain are consistently amongst the least likely to say so.

Information by country

Austria: "Tradition", "honour", and violence against women

In the last 15 years, it has become increasingly recognized that women and girls from migrant and minority groups can be affected by specific forms of violence and face different barriers when seeking help. These are "forms of gender-based violence that make women victims of certain moral and traditional values", such as genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour crimes, such as honour killings on a case-by-case basis. **Honour is, according to Nina Scholz, in traditional-conservative immigrant milieus "a collective but always endangered 'possession' of the family, which can be lost at any time due to 'dishonourable' behaviour.** At its core, it is always about the sexuality of the woman. Dishonourable is any self-determined sexual behaviour not sanctioned by the community. A loss of honour hits the entire family in the form of proscription by the community. The fear of this shame leads to appropriate control and oppression mechanisms, justifies an authoritarian anti-emancipatory style of education and the discrimination of girls and women". Not necessarily religion, but archaic traditions are therefore mostly the background of such violent practices. What they have in common is that they "are practiced in the family or community, are largely socially legitimized, and build on patriarchal norms and values". For the affected women, who are mostly trapped in these patriarchal systems, a self-determined life is largely denied. (...) There are specialized agencies in Austria and victim-oriented legislation to assist women affected by these forms of violence to seek help.[21]

Austria was one the first countries to undergo the basic evaluation by GREVIO (Group of experts on action against violence against women and domestic violence) – the monitoring committee of the Istanbul Convention. [22]GREVIO urged the Austrian authorities to take measures to ensure that the provisions of the Istanbul Convention are fully implemented **with regard to all women, including women with disabilities, asylum-seeking women and women with insecure residence status.**

GREVIO invited the Austrian authorities **to adopt a universally applicable legal definition of domestic violence** (in line with Article 3 b of the Istanbul Convention). However, the Ministerium Frauen Gesundheit (Women and Health) argued that the adoption of a universally applicable legal definition of domestic violence, including economic violence, is not considered feasible within Austria's legal system: "The introduction of such a definition might turn Austria's complex and multi-layered legislation on domestic violence into a rather inflexible and rigid system. However, economic violence can already amount to a form of domestic violence under Austrian law if it reaches a critical level; for example, denying financial support can constitute a breach of obligations under marriage laws and can hence be considered accordingly during divorce proceedings".

GREVIO strongly encouraged the Austrian authorities to ensure **that a set of comprehensive policies in the fields of prevention, protection and prosecution exists in relation to all forms of violence**

[21]Austria, Demokratiezentrum Wien, "Gewalt gegen Frauen", http://www.demokratiezentrum.org/themen/genderperspektiven/lebensrealitaeten/gewalt-gegen-frauen.html

[22] Austria's Country Report was coordinated and prepared by the National Coordination Centre for Violence against Women and submitted to GREVIO on 1 September 2016.

against women, in particular in relation to female genital mutilation and forced marriage. In this case, the Ministry acknowledged the importance of increased efforts to implement comprehensive policies concerning other forms of gender-based violence.[23]

Belgium: Violence in the private sphere, hidden from view

In Belgium, more than 1 in 3 women (36%) have suffered physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. 1 in 4 women (24%) experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partner or ex-partner. More than two out of five people (44%) know female victims of domestic violence in their circle of friends and family. In 2015, 1,255 women and 1,236 children were housed in specialized shelters in the reception of women victims of marital violence.

In 2015, in Wallonia, the police registered 1,032 rape complaints, an average of 3 complaints per day. According to a recent study, only 16% of victims of "serious" sexual violence report to the police. The number of rapes (without considering the attempts) would actually be 6,450, an estimated average of 18 rapes per day in Wallonia. In 2015, in reported rape cases, 53% of rape victims were minors. Some 16,029 complaints of violence among the couple (physical, psychological, sexual, economic) were recorded in 2015, in Wallonia (44 complaints on average per day). Of these complaints, about half (7,975) were on facts of physical violence. In cases of physical violence within the couple, 84% of the suspects were men.[24]

Bulgaria: Court watch in order to reduce discrimination of victims of domestic violence and delay in lawsuits

According to the FRA survey, in Bulgaria prevalence rates of domestic violence are in line with the EU average (22%). However, level of awareness about other women victims of domestic violence in the circle of respondents' family or friends is low. This could indicate either low prevalence of violence or (more likely) that violence against women in the family or in partner relationship is mainly considered as private matter, so victims or witnesses of violence do not share this information with others. The second assumption is supported by another study carried out in Bulgaria (Alpha Research in 2011 on Sexual violence against women in Bulgaria), which revealed rather high prevalence of sexual abuse experience among women in this country. According to this study, Bulgarian women are embarrassed to talk about sexual violence.

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[23] Ministerium Frauen Gesundheit, **Austria's Comments on GREVIOS'S Report.** Vienna, August 2017. https://www.bmgf.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/1/1/6/CH1573/CMS1506417636916/stellungnahme_oesterreich_zu_grevio-bericht_austrias_comments_on_grevios_report.pdf

[24] (1) Study on the opinions and behavior of the Belgian population on sexual violence, Amnesty and SOS rape, 2014. (2) Estimate based on police statistics of crime and the results of the study on sexual violence, Amnesty International and SOS Viol, 2014. (3) Source: Police crime statistics, year 2015. "Les violences faites aux femmes en Wallonie : état des lieux en chiffres" , October 30th, 2017, http://www.cvfe.be/actualites/2016/03/01/violences-faites-aux-femmes-wallonie-etat-lieux-chiffres

Bulgarian media reports cover only the most severe forms of violence, such as rape. In the FRA survey it is assessed that level of awareness of different forms of violence against women is low in Bulgaria, and 'cultural readings' of what violence against women is, contributes to an underestimation of perceived prevalence. The Alpha Research study reported that victims do not speak about violence as 76% of perpetrators of sexual violence were known to victims and they were convicted only in 5% of cases. [25]

Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was adopted in 2005, first National Programme on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence was approved for period 2007-2008.

In order to monitor court processes against perpetrators of domestic violence, the project was launched in 2006 in Varna Regional and Varna District Court, supported by Open Society Foundation. The project involved trained volunteers attending court cases on domestic violence and evidencing data along set of indicators such as demographic characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, whether or not a protection order was issued, how many cases were withdrawn or delayed. The watch is conducted by four NGOs: Demetra Association in Burgas, the Youth Alliance Association in Varna, the NGO centre in Rgzrad and the Bulgarian Gender Research Centre Foundation in Sofia. This is independent monitoring of the law's implementation and it was noted that observation of judicial practices prevents or at least limits the effect of bias, prejudice and discrimination and makes the rule of law a little more predictable. It enhances the law's impact by communicating what is observed via media. Effects of watch are positive. Number of immediate protection orders increased more than doubled in one year (2010-2011), and the average duration for lawsuits under the Law for Protection against Domestic Violence fall from over two months to under two months.[26]

Croatia: Legislation still to be implemented

The key to achieving true gender equality in practice lies in effective implementation of gender equality policies and targeted legislative instruments and measures. Gender equality is an overarching principle of the democratic and social legal order of the Republic of Croatia.

Gender equality issues permeate all spheres of life. The fundamental policy instrument for combating gender discrimination in the Republic of Croatia is the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which is adopted and implemented for a five-year periods. More determination and efforts are needed to ensure that all state, regional and local authorities understand and combat gender discrimination within the scope of their activities. Rooting out traditional attitudes and prejudices about gender roles in the society is particularly important for the elimination of gender stereotyping and sexism in general. Unfortunately, many issues in the Croatian society are still not recognised as gender equality issues (primarily economic independence, which has spill-over effects throughout a person's life) and

[25] Alpha Research (2011), **Sexual violence against women in Bulgaria (Сексуалното насилие над жени в България), p. 12., q**uoted from FRA (2015) **Violence against women: and EU-wide survey. Main results.** *Available at* *http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report*

[26] Information taken from EIGE website http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/good-practices/bulgaria/bulgarias-court-watch-reduces-discrimination-and-delay-courts

some are too politicised (such as reproductive rights of women). Economic issues predominate in the public and political debate, but the awareness about the importance of gender equality for economic growth is still low. It is therefore extremely important to constantly question the existing policy and legislative frameworks for combating discrimination and to adapt them to resolve particular problems which are revealed in their practical implementation, in accordance with the international standards.

Croatia has established a legislative and strategic instruments' framework for combating domestic violence. This legislative framework includes the special Act on Protection against Domestic Violence, Gender Equality Act and numerous other acts covering specific spheres of domestic violence. The main strategic instruments include the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence and the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality. The Domestic Violence Case Practice Protocol was adopted in 2005 and it lays down obligations of competent authorities and other stakeholders to participate in the detection and eradication of violence, as well as detailed rules and procedures for the provision of assistance and protection to victims of domestic violence.

The full scope of violence against women, falling within the definition domestic violence, is always difficult to estimate. The available statistics reveal only part of the reality, since many cases, primarily in the sphere of economic and psychological violence, remain unreported. Practical implementation of the existing legislation, protocols and strategies is among the biggest problems. Domestic violence acts are often treated as one-time incidents, even though there is usually a history of unreported violence preceding them; perpetrators and victims are arrested together or even charged with public nuisance; victims are treated as if they have 'provoked' violent (re) actions themselves. Verbal, psychological or economic violence, or combination and interaction of several forms of violence are often not taken into account. Protective measures, such as restraint orders, are implemented by controlling the victim's whereabouts, not the perpetrator's. Psycho-social treatment of perpetrators is not adequate, primarily due to a serious lack of funding.[27]

Cyprus: The Istanbul Convention eventually ratified

The Republic of Cyprus has signed and, as of 14th July 2017, ratified the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, becoming the 27th country to do it.[28] The government proceeded with preparing a new draft bill entitled "The Protection from Harassment and Stalking" and other related Issues Law, and enactment of other related laws. However, some forms of violence against women still remain un-penalized and unmonitored (e.g. economic violence).

Cyprus has transposed Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, implementing national legislation in April 2016 (19), which ensures that women victims of gender-based violence, among others, receive specialized support services.

[27] Martina Schonard (2017), **Gender Equality Policies in Croatia. Update.** European Parliament, Study for the FEMM Committee **PE 596.803**
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596803/IPOL_STU(2017)596803_EN.pdf

[28] Cyprus Women's Lobby Report for the CONVENTION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN, 70th Session, CYPRUS SHADOW REPORT, 2018.
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/CYP/INT_CEDAW_NGO_CYP_31500_E.pdf

However, there is no evidence that the law is being implemented or that front line services have the knowledge and resources to meet their obligations under the law.

Lawyers, prosecutors and judges lack the necessary training and knowledge on violence against women (VAW), the needs and rights of victims, and the legal framework on VAW in Cyprus. Legal sanctions against perpetrators are inadequate, particularly in cases of rape, and do not reflect the seriousness of the crime. There is currently no data available on women's access to protection orders and other protection measures.

Moreover, although free legal aid is available in Cyprus, the process for accessing this aid is time-consuming and not facilitated by the government service. Women are often faced with court delays, as well as stereotypical attitudes by prosecutors and the judiciary. A high number of reported domestic violence cases never reach the court and are either suspended or dropped. Cyprus has one of the lowest conviction rates in Europe and the penalties imposed on the perpetrators are minimal and non-deterrent.

A National Action Plan (NAP) for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family was implemented during the period 2017-2019 by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family (the Advisory Committee). VAW is also included in the NAP on Equality between Men and Women (2014-2017), including domestic violence, sexual harassment and trafficking in women. However, the NAP lacks specific indicators, as well as timelines and dedicated budgets.

Front line professionals (Police, Social Welfare Services, and Health Services) often lack the ability (human resources, lack of direction from senior government officials) to offer adequate support and protection due to lack of systematic specialised training.

Comprehensive data collection on all forms of VAW disaggregated by sex and age of victim and perpetrator, type of violence, relationship between victim and perpetrator is urgently needed as foreseen by the Istanbul Convention and the Victims' Rights Directive. The Advisory Committee has formally submitted to the Ministry of Justice a proposal for a unified and centralised data collection mechanism and processing administrative data on domestic violence. However, to date, no action has been taken in this area.

Island wide specialized services for victims of all forms of VAW are lacking. Domestic violence services are offered by one NGO, the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO) with government support. SPAVO runs the national domestic violence helpline 1440, two women's shelters and counselling services. The burden for the provision of specialised support services to victims of violence as well as for securing the financial resources to ensure such services are sustainable falls to NGOs and volunteer organisations.

Cyprus lacks rape crisis centres or specialized services for victims of rape and sexual assault. Conviction rates in Cyprus are among the lowest in Europe, despite increasing reporting rates. Furthermore, awareness raising campaigns and/or other prevention programs on sexual violence are not implemented at any level.

FGM and other harmful traditional practices, such as honour related violence and forced marriage, are not framed as issues in Cyprus, despite an increasing migrant population in Cyprus, and there is a lack of data on specific forms of harmful traditional practices.

EAPN Cyprus informed that "Migrant women often do not have access to services or lack adequate specialised support due to cultural, economic and other barriers. It is essential to ensure that

migrant women have access to information and culturally sensitive victim support services." It should be noted that the Cyprus government placed a reservation on Article 59 of the Istanbul Convention on Residence Status, which states that survivors whose residence status depends on that of a violent spouse or partner have the right to apply for a separate residence permit. According to the Ministry of Interior, the reason behind this reservation is a 'fear' on behalf of the government that migrant women will claim being victims of violence in order access residence permits. This is rooted in racist and sexist attitudes towards migrant women.

Primary prevention of VAW has been a neglected policy area in Cyprus, in favour of secondary prevention. Primary prevention should be targeted through the educational system, since it is one of the primary transmitters of traditional cultural and social norms that are conducive to violence against women.

According to a recent survey concerning domestic violence against women, 22% of Cypriot women aged 15 years and older have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Specific vulnerable groups are migrants, refugees, domestic workers, disabled women and girls. These women, as victims of violence, often lack adequate specialized support due to cultural, economic, and other barriers, which makes them particularly vulnerable to re-victimization or discrimination by the state.

Cyprus does not have their Criminal Statistics disaggregated by type of gender-based violent crime, and the Judges or the Secretaries of the Courts do not fill in/ send all the Statistical Returns. After the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2017, and the coming of that into force by the end of 2018, statistics are expected to improve and with this, it will be clearer the extent of gender-based violence, as well as the victims' profiles.[29]

Czech Republic: Poverty, inequality and gender-based violence

Czech women are twice as likely to be poor as Czech men according to a report published by Social Watch in 2017. Single mothers are among those most likely to be living in poverty, along with female migrants and women over the age of 65. Women are solely responsible for 87% of the estimated 180,000 single-parent families in the Czech Republic, the report says. On top of that, single mothers are more likely to be in low-paid work, and twice as

[29] Cyprus Women's Lobby Shadow Report for the CEDAW committee 2018 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fNGO%2fCYP%2f31500&Lang=en
Cyprus, Report on Violence against Women. https://www.euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/112016-EMHRN-Factsheet-VAW-Cyprus-EN.pdf
EU-wide survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2014 on violence against women in Cyprus (FRA Survey) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, (2014). Violence Against Women: An EU Wide Survey, Main Results. Publication Office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
Statistics of Cyprus Police http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/0E971C05B95D4449C2258266003B6C86?OpenDocument
https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/newsroom/-/asset_publisher/anlInZ5mw6yX/content/cyprus-ratifies-the-istanbul-convention?_101_INSTANCE_anlInZ5mw6yX_viewMode=view

likely to be unemployed than the national average. The financial problems faced by Czech women are closely linked to other inequality issues.

Marketa Mottlová, project coordinator at the Czech equality watchdog **Forum 50%**, says the consequences of the disadvantaged position of women on the labour market are serious in terms of economic dependence and poverty. Domestic violence is impossible to separate from economic dependence in a society where experts point out that sexist attitudes persist in many areas. Alarmingly, Mottlová points out that one Czech woman out of three has experienced violence in her life: "Stereotypes around the topic of rape are present in the Czech society," she says. "Victims are sometimes seen as co-responsible for the rape. In this same line of thought, Hana Stelzerová, director of the Czech **Women's Lobby**, confirms that: "Poverty among women and violence against women are the most serious outcomes of gender inequality in the Czech Republic."

In May 2016 the Czech Republic signed the Istanbul Convention. It was the next-to-last state to do so and the convention has not yet been ratified. According to the Social Watch report, the reason for the delay is "the lack of willingness to accept the gender question when it comes to the issue of violence."[30]

[30] The battle for gender equality rages on in the Czech Republic. https://www.equaltimes.org/the-battle-for-gender-equality?lang=es#.W0yGFS8rxR0

Denmark: Indirect gender-based discrimination of women in criminal law

Since 2002, Denmark has adopted four National Action Plans to stop violence against women, and these have adapted to evolving patterns of violence.

A recent legal extended essay focusing on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, in the Danish law, identified how indirect discrimination against women takes place in the field of criminal law. The essay shows how the Danish judges tend to sentence cases of domestic violence, in a mitigating direction if: 1) prior to the violence there have been disagreements between the victim and the perpetrator; 2) the offence was performed by a perpetrator in an agitated state of mind (so-called ”oprørt sindstilstand”); or 3) the relationship between the parties still exists or is resumed at the time of the trial.

On these grounds, the perpetrators of domestic violence do not seem to receive dissuasive punishments, because the courts’ mitigated sentences. Compared with other relevant cases, the penalties in court rulings regarding domestic violence are generally lower than the penalties sentenced for similar acts of violence exercised in other contexts, such as at work or in the nightlife.[31]

Estonia: Gender-based violence has recently been acknowledged

Violence against women as a public issue and health burden has only recently been acknowledged in Estonia. According to the 2014 European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey, women in Estonia are most exposed in the EU to psychological violence from the age of 15; this happens to 50% of the women surveyed and is significantly higher than the European average (43%).

Women with psychological violence are the most exposed in Latvia and Denmark (up to 60%), the smallest in Spain (33%) and Ireland (31%). The partner's psychological extortion or the use of children as an extortion tool has been experienced in 10% of women participating in the study, which is slightly above the European average (8%). Every third woman in Estonia who is 15 years old suffered physical or sexual violence, an equivalent to the European average. Denmark (52%), Finland (47%), Austria (20%) and Poland (19%) are the most affected by physical and sexual violence. In the past 12 months, 5% of Estonian women have been exposed to physical or sexual violence.[32]

[31] The Women's Council in Denmark, Danish NGO-Shadow Report to GREVIO, Copenhagen, January 2017, http://www.kvinderaadet.dk/files/Danish_NGO_report_2017_GREVIO.pdf

[32] Delfi, Estonia, March 2014, http://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/uuring-50-protsenti-eesti-naistest-on-kokku-puutunud-psuhholoogilise-vagivallaga?id=68157699

Finland: Domestic violence and street aggressions

Domestic violence and random attacks under the influence of alcohol are the most common forms of violence against women in Finland. According to FRA survey, 46.7% of women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence while 53% experienced psychological violence since the age of 15.[33]

Undocumented migrants are one of the most vulnerable groups. There are about 4,000 undocumented migrants in Finland. Some of them end up in a kind of slavery-situation, where they cannot complain to the officials or police about their work situation, crimes, etc., because they fear that they will be forced away from Finland. Some women might also end up into forced prostitution. There are some NGOs working in this field trying try to help these people and giving shelter.

MONIKA – The Finnish Multicultural Women's Association is an NGO operating in the field of social affairs. It develops and provides specialized services for immigrant women and their children who have been subjected to violence, and acts as an expert and advocates in issues related to ethnic non-discrimination and violence, as well as promoting integration by supporting civil society activities for immigrants.

Pro-tukipiste NGO is a specialized service promoting the participation and the human rights of people working in the sex or erotic industry and for victims of human trafficking. The NGO provides them low threshold social and health services. The services are situated in Helsinki, Tampere and Turku.

France: One woman murdered every three days

In 2016 a woman died every three days under the blows of a man with whom she had a relationship. Children are also victims of this domestic violence, says a national study on violent deaths in couples, relayed in 2017 by a statement from the Ministry of the Interior and the State Secretariat for Equality between Women and Men. In 2016, taking into account "official couples" which means couples who are legally married, 138 victims died from the violence of their partners or ex-partners (compared to 143 in 2014, and 136 in 2015). In 79% of the cases, the victims were women and nearly 80% of the perpetrators were men. The main motive of these murderers: the separation. This figure is of 123 if we consider the "unofficial" couples (boyfriend, lover, episodic relationship ...). On the other hand, when the perpetrator of the homicide is a woman, "the male victim had committed previous violence on his partner" in 60% of cases (against 4% conversely).

But women are not the only victims of domestic violence. **Twenty-five children were also murdered.** According to EAPN France, this figure could increase to 2 children murdered per day, but there is a lack of statistics on this issue. For this reason, and because the problem is very important, the French administration has launched an Inter-Ministerial plan of 23 measures to mobilise and fight against violence against children for the period 2017-2019.[34]

[33] FRA Survey, EIGE's calculation.

[34] http://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/plan-violence_-enfants_vf.pdf

In 2016, the total number of deaths caused by domestic violence reaches 196, if we take into consideration the "collateral victims" and the suicides of the perpetrators. The government reiterates its "total determination" to fight against this violence, particularly through the 5th three-year plan to mobilize and combat all violence against women (2017-2019) and the 1st inter-ministerial triennial plan to combat violence against women and children (2017-2019).[35]

Germany: More than 100,000 cases of gender-based violence in 2016

Violence against women, even by relatives, acquaintances or partners, is anything but a marginal phenomenon in Germany. More than 100,000 cases of domestic violence against women were counted in 2015. The dark figure will be much higher.[36]

The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) together with the German Minister for Family Affairs, Manuela Schwesig, released the statistics in Berlin on November 2016. This was the first-time police were releasing numbers showing the extent of violence in intimate relationships. According to the BKA's figures, in 2015, a total of 127,457 people in relationships were targets of murder, bodily harm, rape, sexual assault, threats and stalking. 82%, or over 104,000, of these, were women. Among the women, over 65,800 suffered simple injuries, 11,400 were badly injured, 16,200 were subjected to threats and nearly 8,000 were victims of stalking. 331 women were killed intentionally or unintentionally by their partners. In cases of rape and sexual assault, almost all the victims were women. Over 90% of victims of stalking and threats were also female, according to the statistics. In a press statement, the BKA's President Holder Munch explained that police had registered several cases of abuse, starting from subtle forms of humiliation, insults and intimidation, psychic, physical and sexual abuse to rape and murder.[37]

Greece: Domestic Violence soaring during the crisis

The first epidemiological study on gender-based and domestic violence in Greece was published in 2003 under the auspices of the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI). The results indicated that in a sample of 200 women, 56% had been recipients of violent or abusive psychologically or physically violent behaviour by their husbands or companions while only 3.6% of them reported that their husband or companion was abusing them on a regular basis and 3.5% testified they had been forced to have sexual intercourse.

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[35] Franceinfo, France, September 1st 2017, “Violences conjugales: toujours en moyenne une femme morte tous les trois jours sous les coups d'un homme”. **Étude nationale relative aux morts violentes au sein du couple - Année 2016.** https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministre/Communiques/Etude-nationale-relative-aux-morts-violentes-au-sein-du-couple-Annee-2016

[36] Der Spiegel, Germany, March 8th, 2017, “Bekämpfung von Gewalt gegen Frauen. Jahre später”, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/gewalt-gegen-frauen-bundesregierung-bringt-istanbul-konvention-auf-den-weg-a-1137816.html

[37] DW, Germany, November 26th, 2017, http://www.dw.com/en/domestic-violence-affects-over-100000-women-in-germany/a-36482282

Since 2003 no other study or national-level research on the issue of gender-based violence has been conducted. Nevertheless, current studies in a variety of fields such as labour, migrant labour, undeclared labour, and trafficking reflect an alarming reality indicating that gender-based violence, a term that includes domestic violence, rape, human trafficking and sexual harassment, has aggravated during the years of the Greek crisis. According to the Special Eurobarometer 2016 on gender-based violence, 33% of participants in the survey were likely to know that a woman in their family, work environment, or community has been abused.[38]

With a nearly eight-year-long economic crisis already crushing Greece with record unemployment, poverty, suicide and deprivation, the number of gender-based violence cases grew from 2014 to 2017, with more than 13,700 cases reported.

According to (more) recent data, 8 out of 10 women are victims of domestic violence (mostly husband). These data area provided by the General Secretariat for Equality, based on the calls to SOS phone line (15900). According to the same source, from 19/11/2016 till 19/11/2017, the line received 5,041 calls and 113 electronic messages. Out of these calls, 4,266 (85%) referred to government - 3,034 calls (71%) were made by the abused women whereas 1,232 calls (29%) were made by friends, relatives, neighbours etc.

- 2,432 (80%) calls reported domestic violence, 53 (2%) sexual harassment, 18 (1%) rape, 54 (2%) referred to other forms of violence - no call was made regarding trafficking.
- The requests were: 1,516 (40%) for psychosocial support, 976 (26%) legal counselling, 191 (5%) legal support, 251 (7%) shelter, 15 (0%) job. Out of the 3.034 women who called, 1.663 (50%) are mothers.
- 2,484 (82%) are Greek, 198 (7%) are migrants [no data to specify if they are refugees or economic migrants] and 23 (1%) are women with special needs.
- 69% of women are between 26 and 55 years of age.
- EAPN Greece reported that there are incidents of governments on the islands where, due to the geographical restrictions, asylum seekers and refugees cannot leave the islands and have to stay for long period of time in place under appalling conditions.

In 2017 there were 3,134 cases of domestic violence reported, involving 4,243 victims, according to the Greek Police (ELAS) spokeswoman Ioanna Rotziokou. Violence was verbal, physical or sexual, and was occasionally fatal. “Sometimes the tragic outcome of these domestic situations is even death, with the number of female fatalities twice that of men,” she said.[39]

According to EAPN Greece: “There have been projects implemented by NGOs which focus on government issues - KETHI will start implementing the project (with funds by UNICEF) «Enhancing protection for refugee and migrant GBV survivors through increased access to GBV services». A law was voted lately which protects victims from all forms of violence – there is need though to clarify the concrete procedures and protocols for such protection and to appoint focal points.”

[38] Aliki Kosyfologou (2018), **GREECE. AUSTERITY, GENDER INEQUALITY AND FEMINISM AFTER THE CRISIS. The gendered aspects of the austerity regime in Greece: 2010 – 2017.** Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/images/publikationen/Studien/Austerity-feminism/FEMINIST_GR.pdf

[39] The National Herald, February 4th, 2018 https://www.thenationalherald.com/189614/domestic-violence-soaring-crisis-wracked-greece/

A law was voted lately which protects victims from all forms of violence – there is need though to clarify the concrete procedures and protocols for such protection and to appoint focal points.

Hungary: 1 among 5 women regularly suffers abuses from her partner

The Hungarian state does not protect properly women experiencing partner and domestic violence. One in five Hungarian women suffer from regular abuse by her partner.[40] Hungary signed the Istanbul Convention, but it has not ratified it yet. There is a lack of safe housing and support system for victims of partner and domestic violence. The existing good examples are mostly provided by NGOs, such as helplines, legal aid, self-help groups etc.

There is a possibility for victims of violence to ask for restraining but the regulation is problematic (see for instance the too short duration of the order).[41]

The current Hungarian government has no female members at all.[42] The governmental rhetoric strengthens a conservative and stereotypical image of women (kitchen – child – care-house work triangle), portraying the "ideal woman" as a mother and supporter of her husband. Although, there were cases in recent years of politicians abusing their partners, violence against women is still not on the governmental agenda.[43]

Vulnerable groups within the group of women are:

- Low-income women
- Elderly women
- On the top of all forms of violence, Roma women often face ethnic discrimination in Hungary
- Trans women suffer from exclusion
- The women of the LGBTQI community: the Fundamental of Hungary refers to "family" as an institution based on marriage of a man and woman.[44]

[40] NANE data, http://nane.hu/erintetteknek/tudnivalok-a-nok-elleni-eroszakrol/

[41] NOK JOGA Mit tehet Ön,
ha családon belüli erôszak áldozatává válik?
http://patent.org.hu/dokumentumok/nok_joga_sorozat/nok/mit_tehet_csbe_aldozat_2014.pdf

[42] "A kormány tagjai", http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-kormany-tagjai

[43] **Csak pénzbüntetést kapott a vak komondor gazdája at**
https://index.hu/belfold/2016/02/17/vak_komondor_balogh_jozsef_fulophazai_polgarmester_itelet

[44] Wolters Kluwer, ***Magyarország Alaptörvénye (2011. április 25.)*** *Isten, áldd meg a magyart!* ***NEMZETI HITVALLÁS*** * https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A1100425.ATV

Iceland: Champion in gender equality, but gender-based violence persists

According to the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, Iceland occupies the first place in the global rank with the smallest gender gap.[45] However, at the same time, Iceland has one of Europe's highest rate of reported rapes per capita, according to Eurostat (although legal definitions differ between countries complicating comparisons).[46] Gender experts and feminists in Iceland argue that such ranking masks persistent violence against women, harassment and everyday sexism.

According to study conducted in 2010, 42% of Icelandic women had been subjected to violence, threat or physical contact of a sexual nature that caused distress (since the age of 16), 22% of women had experienced violence in close relationship, while only 22% approached organizations or institutions that provide services to victims of violence. Only 13% victims reported the last incident of violence to the police.[47]

During last several years, significant changes were made in the legislation regarding violence against women. After years of pressure from advocacy women's groups and some Parliamentarians, crucial changes have been put in effect by the Parliament. In 2011 the Parliament approved a law that improves the provisions for protection of victims of violence in close relationships. The law provides measures such as removal of the perpetrator from the household and putting in place a specific restraining order in case of suspicion of domestic violence. It is based on the Austrian model, where the victim of domestic/partner violence is protected, and the perpetrator is removed. Legislative changes and policy initiatives had a significant impact on the prosecution of cases involving domestic violence. Increased cooperation between the municipality and social services and the police have led to increased prosecution of perpetrators and protection for victims. For example, in 2010, as much as 94% of cases reported to the police were dropped, while in 2015, there was only 3% of dropped cases[3]. The Istanbul Convention was signed by Iceland in 2011 and is currently being implemented. **According to EAPN Iceland, "There are many good practices that indicate strong efforts to provide adequate response to violence against women."**

[45] World Economic Forum (2017) **The Global Gender Gap Report 2017**: 174, available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf

[46] https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2017/12/12/icelands-high-gender-ranking-masks-continuing-violence-harassment-and-everyday-sexism-experts-say.html

[47]]The Centre for Gender Equality Iceland (2017) **Gender Equality in Iceland.** https://www.jafnretti.is/static/files/2018/utgefid_efni_af_gomlu_sidu/gender_equality_in_iceland_2017-1-.pdf

Ireland: The 2018 Domestic Violence Act

The Bill entitled an Act to consolidate the law on domestic violence; to provide for emergency barring orders in certain circumstances; to provide for evidence to be given through television link in certain proceedings; to provide for the right of an applicant to be accompanied in certain proceedings; to provide for the obtaining of the views of a child in certain proceedings; to provide for the giving of information on support services to victims of domestic violence; to provide for the making of recommendations for engagement with certain services by respondents; to provide for restrictions on those present in court during certain proceedings; to prohibit the publication or broadcast of certain matters; to provide for an offence of forced marriage; to repeal provisions for exemption, in certain cases, from minimum age requirements for marriage; for those and other purposes to repeal the Domestic Violence Act 1996 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2002 and to provide for the consequential amendment of certain other enactments; and to provide for related matters.

The main changes to the law include:

The Bill will provide for a new criminal offence of coercive control. This is psychological abuse in an intimate relationship that causes fear of violence, or serious alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse impact on a person's day-to-day activities.

Where a person is convicted of a violent or sexual offence against his or her spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are in an intimate relationship, that fact shall be an aggravating factor for the purposes of sentencing. There will be an extensive list of factors that a court must consider when dealing with an application for a domestic violence order. The list is not exhaustive and will not limit a court's discretion to make an order.

Victims will be able to give evidence by live television link to avoid the risk of intimidation. Victims will be able to bring a friend, family member or support worker into court to support them during proceedings.

Children will be able to make their views known to the court where an order is sought on behalf of, or will partly relate to, a child. The court will have the option of appointing an expert to assist the court to ascertain the views of the child.

The requirement for a relationship to be "committed" to enable a person to apply for a domestic violence order has been removed.

Where a court is satisfied that the threshold for making an order has been reached, it must make an order. Domestic violence orders will remain in force in respect of dependents after they reach the age of 18, until the orders expire. Safety orders will be available to people who are in intimate relationships but who are not cohabiting.

Victims of domestic violence who are cohabiting with, or are parents of, the perpetrator will be able to apply for an emergency barring order lasting for eight working days, where there is an immediate risk of significant harm. When making a safety order or barring order, courts will be able to prohibit a perpetrator of domestic violence from communicating with the victim electronically.

The Bill will provide protection against cross-examination conducted in person. Courts will be able to direct personal service by An Garda Síochána of orders on respondents in cases where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the respondent will try to evade orders. Special out-of-hours sittings of the District Court may be requested by Ann Garda Síochána where necessary to deal with urgent applications for orders. The Courts Service will have an obligation to offer information on support services for victims of domestic violence. The courts will be able to recommend that a perpetrator engages with services such as programmes aimed at perpetrators of domestic violence, addiction or counselling services. Restrictions will be put in place on media reporting and attendance by the general public at criminal court proceedings for breaches of civil domestic violence orders.

The Bill will provide for a new criminal offence of forced marriage. The legislative provisions that enable people under the age of 18 to marry will be repealed.

Reforms included in the Domestic Violence Bill 2017 bring Ireland a step closer to ratifying the Istanbul Convention, which aims to combat domestic violence.

Irish key national Strategies:

Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence aims to:

- Change societal attitudes to support a reduction in domestic and sexual violence.
- Improve supports available to victims and survivors and hold perpetrators to account in order to create a safer Ireland.

The other important document is the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020.

Italy: Statistics about rape not reliable and 31.5% of women aged 16-70 affected

The portion of reported rape is too small to be representative. Moreover, the allegations are not only related to rape, but to the complexity of sexual violence. How do you know if the rapes increase or not year after year? The comparison is to be made using the statistics by Istat, the National Institute of Statistics, that estimates the submerged, asking directly to women if they have suffered from different types of violence and if they have reported them to the police. These surveys were conducted in 2006 and 2014 and then stopped because, as Istat officials stated, "they are too expensive". We will have to wait 2019 to know what has happened to gender-based violence from 2014 on. Numbers speak clearly, 1,150,000 women have been raped or attempted to be raped during their lives, nearly 7 million women have been subjected to physical or sexual violence, 36% of women who have been subject to partner violence have been afraid for her life.[48]

As for femicide, in Italy, one woman is murdered approximately every two days: 157 in 2012; 179 in 2013; 152 in 2014, 141 in 2015; 145 in 2016. In October 2013, the Senate approved the law against femicide (119/2013). The legislation falls within the framework outlined by the Istanbul Convention,

[48] La Stampa, Italy, September 27th, 2017, "Violenza sulle donne, un'emergenza che non si misura con i numeri", http://www.lastampa.it/2017/09/27/cultura/violenza-sulle-donne-unemergenza-che-non-si-misura-con-i-numeri-GuDFshHemiB6N0MC7BlIDL/pagina.html

which for the first time recognizes violence against women as a form of violation of human rights and discrimination.

In 55,8% of cases there is, or it had ended not too long before, a sentimental relation between the murderer and the victim. If to this we add the cases in which murderer and victim had family ties, we discover that 75% of the women are killed within the family, the place that should defend her the most, theoretically.

The National Institute of Statistics reports that in 2014:

31.5% of women aged 16-70 (6,788,000) has suffered some form of physical violence during her life. Of these women:

- 51.4% were separated or divorced
- 36.6% suffered from serious illness
- 42.5% had a college degree
- 40.3% were professionals or managers
- 35.9% were 25-34 years old

The 2016 Istat Survey on Citizens' Security estimates that 1,403,000 women have suffered, during their working life, sexual harassment or sexual blackmail at work, equal to about 8.9% of current or past workers, including women seeking employment. Only one in five women related their experience to their colleagues (8.1%), much less with the employer, managers or unions. Almost none reported the fact to the police force (0.7%).

Befree is a cooperative with more than 10 years of activity helping hundreds of abused women. The cooperative, which counts about 50 workers, works in Rome and in the centre-south of the country. It manages anti-violence centres, shelters, and help-desks in hospitals' emergency rooms, assists abused women with shelter when necessary, psychological and legal assistance, training to face the job market, and enables them to work by organizing child-care. According to Oria Gargano, the cooperative's president and one of its founders, the main challenge for the battered women whom the cooperative assists is finding a job, especially when they "have left their jobs, often forced by their partners to be 'queens of the house', or never had one".

A new law allows battered and abused women – once their status as such is certified – to stay away from their job for a period of time without losing it. This legislation, despite its laborious initial implementation, is a great help but it is barely enough. The lack of an adequate minimum income scheme and social services such as child-care, coupled with the very long wait for the courts to process petitions for alimony and child support and a strong tendency of the men to "go missing", make it very hard for these women to decide to face the future alone.

Latvia: Controversial over Istanbul Convention

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), an autonomous body of the European Union based in Vilnius, 39% of women in Latvia have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, some 6% higher than the EU average. In Latvia, 6.8% of women experienced violence

during the last 12 months, with 60% also suffering psychological abuse from their partners. Latvia is placed seventh in the EU for the level of violence and abuse women experience. According to EIGE estimates, the financial cost of intimate partner violence against women in Latvia amounts to €442 million per year.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, more commonly referred to as the Istanbul Convention, is based on the understanding that violence against women is a form of gender-based violence, committed against women because they're women. Latvia signed it in 2016. To date, 28 countries have ratified it. **The Latvian government has yet to do so.**

The debate over the Istanbul Convention ratification has become a politicised issue with Latvia's political cauldron also being stirred by Latvia's four religious leaders, archbishops Zbignevs Stankevics of the Roman Catholic Church, and Janis Vanags of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, metropolitan Aleksandrs Kudrjasovs from the Latvian Orthodox Church and bishop Peteris Sprogis from the Union of Baptist Churches in Latvia. Religious influence has been viewed by some as being exerted on the Latvian Green Party and the Latvian Farmers' Union party politicians (who are now opposed to the convention) in calling for opposition of the convention's adoption by the government. Particularly problematic for the four religious leaders is Article 12 of the convention which obliges states to produce transformative equality through measures to 'promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men.'

The award-winning Latvian poet, novelist, playwright and theatre director Inga Gaile believes that large-scale domestic violence against women as well as rape remain a grave problem in Latvia, even though major law reforms have been implemented in recent years. "Sex was a taboo theme during the Soviet period in Latvia, and it's still so today. Everyone was frustrated during the Soviet period because there was no such thing as sex. Nobody knew how to talk about it. I think that almost every woman over the age of 30 in Latvia has been raped or sexually violated," Gaile told The Baltic Times.

In a comments paper entitled 'The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality' presented in Greece by Kasava in February 2018 on the situation in Latvia, she notes that 26 women (1.56 women victims of intentional homicide by perpetrators per 100,000 inhabitants) are being killed every year in Latvia.

The Latvian Ministry of Internal Affairs statistics on violent crimes show a steady picture of similar numbers in 2014 and 2016, with a slight (as yet unexplained) drop in 2015. Murders and deaths from injuries in total numbered 127 (2016) of which women constituted 45%. Furthermore, 47 cases (or 37%) of all deaths were within the family setting, and 30 (or 63%) of those were women. Women are primarily murdered by people within the family, and 16% of them murdered by their partners. Rape numbers have decreased, with 40 criminal cases in 2016 compared to 51 in 2014.[49]

[49] The Baltic Course, April 26th 2018, http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/analytics/?doc=139595

According to an European Parliament study (2015), Latvia doesn't have an integrated approach to eradicate violence against women. The cooperation between the institutions is weak. Statistics on gender-based violence are scattered and incomplete, and often not mutually comparable.[50]

Within the Programme on the Prevention of Domestic Violence 2008-2011 some steps were taken towards improving legislation and cooperation between institutions. State funded social rehabilitation services are introduced in 2015. NGOs remain the main providers of services for victims of domestic violence.

Victims in Latvia are provided protection in 23 family crisis centres/women's shelters with a total of 1,084 beds for women and children. The Skalbes Association, established in 1997, which provides a 24/7 helpline for victims of violence and abuse believes that the convention's ratification would give warranty and certainty to laws and provide financial support for activities which would assist rehabilitating victims of domestic violence.

The Latvian Criminal Law defines and criminalises trafficking of human beings and sending people for sexual exploitation. The National Strategy for the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings 2014-2020 aims to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, protect and assist victims, and to promote cross-sectoral cooperation. [51]

Lithuania: Institutional trust in the Istanbul Convention fails

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Lithuania could amount to €600 million per year. The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results showed that, in Lithuania, since the age of 15: 31% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence; 8% of women have been stalked; 35% of women have experience sexual harassment. According to Eurostat, from 2010 to 2012, an estimated 0.6 per 100 000 people in the country were registered as victims of human trafficking.

In Lithuania, rape and sexual assault are criminalised under Articles 149—151 of the criminal code. Rape law in Lithuania still requires 'force or threat' and does not cover consent. Marital rape in Lithuania is not criminalised.

Sexual harassment is defined under the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (LR Moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių įstatymas) and is reflected in the Lithuanian penal code. The law also covers sexual harassment at work.

In 2011, Lithuania created the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. Female genital mutilation is not criminalised in Lithuanian law, although it could potentially be prosecuted under other statutes.

[50] Olga Rastrigina (2015), The Policy on Gender Equality in Latvia. In depth analysis. European Parliament, DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS- WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER EQUALITY. http://www.gwi-boell.de/sites/default/files/uploads/2010/02/ipol_ida2015510008_en.pdf

[51] The Baltic Course, April 26th 2018, http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/analytics/?doc=139595

Lithuania has 17 specialised support centres which provide proactive assistance to women who have called the police due to domestic violence.[52]

In June 2018, Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaite submitted to the national Parliament the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence — known as the Istanbul Convention — for ratification. Yet the treaty is bound to face political opposition, as demonstrated by the earlier Parliament's decision to put on hold its ratification. The main reason for the delay was the use of the term 'gender' in the Istanbul Convention. In accordance to Article 3c, 'gender' means 'socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men'. The term is central to the Convention since it depicts violence against women as gender-based. In other words, it views gender violence as a consequence of power inequalities between men and women, which are rooted in sociocultural norms. **The critics in Lithuania assert that the concept of 'gender' is unfamiliar to national law.** It is further argued that the treaty challenges binary sex system and paves the way to the recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

The ruling Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union party previously suggested that CEDAW, which Lithuania ratified in 1994, provided a sufficient framework to tackle violence against women. As a treaty dedicated to the elimination of discrimination against women, it is absent of the term 'gender' and is believed to overlap with the Istanbul Convention.[53]

Luxembourg: A law to reinforce victims' protection

Regarding the ratification of the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, a new law has been voted by the Parliament on 3 July 2018. The law, which modifies several existing laws, aims at preventing violence, protecting victims and reinforcing collaboration between several actors. The law introduces into the penal code the legal notion of forbidding any form of violence based on gender. Genital mutilation will be sanctioned by severe fines and a maximum 20-year prison sentence. An additional measure is introduced for children affected by domestic violence. There will be obligatory consultations for any minor who has been exposed to domestic violence and where the perpetrator has been expelled from the home. The minors will be assisted by specialized services.[54]

[52] http://www.itstopsnow.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/EIGE%20Report%20Lithuania-Combating%20Violence%20against%20Women.pdf

[53] Laura Nacyte (2018), "Debating the Istanbul Convention in Lithuania: The Term "Gender" is not Alien", in https://ilg2.org/2018/07/13/debating-the-istanbul-convention-in-lithuania-the-term-gender-is-not-alien/

[54] The Parliament's website has every detail to the law, the text, the deliberations and the vote; it can be seen at: https://www.chd.lu/wps/portal/public/Accueil/TravailALaChambre/Recherche/RoleDesAffaires?action=doDocpaDetails&id=7167

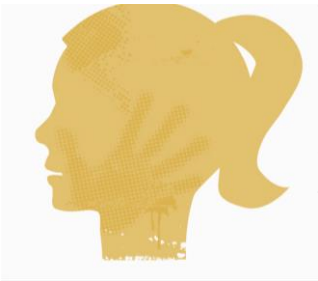
Macedonia: A woman victim of sexual violence every 7 seconds

78% of victims of physical violence are women, while 98% of perpetrators of domestic violence are men. From 2008 to 2016, 70 femicides were registered, of which 15 occurred only in the period 2013-2016. Over 3/4 of domestic violence cases have not been reported in any publicly available service. Every second, a woman in Macedonia is victim of psychological violence; every four seconds, she is victim of physical violence, and every seven, victim of sexual violence.

In the first half of 2017, criminal charges were filed for a total of 384 perpetrators of domestic violence. In reported domestic violence, 94% of the perpetrators of the crimes were men, and most often the perpetrator is the husband (in 161 cases), the son (in 84 cases) and the father (in 21 cases). Women remain the most vulnerable group in domestic violence, with a 75% of the cases, and parents and children account for the 25%. According to the typology, physical violence is the most frequent (in 323 cases), followed by physical violence with cold weapons (17 cases) and in one case, using firearms.[55]

Macedonia ratified the Istanbul convention at the end of December 2017, 6 years after its adoption in 2011. The implementation process is on the way.

Malta: Half of the Maltese agree that victims exaggerate



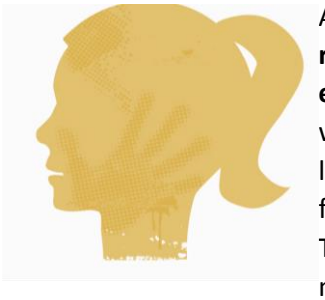
47% of Maltese people agree that "women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape". This puts Malta as the worst in this regard in the European Union, with a considerable 3% lead over Cyprus. On the other side of the spectrum, Sweden scored 8%. Secondly, 40% think "violence against women is often provoked by the victim". Sweden and the Netherlands lead the other side of the coin, with 9% and 6% respectively. Thirdly, 36% believe "at least one situation justifies" having sexual intercourse without consent. Fourthly, more than half agree that "women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know". So, while all the other results point to Maltese people thinking women exaggerate (or even downright make up) claims of domestic violence and rape, or that they might even provoke attacks, or that even "at least one situation justifies" sexual intercourse without consent, 52% believe it's definitely not them. Loving Malta reached out to Victim Support Malta, one such support service, to find out what they had to say about these five statistics.

According to Krista Tabone, Victim Support Malta's Director: "Whilst it is highly concerning to see the high degree of victim blaming attitudes which was exhibited by Maltese participants, it is unfortunately not surprising. A lot of people minimize domestic violence. We have so many clients who come to us thinking that their partner may have had a right to become violent, and this notion if often emphasised by the people around them. If you tell someone that your partner was abusive, the follow up question is 'but what did you do?', it doesn't instil too much confidence in the person who is opening up to seek further help and support. In relation to sexual assault, we find that the myth that rape is usually committed by strangers is still widely believed. The majority of sexual assault victims

[55] http://www.glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/

know the person who abused them, and people seem to have an issue with believing that someone could do this to someone that they know. As one might imagine, this creates a huge issue when the victim attempts to seek justice for the crime which was committed against them. The constant need to justify why and how you did or didn't resist and the questions about why the victim ended up in that situation, all adds to the severe victim blaming attitude seen in these statistics."[56]

Norway: Inherited violent attitudes among men and biased cultural relativism



A first issue is called "inherited violence". **In Norway, six out of ten men who receive treatment for domestic violence towards their partner have experienced violence in their own childhood.** Many of them also struggle with anxiety, depression and drug abuse. Seven out of ten men qualify for at least one psychiatric diagnosis. These are the results of a 2015 Ph.D. study from Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS).[57] The study is based on extensive quantitative and qualitative data material on men who have sought treatment at Alternative to Violence (ATV), a professional research and treatment centre for domestic violence. By way of comparison, the occurrence of psychiatric diagnoses among Norwegian men in general is 15%. "This does not mean that every man who has a psychiatric diagnosis or has been victim of violence becomes violent himself. Many of them manage just fine. But having been exposed to violence makes you more vulnerable for developing violent behaviour yourself," says Ingunn Rangul Askeland, psychologist and researcher behind the study.

"The majority of these men have either been exposed to violence or abuse themselves, or they have received little care and attention during childhood. As a result they struggle with their own relations and find it difficult to regulate and communicate their own emotions as adults."

Another important aspect related to gender-based violence and poverty in Norway is related to a biased multicultural approach. On March 8 2018, the Norwegian centre for violence and traumatic stress studies (NKVTS) launched the report 'Om du tør å spørre, tør folk å svare'. Hjelpeapparatets og politiets erfaringer med vold i nære relasjoner i samiske samfunn. ("'If you dare to ask, people dare to answer.' The Social Services' and the Police's experiences with domestic violence in Sami communities.").[58] This report showed that **women with Sami background** who experience domestic violence seek help from the authorities less often than other Norwegians. Much of the reason for this is that those working within the support system have limited knowledge of Sami language and culture,

[56] Lovin Malta, September 2017, "4 Extremely Worrying Statistics About Domestic Violence In Malta", https://lovinmalta.com/lifestyle/living-in-malta/4-extremely-worrying-statistics-about-domestic-violence-in-malta

[57] http://kjonnsforskning.no/en/2015/08/mens-violence-against-women-not-only-about-power

[58] The report is written by Ingvil Thallaug Øverli, Solveig Bergman and Ann-Kristin Finstad. Øverli has conducted the fieldwork in collaboration with project co-worker Finstad, while Bergman has been responsible for the project. The report was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, which, in collaboration with the Sami Parliament, initiated research on domestic violence in Sami communities. http://kjonnsforskning.no/en/2017/06/sami-victims-violence-do-not-seek-help

and that violence and abuse is highly tabooed in Sami communities. But another important reason is the Sami population's inherent shame caused by the Norwegianization policy.[59]

The issue of cultural relativism also applies to migrant and refugee's communities living in Norway, for example those coming from Africa. However, the acceptance of women's submission to men is not true culture respect or sensitivity. According to the Norwegian researcher Hilde Jakobsen, "the distinction between us, the Westerners, and they, the Africans, is a construction meant to serve political purposes." At the same time, among these communities, the rejection of feminist ideas is based on the idea that they are 'Western intervention', even if they come from their own people. [60]

Researcher Stine Helena Bang Svendsen says it is important to view the debate on multiculturalism in Norway in connection with the national unwillingness to address Norwegian racism: "In politics we can see that multiculturalism has limited, but nonetheless significant elbow room vis-à-vis national minorities and indigenous people. By the same token, the widespread refusal to acknowledge racism in Norwegian society plays a role here", she argues. "The Norwegian debate on female circumcision and forced marriage are classic examples of how Muslims' sexuality is portrayed as oriental and exotic. However, this understanding of the debate has had little impact in the Norwegian public sphere. The reason for this is not that knowledge about racism is unavailable in Norway, but that the unwillingness to admit it exists is very strong." According to Svendsen, when a type of policy is perceived as being part of a specific culture, as it's the case when Norway and gender equality are equated with each other, the policy has achieved status as relatively non-controversial.[61]

According to EAPN Norway, **"Norway is not as fantastic in regards of equality as we are lead to believe, only concerning education and work opportunities are we in a good place, as in relation to the right to have time off when we have new-borns to care for. When we talk about violence in the home environment also Norway is moving forward in slow motion, as well as in taking rape as a highly criminal offence. Groups of men are still being acquitted for rape due to the moral codes still existing."[62]**

Poland: The best in Europe or just another fake news?

According to the 2014 survey carried out by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Poland, with its 19%, is the EU country with the lowest percentage of women who suffered from physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15. The Polish Statistical Office reports that the number of rapes has being gone steadily down from 2013 (from the 1328 of that year to 1253 in 2017).[63]

But there are two sides of the same coin, without forgetting that 19% means that approximately 1 out of 20 women suffered gender-based violence.

[59] The Norwegianisation policy was institutionalised in legislation and practical politics from the mid-1800s. Sami language, history, and ethnic background were put to silence many places and in many families, which resulted in a loss of language and identity among other things.

[60] http://kjonnsforskning.no/en/2016/06/violence-puts-women-their-place

[61] http://kjonnsforskning.no/en/2017/04/gender-equality-ideals-make-muslim-women-more-religious

[62] http://www.newsinenglish.no/2016/08/08/thousands-protest-rape-acquittals/

[63] https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/justice/justice/violence-against-women,1,1.html

"I don't think that we should be happy about this figure, because in my opinion the situation in Poland is not that great and those numbers do not exactly show the real situation", Urszula Nowakowska, director of Warsaw-based Centre for Women's Rights, a NGO that supports victims of domestic violence and promote women's rights, told Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.[64]

According to Nowakowska, those who are supposed to help, including the police, often confuse women by hinting that the violence they were subject to can be reduced to a solvable "conflict" within the family. Women do not report and when they do, the police very often do not file the complaint.

Poland's government, on the other hand, appears to be anything but on the side of women. Politicians and religious authorities keep claiming that women in Poland are much more respected than those living in other EU countries but the ruling Law and Justice party has a peculiar way of demonstrating it.

In October 2017, police raided the offices of the Women's Rights Centre and Baba, another NGO supporting victims of domestic violence. The official rationale for the raids was a search for evidence linked to alleged wrongdoing by the previous government's Ministry of Justice. But the timing was suspicious. The previous day, activists from these organizations were among thousands who marched against a restrictive abortion law.

In 2016, the Ministry of Justice withdrew funding from several women's rights NGOs, including Women's Rights Centre and Baba, claiming that they discriminate against men because they only support female survivors of domestic violence. The Women's Right Center did not receive funds the following year either.

In 2016, the Ministry of Justice initiated a draft bill calling for withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and even if this initiative was abandoned in January, parliamentarians periodically call for Poland's withdrawal, claiming the convention is a source of evil "gender ideology" aimed at destroying Polish traditional values.

Portugal: The cross impact between the crisis and the violence against elderly women, and the situation of violence among the other specific groups

In 2013, the Portuguese Association for Victim Support started a data report on elderly persons that were victims of violence and crime. During the economic crisis, there were a set of references about the situation of abuse against the elderly who were taken away from nursing homes by their children, since pensions had become an important source of economic aid to these families. There were also cases about grown-up children who returned to their parents' home after losing jobs and struggling with difficulties to pay rents. In these situations, the Association reported the increase of violence against the elderly, most of them women. Recent data show that between 2013 and 2016, 3,612 elderly persons were victim of crime and violence: 79.51% were women and 20.49%, men.[65] The same entity presented more detailed data on the domestic violence, specifically "*filioparental" (children to*

[64] For the full interview see, http://news.trust.org/item/20140306164123-i8wuf/

[65] Estatísticas APAV, Pessoas Idosas vítimas de crime e de violência 2013-2016, Lisboa, APAV, June 2017 https://apav.pt/apav_v3/images/pdf/Estatisticas_APAV_Pessoas_Idosas_2013_2016.PDF

their parents) violence and for the same period (2013-2016) the Portuguese Association for Victim Support registered a total of 2,604 cases of support to parents who are victims of domestic violence by their own children. Also, in here the victim is mainly female (81.84%) when comparing with men (17.43%) and aged over 65 +(49%).[66]

Considering children and young people[67] the same entity reports a total of 4,011 child support processes and young victims of crime and violence between 2013 and 2016. On average, the gender of the victim is female for 55% of the cases. On the contrary and with regard to the perpetrator of the crime the majority is male for 83% of the assigned situations.

Romania: Still a tolerated phenomenon

Violence against women and girls in Romania is still a tolerated phenomenon, with 1 in 4 women who are sexually abused by their partner or former partner and 75% of these women have not registered any complaint to the police (FRA, 2016). A study coordinated by the VAW Network highlights the fact that although over 27,000 complaints for violence in the family were registered in 2016, only 1467 culprits were sent on trial. There are 8 counties in Romania without any shelter for victims of family violence and there is no crisis centre for survivors of sexual violence. Women who face gender-based violence have to confront the patriarchal norms from the Romanian society and their communities, and to fight against the victim blaming tendencies.

There are 40% of Romanians who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2014) and 19% of Romanians face in-work poverty (Eurostat, 2018). In these context, many women who are living in an abusive relationship are economically dependent, or there are couples who survive from a month to another and they can not leave an abusive partner without any financial support, to survive together with their children. Over these obstacles we may take into consideration the racist, sexist or classist attitudes of some representatives of the responsible authorities, who discourage victims to register complaints, to request a protection order or who are taking the part of the aggressor through their lack of action for women's safety.

[66] APAV, Crimes de violência doméstica. Violência Filioparental 2013-2016, Outubro de 2017. Available here: https://apav.pt/apav_v3/images/pdf/Estatisticas_APAV_ViolenciaFilioparental_2013-2016.pdf

[67] APAV, Crianças e jovens vítimas de crimes e de violência 2013-2016, Agosto 2017. Available here: https://apav.pt/apav_v3/images/pdf/Estatisticas_APAV_Criancas_Jovens_2013-2016.pdf

Serbia: Lack of cooperation between institutions responsible for preventing violence

For years, violence against women and girls has been a persistent problem in Serbia. The only nationally representative study showed that more than half of women (54.2%) who are 18+ has experienced at least some form of domestic violence since the age of 15. The most frequent form of violence was psychological (48.7% women experienced during the life span), followed by physical (21.6%) and economic (15.8.6%). Sexual violence in form of forced intercourse was reported by 3.8% of women.[68] During the last 10 years, Serbia has introduced various policies and institutional mechanisms to eliminate and prevent violence against women. As the rate to social assistance in case of violence was very low (around 10% in 2010[69]), the system of protection was developed by introducing a General protocol and Special protocols that define roles of each institution in the response to violence (the police, prosecutors, courts, social services and other actors). Despite some improvements, cooperation among different parts of the system is not yet satisfactory and needs further improvement.

The country's legislative framework has improved since Serbia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in 2013. The Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, which introduces changes to existing practices related to the institutional response to violence, entered into force on 1st June, 2017. The Law introduces urgent measures for removing perpetrators from their family and prohibiting them from approaching their victims. It also stipulates professional and disciplinary liability for officials who fail to act in accordance with the Law. The Serbian Parliament has also adopted changes to the Criminal Code, introducing new criminal offences for domestic violence and tougher penalties.[70]

Slovakia: The State finally noticed the victims

There are some big issues faced by women in the Slovakian society. Some of them are related to **economic inequality, and could generate economic violence**:

(1) **Advanced alimony:** Insufficient or irregular payment of alimony for a child is an extensive problem and one of the root causes of poverty and financial problems (indebtedness) of single parents, of which women are vast majority. There is a need for development and higher accessibility of marital counselling and prevention of severe conflicts between the divorcing parents (so called Cochem practices), but we also need to put into practice the advance alimony to ensure that every family receives the financial resources regularly (the principle is

[68] Babovic, M, Ginic, K, Vukovic, O. (2010) **Mapping Domestic Violence against Women in Central Serbia**, UNDP, SZRN, Belgrade.

[69] Babovic, M, Ginic, K, Vukovic, O. (2010) Loc. Cit.

[70] UN Women Europe and Central Asia, October 31st, 2017 "Serbia fights to curb violence against women", http://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/10/serbia-fights-to-curb-violence-against-women

that in case of failure of standard alimony payment, the state will pay the alimony to the family and collect it retrospectively from the other parent).

(2) **Lack of affordable kindergartens and return to the labour market after parental leave**. There is a guarantee of a place in kindergarten for 4 years old and older children, and there was a plan for a guarantee even for 2 years old, but the current Parliament cancelled it. In reality, it is a problem to find a place in the kindergarten even for parents of 3 years old children, which means that many women have to register at the employment office as unemployed when they are no longer entitled for parental allowance and wait until the child is accepted to the kindergarten. Paradoxically, in the current situation of very low unemployment, mothers of small children are significantly affected by unemployment. The segment of other forms of delegated childcare like "child groups" and "micro nurseries" (financed mainly from EU funds) or private kindergartens (that are unfortunately expensive even for middle income families) is developing but cannot compensate the lack of places in kindergartens yet. Relatively long period that women spend out of the labour market during the parental leave is closely linked to the economic inequality. There is also a tendency to work as self-employed after the parental leave, which is in fact another form of precarity.

Another problematic situation is related to **public opinion and politicians.** Even if there is a Governmental strategy of promoting equality of men and women, the topic is not a priority and there are no significant changes. The idea that violence is gender-based and is a result of inequality is not rooted in the Czech society. Some conservative groups are campaigning against the ratification of Istanbul Convention. Also quotes of some politicians trivialising the poverty of women or sexual violence are not helpful for tackling these phenomena.

EAPN Slovakia confirmed that Social Services tend to reflect these inequalities. "In cases of long-term domestic abuse, if the survivor has some material or financial claims on the aggressor, they can only request it for harms not older than 2 years, the others are time-barred. Thus, the survivor cannot get a full compensation. The police (especially in small urban areas or villages) has limited awareness of the issues of domestic and gender-based violence, which sometimes leads to the tendency to trivialize the cases they encounter. In general, it is not possible to obtain help from the police earlier than in the stage of actual physical violence. As the harassment or threats are difficult to prove, police cannot (or is not willing to) act. **The situation of parents and grandparents (typically mothers, grandmothers) that are abused by their descendants and/or their partners is often grievous. It is very complicated to make the descendants legally leave the household and if they are under 30 and have no regular income, the parents still have the maintenance obligation for them".**

By notifying crimes to the competent authorities, the victims often make their life harder. Such as a schoolgirl from Nevidzian sexually abused by a Catholic priest. Though he was convicted, the entire village stood on the side of his parson and turned against the girl and her mother… Life has not ceased to fear even after the Court sentenced her ex-husband to twenty years to jail. The fear of the perpetrator's revenge or immediate reaction is often greater than the desire for justice. The purpose of the new law is to ensure that victims of crime are not afraid to file a criminal complaint in order to strengthen their rights and to ensure greater scrutiny of the authorities to provide them with assistance. Regardless of whether the perpetrator is known or not, the victim is considered a victim from the outset. A section dealing with secondary victimization is also very important. Above the individual bodies - experts, psychologists or law enforcement authorities - greater control will arise. The fact that the victims of sexual violence must sometimes suffer inappropriate reactions, for example by the investigators, was confirmed by Barbora Burajová, the chief manager of the Koordinačno-metodické centrum pro rodovo podmíněné a domácí násilie, which focused on this issue in the survey. By this law, the legal system of Slovakia transposed the EU Directive of the European

Parliament and the Council of 2012 on minimum standards in the field of support and protection of victims of crime.[71]

Slovenia: Fast progress in protection of women victims of gender-based violence

According to the FRA survey in 2014, there were 22% of women victims of physical and/or sexual violence, 14% of victims of stalking, while 44% of women in Slovenia have experienced sexual harassment. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act defines different forms of domestic violence (physical, sexual, psychological, economic, stalking and neglect) and defines the responsibilities of different institutions in providing response to violence (prevention and protection). Violence against women in intimate partner relationship is prohibited and sanctioned by the Criminal Code.

The National Program on the Prevention of Domestic Violence was the main strategic document; it defined objectives and measures related to prevention and protection from domestic violence in the Republic of Slovenia for period 2009-2014. The document recognizes that domestic violence is the consequence of uneven distribution of power between women and men and defines specific measures for protection of victims.

Slovenia signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in 2011 and ratified in 2015. A year after ratification, the Government established an intergovernmental working group consisting of representatives of government and civil society for coordination of the implementation of the Convention.

Different measures and services are available in Slovenia for protection of women and children victims of domestic violence. There is a national women's helpline for women and children experiencing violence (with free calls). Slovenia is one of four EU countries that exceed the recommended minimum of shelters for protection of victims of violence per head (16 shelters with 274 beds) of population, due to the fast progress in development of protection services. Victims of violence have access to emergency barring orders and temporary protection orders. Women experiencing rape and sexual assault, and/or domestic violence can access a specialist service for women. There are specialist services in form of psychosocial support, specific support to victims of trafficking, etc. There is also one program for perpetrators which is implemented by NGO, the Association for Nonviolent Communication and it is linked to appropriate women's support services.[72]

[71] Pravda, July 24th, 2017, "Štát si konečne všimol obete, ochráni ich novým zákonom", https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/436250-stat-si-konecne-vsimol-obete-ochrani-ich-novym-zakonom/

[72] EIGE, Combating violence against women Slovenia, available at http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/combating-violence-against-women-slovenia

Spain: 42.8% of women assisted by the government suffer material deprivation

Since 2004, Spanish law protects women who suffer at the hands of their partners, ex-partners or husbands, although 821 femicides have occurred.[73] Some men, particularly on the social media, insist on accusations of "fraud" on behalf of the 13,500 women who monthly report gender violence crimes to the police. However, the Prosecution did not prove any false allegations of gender violence in 2016. Datas show that there are big differences in getting protection orders, according to the Court where the woman reports the crime. In general, there is a consensus on the fact that judges barely use the protocol to assess the risk of a gender violence victim, as a matter of urgency.[74]

In 2016, the Spanish Red Cross assisted 8,894 women through the ATENPRO service. Implemented in the framework of the 2004 Law, this service provides an electronic warning device for victims of gender violence. The Spanish Red Cross carried out a study on the dimensions of gender violence:

1) Control of the domestic economy by the abuser;

2) Social isolation, physical and sexual violence, physical injuries and psychological violence against the victim;

3) Violence against children, an increasingly important variable (67.1% of the women indicated that their children had witnessed / suffered some of the aggressions caused by their ex-partner; 23.2% of the children were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder; 24.7% took advantage of the visits to their children to frighten or threaten them).

Gender-based violence is not only recorded among low-income people. However, because of this violence, many women lose their previous economic stability and get into poverty or social exclusion. The following indicators show how women pay a heavy toll:

- Severe material deprivation: the severe material deprivation reaches 6.1% for the Spanish population, but it is almost 7 times higher in the gender victims' households, with 42.8%. The biggest difference is in the capacity to face contingencies of 650 euros (43.4 percentage points).
- **Income poverty: 78.4% of the households of victims' households are below the poverty line; 67.7% are in very high poverty and 52.8% in extreme poverty. The rate for the general population amounts to 22.1%; that is, it is three times lower.**
- Low Work Intensity: 45.5% of households are unemployed or have low employment intensity (the general population's rate is 15.4%).
- **AROPE: 84% of women victims of gender violence are at-risk-of-poverty-and/or-exclusion, while the general population stands at 27.9%.**
- **Child Poverty: 78.6% of the victim's children live in poverty (the rate for the general population is 28.8%)**.

[73] https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2017-02-12/especial-violencia-genero-espana-datos-victimas_1329653/

[74] http://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/mujeres-denuncian-violencia-machista-mes_0_700280064.html

- **In-work Poverty: Among the victims the rate of in-work poverty is 58.9% (14.8% among the general population).**[75]

Statistics are gravely underrepresenting the actual reality: The data compiled by the Government and those collected by organizations that have established observatories of gender-based violence do not coincide and do not measure the same parameters. Since 2003, the Government Delegation for Gender Violence, an organization pertaining to the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs and Equality, keeps an official record of the crimes identified by the Comprehensive Law on Gender-based Violence: that is, only the murders carried out by partners or ex-partners (those men with whom women have or have had a recognized affective relationship, or the men that is living with them) are counted. **Thus, the only victims whose data are collected are the women with partners or husbands, and recently (since 2013) their children, if murdered.**

This means that, if in the same act a man murders his partner or ex-partner and the mother, neighbour, friend or sister-in-law who were with her at the time, the statistics will only count the first one, but will not consider the other victims of sexist violence. Nor those who have been killed trying to avoid a sexist murder. This is the case of Ana Hilda Linares, 55, who at the end of May of this year was murdered by her 29-year old nephew, one day after she reported him for trying to suffocate his ex-partner, Linares' niece. However, Ana is not counted among the 28 murdered women that the ministry accounts for in 2017, because it is not considered a crime of gender violence. The organization Feminicidio.net has been building a database for ten years: it collects about 50 information fields from each of the victims and have more than 40,000 records. Thus, if for the Government, the number of gender-based murders between 2003 (year in which the data collection begins) and June 2017 approaches 900 women, other organizations count more than 1,100. For this organization, it is important to document all forms of violence in order to differentiate murders due to sexist violence from those that are not.[76]

Sweden: Taking action against sexual violence and harassment after the #metoo movement

The #metoo movement in Sweden strongly demonstrates that more needs to be done to combat sexual harassment and sexual violence in workplaces and society at large. The Swedish Government requires all employers to take responsibility for a secure work environment. In the area of work environment and discrimination there are already many tools and relevant legislation, but the power and size of the petitions show that there are deficiencies in compliance with the regulations.

"Several of the testimonies made public have clarified **the frequent link between working conditions and vulnerability to sexual harassment and abuse**. Criminal acts committed at workplaces shall of course always be reported to be dealt with by the judicial system. But in addition to punishable acts, many women also bear witness to a completely unacceptable work environment. It is obvious that

[75] Malgesini, Graciela et al (2017), Boletín sobre vulnerabilidad social Nº 14. Las mujeres víctimas de violencia de género, atendidas en el servicio ATENPRO. Cruz Roja, Madrid, available at: http://www.cruzroja.es/principal/web/estudios-e-innovacion

[76] Diario Público, Spain, June 21st, 2017, "Violencia de género. Lo que no revela la estadística de la violencia machista", http://www.publico.es/sociedad/violencia-genero-no-revelan-estadistica-violencia-machista.html

not enough has been done to rectify these problems", says Minister for Employment and Integration Ylva Johansson.[77]

The **National strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women** begins working in January 2018. The agency will work with follow-up, analysis, coordination, knowledge and support for achieving the Government's gender equality policy goals. One of the sub-goals is that men's violence against women must stop, and that women and men, girls and boys must have the same right and access to physical integrity.[78]

The Swedish Government wants stronger protection and support. At the end of 2017 they proposed to the Council on Legislation **new sexual offence legislation that is based on consent.** The Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority will receive resources to implement information and training initiatives in the area of sexual offences.[79]

EAPN Sweden remarked the importance of economic violence against women in Sweden: "A violence that restrict their lives, prevents them from leaving bad relations, and force them to live in poverty, even if they formally live in a wealthy family".

The Netherlands: Not safe at home

The Netherlands is too slow in acting against domestic violence, according to the mayor of The Hague, Pauline Krikke. "Nationwide there are 50 deaths per year due to domestic violence. In every classroom in the Netherlands there is at least one child that has to deal with child abuse or relational violence between parents", she said to the Volkskrant. The home is relatively the most dangerous place for many women and girls. Perpetrators of violence against women are in many cases the partner, ex-partner or other acquaintances, from the family or friends circle. For example, 11% of Dutch women experienced sexual violence by a partner or ex-partner. 3% of Dutch women have even avoided their own house for fear of violence last year. About 180,000 women experience their own home not always as a safe place. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Dutch women have ever been sexually intimidated; this amounts to 4.3 million women. 18% of Dutch women have ever experienced sexual violence, ranging from rape or attempt to participate in sexual activity under the coercion or threat. One in ten Dutch women was once raped in her life. A third of young women (18-29 years) experienced a form of cyber intimidation. For example, through mobile phone applications to track one's location, send out sexually-explicit photos, or spread intimate information via social networks.[80]

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[77] https://www.government.se/articles/2018/01/the-government-of-sweden-takes-action-against-sexual-violence-and-harassment/

[78] The strategy's four objectives: 1) Increased and effective preventive work to combat violence. 2) Improved detection of violence and stronger protection for and support to women and children subjected to violence. 3) More effective crime-fighting. 4) Improved knowledge and methodological development. https://www.government.se/information-material/2016/11/fact-sheet-national-strategy-to-prevent-and-combat-mens-violence-against-women/

[79] https://www.government.se/press-releases/2017/12/new-sexual-offence-legislation-based-on-consent/

[80] The availability of new forms of communication and technologies (via the Internet, social media and mobile communications) leads to new forms of cyber violence that occur on a relatively large scale. Geweld tegen

UK: only 15% of survivors of sexual violence report it to the police

According to a 2018 report by the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)[81] a critical issue is what will happen to progress on women's equality after Brexit? The Government has promised to retain the protections in the Equality Act, but this commitment has not been included in the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill. Women's inequality in the UK is widespread and has serious consequences. Power and voice are unequally distributed: women in the UK are heavily underrepresented in democratic structures and in senior levels of business and institutions.

Risk of injustice and consequent poverty have increased in recent years because of changes to legal aid that raise the cost and reduce the access to legal remedies in the fields of employment, family law, housing and debt. For example, the EHRC report shows that women are four-fifths of the claimants in sex discrimination and equal pay claims, but these have now fallen by 76% and 57% respectively. There has been a 42% fall in the number of pregnancy and maternity claims.

As they are more likely to be low-paid, the higher statutory minimum wage disproportionately benefits women. But eight years of 'austerity' has disproportionately affected women and children, who have borne the burden of government spending cuts. Tax and welfare changes have cut the incomes of women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and children, seriously increasing their risk of poverty. Local municipality cuts of 50% of budget have reduced or eliminated services women and children and vulnerable people depend on, including for women escaping violent situations and needing rehousing. It is so much more difficult for disadvantaged women with children to seek to exit violent households.

The EHRC report states that there are serious and extreme consequences of women's inequality, but insufficient good data to tackle it. Only 15% of UK survivors of sexual violence report their experience to the police. In the year to December 2017, 145,397 sexual offences were recorded by police in England and Wales – a 25% increase, which may partly reflect better awareness, through social movements such as #Me Too, as well as better police training in domestic abuse and harassment. But prosecution and conviction rates are low. The EHRC report recommends better support for survivors of domestic violence, higher prosecution and conviction rates and a review of hate crime legislation. Responding to the EHRC report, the chief executive of the Fawcett Society [82]which campaigns for gender equality and women's rights, stated that "violence against women and girls is endemic in our society, misogyny is so widespread it is invisible to some, and sexual harassment is commonplace"[83].

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vrouwen. Europese onderzoeksgegevens in Nederlandse context, October 2014, https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/feiten/landelijk/geweld-tegen-vrouwen-europese-onderzoeksgegevens-in-nederlandse-contex

[81] Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) Pressing for progress: women's rights and gender equality in 2018: full report and recommendations, available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pressing-for-progress-womens-rights-and-gender-equality-in-2018-pdf.pdf

[82] See https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

[83] Sam Smithers, chief executive, Fawcett Society quoted in an article by Alexandra Topping, in *The Guardian*, 23 July 2018, page 3.

A two-year study in London by University College London and King's College Hospital NHS Trust[84]found a link between sexual assault and mental illness. Months after being assaulted, four out of five teenage girls who suffer sexual assault are still suffering – from anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and other serious conditions. 80% had at least one disorder and 55% had at least two disorders.

The Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020[85] indicates that the cost of VAWG is high. "Experiences of abuse have serious psychological, emotional and physical consequences and may contribute to multiple disadvantage, or a chaotic lifestyle involving substance misuse, homelessness, offending behaviour, gang involvement, prostitution or mental health problems. That 41% of the prison population have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse is illustrative of the wider social harms these crimes cause. The cost to individuals cannot be measured, but the costs of violence and abuse to the economy can be calculated and are considerable". Walby's 2009 report[86] estimated that providing public services to victims of domestic violence and the lost economic output of women costs the UK £15.8 billion annually. The cost to health, housing and social services, criminal justice and civil legal services is estimated at £3.9 billion". The strategy considers the situation of the most isolated women, as being able to understand and speak basic English can be the first step in knowing that domestic abuse is a crime and that help is available before it reaches crisis point.

As in other countries, migrant and some minority ethnic communities are over-represented in relation to gender-based violence. Violence against women and girls from minority communities has been a focus for intervention for several decades. These initiatives have, however, tended to exist in isolation from strategies on violence against women and girls from majority groups. In the UK, when minorities are involved in gender-based violence, whether as victims or perpetrators, culture is problematized rather than masculinity in a way that is unhelpful in preventing these crimes.[87]

At the same time, migration and asylum-seeking are in part related to gender-based violence. In many cases, women's journeys to escape domestic violence can be understood as an active strategy to achieve safety and as forced migration during which women experience force from the abuser and the impact of agencies and authorities.[88]

[84] Khadr, S. Clarke, V. Wellings, K. Villalta, L. Goddard, A. Welch, J. Bewley, S.Kramer, T and R Viner,Mental and sexual health outcomes following sexual assault in adolescents: a prospective cohort study*, The Lancet, Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 2018, August2018 Volume 2Number 8 p543-620, e15-e20,accessed at: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancah/article/PIIS2352-4642(18)30202-5/fulltext

[85] Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF

[86] Walby, S (2009), The Cost of Domestic Violence Up-date 2009, Lancaster University

[87] Dustin, M (2016), "Culture or masculinity? Understanding gender-based violence in the UK", *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, Vol.24, Number 1. February

[88] Bowsted, J (2017), "Segmented journeys, fragmented lives: women's forced migration to escape domestic violence", *Journal of Gender-Based Violence***,**Volume 1, Number 1, May.

TESTIMONIES

Madrid, Spain, "It's never too late"

Rosalia is now 65 years old, but it is as if she was reborn six years ago. The day she left her house? practically in her pyjamas? to leave behind the man who had physically and psychologically mistreated her for three decades and with whom she shared two children. Today she is a vivacious and very talkative woman, very different from the sad and muted woman in whom her aggressor had turned her.

- "Life in my house was tremendous. You had to shut up. He had a lot of mania with knives or throwing things in the air. He broke many beautiful things, destroyed everything that I liked. He took control of all the money... I excused him, I thought that maybe when the police took him, after I reported, was the beginning of his change. But my son almost did not give me an option. And he was right, it was him or us."[89]

Serbia - "My husband does not allow me to work"

"My husband does not allow me to work, and this is what I want most, at this time... only to buy basic things, to buy some things for my children, I don't even care about myself. My daughter is sick, has vitiligo, and medication is very expensive (three to four thousand a month). I must buy her drugs, I cannot let it expand. I promised them a computer and a TV, I must buy it. We do not have a TV, there is only one in a common room. My husband does not work. It bothers me very much how he behaves...He gives the last money for the cigars, and for the rest of us there is none. Although I'm sick, I would work, I would love to. But he does not allow me, he says, 'No way that my wife will work!' And I could work here, close, I would not be far from home. There, a man here has a tailor shop, I could clean the premises. I could earn 200 euros, that would mean a lot to me, but he will not let me do it, I

[89] El País, Spain, November 26, 2016, https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/11/25/actualidad/1480031328_737759.html

asked him a hundred times. Before I go to work, I would take everything home, send the children to school, prepare to eat, nobody would miss anything, but it is not worth it... It would only be good if we had money, only that children live better.'

Serbia - "He often harasses me"

"Five and a half years ago, when I was pregnant, one night he was drunk and started to kick me with legs in my stomach ... I started bleeding, I was bad, I had miscarriage. It was difficult for the next months, I had nightmares, every night I dreamed of a child. I was in the sixth month of pregnancy. "

"He often harasses me for sexual intercourse, says that it is my obligation, that I have to do it whenever he wants. But in the last year he does not drink, so he does not beat me anymore, only sometimes I hit the slap... "

Italy - "Only when he touched our child I realized how dangerous he was"

"My mother had me when she was 15. I grew up with her and an indefinite numbers of "uncles". Only later I realized they were mama's lovers. I got pregnant at 16, my mother refused to have anything to do with it, and I went to live with my boyfriend who was much older. Everything seemed fine until I got really big and did not want to have sex, asked him to please leave me alone until the baby was born. We had a fight every single night, he slapped me and I gave in. He forced me to have sex too soon after delivery and I ended up in the hospital with an haemorrhage. He started locking me up in the house with the baby because "if I did not want to have sex with him I must have it with somebody else". Finally, one evening he started kicking the baby saying that it was his fault if I had changed so much. The neighbour called the police and we were saved. We lived in a shelter for a while. It took a long time. Now the baby is not a baby anymore. He is 14 and goes to school. I work in a hotel, cleaning rooms but I'm going to classes to be a hairdresser, my dream. I have not seen him since I left, and I know that he is not in Rome anymore and lives with a woman. I hope to never see him again."

What has the EU been doing to address Gender-based Violence?

Gender equality is a core value of the European Union, and the EU has a long history of working to protect citizens against gender-based violence, including measures to support and protect victims of such crimes, as well as ensuring they have access to justice wherever they are in the EU.[90]

Historical background

Since the 1990's, actions have been taken at international level to combat violence against women. The Council of Europe also played an important role in the prevention and combating of violence against women. There is a wide range of regulations in the European Union on the human rights of women and against violence and discrimination against women.

In addition to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the reference framework is the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of the year 2000, particularly its article 21. There are **directives that combat discrimination against women related to employment, access to parental leave, services and goods, although there are not specific on violence**.

In 2011, Directive 2011/36 / EU of 5 April 2011 **on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings and the Protection of Victims** was supplemented by Directive 2011/99 / EU of 13 December 2011 establishing a European protection order 'designed to protect a person against criminal acts of another which may endanger his life, physical or psychological integrity and his dignity, freedom individual or sexual integrity ', and a competent authority of another Member State is empowered to maintain the protection of the person in the territory of that other Member State.

Within the European Parliament, we highlight the **Resolution of the European Parliament of 26 November 2009 on the Elimination of Violence Against Women**, which urges Member States to improve their national legislation and policies to combat all forms of violence against women and take action to combat the causes of violence against women, in particular through prevention measures, and calls on the Union to guarantee the right to assistance and assistance to all victims of violence.

The European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2010 on equality between women and men in the European Union 2009 endorsed the proposal to establish a European protection order for victims.

An important milestone occurred in Istanbul on 11 May 2011, when the Council of Europe **Convention on the Prevention and Control of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was adopted**. Also in 2011, the Parliament and Council Directive 2011/99 / EU on the protection order was passed. In 2012, under the **Victims' Rights Directive** (2012/29 / EU), the **Rights of Victims of Crime (including gender-based violence**) were established so that protection, support, mechanisms of access to justice and recovery, regardless of their nationality and the member state where the violent crime or episode occurred.

However, according to an EIGE Study, "Though the Victims' Rights Directive includes many provisions directly or indirectly referring to victims of gender-based violence, for the most part, they do not regulate the issues of support and protection for these victims in an optimum manner. Some

[90] http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-violence/protecting-victims-of-gender-violence/index_en.htm

provisions do not account for the specific nature of gender-based violence at all. SWOT analysis performed for each of the Directive's provisions showed that virtually each provision represents a strength and a weakness – an opportunity and a threat:

- Most provisions introduce new (or emphasize existing) duties for Member States respecting victim support and protection.
- Very frequently, these provisions are too general, or do not provide reference to instruments such as codes of conduct, in the absence of which, the application of legal solutions can prove limited".[91]

That is, Member States have a broad margin for implementing the 2012 Directive, as provisions were not concrete or clearly compulsory.

In December 2015, the European Commission adopted the Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019. In this work program, the Commission has reaffirmed its commitment to continue its work to promote equality between men and women. This means maintaining the focus of gender-equality policy on the five existing thematic priority areas:

- increasing female labour-market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men,
- reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women,
- promoting equality between women and men in decision-making,
- **combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims,**
- promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.

Briefly, **at EU level, there is no specific legal instrument on violence against women (VAW) in general.** However, legislation such as the Victim's Rights Directive or the Anti-Trafficking Directive address aspects of VAW and assistance to victims of gender-based violence. In addition, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission have adopted, respectively: resolutions, conclusions and strategies on VAW and specific types of violence. **The European Parliament has requested from the Commission on the one hand a European Strategy for Gender Equality with a strong pillar for the elimination of VAW and a Directive that addresses VAW more in general.** Agencies such as the FRA and EIGE play an important role in monitoring VAW.[92]

[91] EIGE, http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/eige-studies/victims-rights-directive#2014

[92] http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/160308_factsheet_vaw_en.pdf

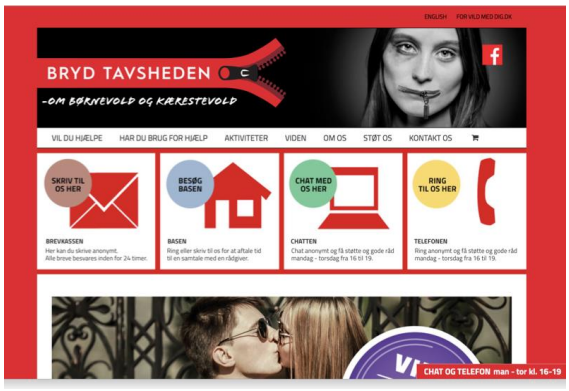
Istanbul Convention

Lately, on 13 June 2017 the Council of the European Union signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Fight against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), the most important international legal instrument to combat gender violence against women. In order to strengthen the role of the Union in the fight against gender violence and in view of the reluctance of a number of member states' governments to ratify it (to date only 14), the European Parliament and the Commission had long been proposing accession to the Convention. The signature is the first step to be followed by the ratification by the Council of the EU so that all Member States align their laws and policies to the common rules of the Convention. This signature is an important step towards the creation of a coherent European system that is more effective in combating gender violence against women that in the EU affects one in three women over the age of 15.

On September 20th, 2017, a "JOINT COMMUNIQUE between the United Nations and European Union on the launch of the Spotlight Initiative – to eliminate violence against women and girls" was launched. The promotion of gender equality, enjoyment of human rights by all as well as women's and girls' empowerment, are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. Not only through the stand-alone SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peaceful societies, but also as a cross-cutting element central to the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Translating this commitment into concrete action, they launched **the Spotlight Initiative** - focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) to make a real and lasting difference for millions of women and girls all over the world.[93]

[93] http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3323_en.htm

Examples of actions and good practices



DENMARK - **The Bryd tavsheden (Break the silence) campaign** in 2010 specifically targeted ethnic minority women to help them to escape from violence by their partners. It was carried out by the ministry for gender equality in co-operation with LOKK, the national association of women's shelters.

Its strategy was to formulate a strong simple message, and to direct this at ethnic minority women in a way they would understand. The campaign therefore published its information leaflets in nine languages and distributed there in places where ethnic minority women would come across them. This multilingual approach also made it easy for ethnic minority media, which often do not have the budgets to pay for translations, to come on board the campaign. It obtained endorsements from popular ethnic minority role models and produced short films in 10 languages. The campaign's website is still in use to this day.[94]

An information folder was produced and distributed in credit card format. It is headed "Stop the violence against women – Break the silence" in Danish and eight other languages (English, Arabic, Bosnian, Somali, Turkish, Russian, Thai and Farsi). The information folders were distributed throughout the country in libraries, general health practitioners, police stations, hospitals – and also hairdressers (hairbrushes with the 24-hour hotline number on them were distributed to ethnic hairdressers and beauty salons) and other meeting points in local communities. The folder is accessible on the web at https://www.brydtavsheden.dk. It contains information about shelters along with practical advice to women exposed to violence. The publication also refers women to the 24-hour hotline (70 20 30 82) and mentions the availability of cultural mediators and interpreters.[95]

HUNGARY - Good practices:

- 16 Days Action Against Violence Against Women - series of awareness raising events. http://16akcionap.org
- Silent Witnesses Exhibition - awareness raising mobile exhibition to commemorate women killed by partner abuse.

http://nane.hu/szolgaltatasok/nema-tanuk-kiallitas/

[94] It also created a simple but imaginative tool in the form of a hairbrush bearing the number of the 24-hour telephone hotline for battered women. The brushes stimulated debates in hairdressers' and beauty salons and many women took the brushes home, thus spreading the message further.

[95] http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/good-practices/denmark/danish-campaign-targets-diversity-domestic-violence

- Informative flyers e.g. about invisible vulnerable groups such as elderly women. http://nane.hu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/nane_idős-nők.pdf
- Educative programs for students - trainings for high school students about sexuality, rights. https://www.facebook.com/pg/kapcsolodjbe/about/?ref=page_internal
- Movement of women against the violence of maternity hospitals - Anti-obstetric violence activists.https://www.facebook.com/masallapotot/

ICELAND - **Aflið is non-governmental education and counselling centre for survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence.** It was founded in 2002 with the main focus to make individuals aware of their own strengths and assist them to use them to change their lives. The organization has grown considerably in recent years and in 2015, a total of 1309 interviews were made. The number of new clients has been growing steadily, in 2013 they were 111, in 2014 they were 115 and in 2015 they were 121.https://reykjavik.is/en/help-victims-violence

A Peaceful Home (formerly Men Take Responsibility), is a therapy program for men who resort to violence against their partners. The program started in 1998 as a four-year pilot program modelled after the Norwegian Alternative to Violence program. In 2006 program was renewed with financing from the Ministry of Social Affairs. This is the only therapy option available in Iceland for men who commit violence against their partners. The therapy is based on individual and group psychological therapy sessions. There was a significant increase in the number of new individuals who came for interviews from 2012-2013 (43.2%). In 2014, additional 54 new individuals came for an interview. The project is currently run in cooperation between the Women´s Shelter, Centre for Gender Equality and Ministry of Welfare, which funds the project. There is also a special programme for perpetrators under 18 years of age, run by the Prison and Probation Administration.https://reykjavik.is/en/help-perpetrators-violence

ITALY - D.i.R.e., the Italian Women's Network against violence, was founded in 2008 and is the first Italian Association of independent women's centres and shelters. The network, which today coordinates 80 of these centres, supports thousands of women and their children; promotes research and lobbies for change at the national level.

D.i.R.e organizes training courses for people working in women's centres and shelters and is committed to opening new ones throughout the country. D.i.R.e. is also a political entity aiming at changing or improving the existing laws on women's rights. For more information: http://www.direcontrolaviolenza.it

PORTUGAL - Organisations like APAV - Portuguese association for victim support is responsible for several campaigns aimed to aware to violence against women, children, the elderly and men. We highlight one of them:

https://www.apav.pt/apav_v3/index.php/pt/a-media/campanhas.

Another good practice is developed by the Committee on Citizenship and Gender Equality and it's related to the work developed in schools. The Committee published recently a Education Guide: Knowledge, Gender and Citizenship in Secondary Education. The aim is to help teachers to include in their lessons the gender equality subject. This Guide is part of a collection of other guides for education oriented for other school levels like pre-school and 3rd cycle. Information available in: https://www.cig.gov.pt/documentacao-de-referencia/doc/cidadania-e-igualdade-de-genero/guioes-de-educacao-genero-e-cidadania/

Another good practice is the recent «Dating Violence Observatory» . It was created in the scope of the UNi+ Programme developed by Plano i Association and the Instituto Universitário da Maia/Maiêutica. The UNi+ Programme if financed by the Secretariat of State for Citizenship and Equality. More information: http://www.associacaoplanoi.org/observatorio-da-violencia-no-namoro-2/

SPAIN, GALICIA. The Autonomous Community of Galicia, in Spain, takes advantage of the days around November 25, Day against Gender Violence, to show social rejection towards this scourge, through meetings, activities, concentrations and different awareness campaigns. The initiative 'In black against sexist violence', was initiated by civil society in Santiago de Compostela in 2015, as "Compostela en negro". In 2017, more than 70 municipalities and three councils have joined, although it has not had the support of the Xunta.

The key to this initiative is to involve the whole of society, which dyes in black shop windows, leisure facilities, monuments or homes with their own materials to show the repulsion towards this scourge. In addition, thousands of posters are distributed to make this slogan visible, which even hangs from the facade of the Cathedral of Santiago.[96]

[96] Watch video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=23&v=47oU-Au9xkk

Another interesting campaign is directed to young people who are suffering from gender-based violence through social networks. The Spanish government launched a sensitization campaign in 2018, as 29% of young girls have acknowledged suffering "abusive control" by their partners, mainly through their mobile phones and/or demands to prove their location through geolocation. The **"10 ways of digital gender-based violence"** appear in this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNRKLvksytw

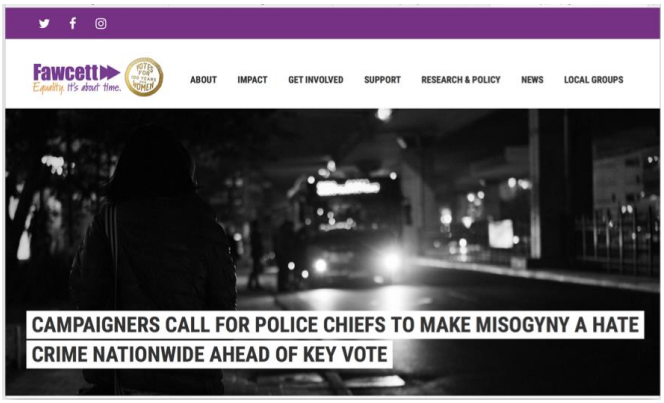
IRELAND, LONGFORD COUNTY**. Over 300,000 people in Ireland have been severely abused by a partner at some point in their lives (COSC).** This is a snapshot of work at local level in County Longford by Longford Women's Link Domestic Violence Service (LWLDVS)

Numbers:

- January to June inclusive, 241 women supported;
- 2 women's support groups ongoing: one on 1 evening a month during summer, the other closed till September.
- 20 women with average attendance of 16 per week.

Interagency Collaboration: Garda (Police) Inspector instigated a meeting with LWLDVS a view to working collaboratively to increase the safety of women reporting domestic violence who access Longford Garda station more than 3 times. The following actions were agreed: LWLDVS Staff will meet and provide informal training sessions with all 5 Longford Police units starting in September. DVS's will support DV victims to prepare statements in LWLDVS. Clients will be accompanied to Longford Garda station where the Garda on duty will read the statement and it will be signed in his/her presence. This is an excellent initiative as it will reduce the amount of time both DVS and clients currently send waiting in the Garda station for a Garda to become available to see the client. It will also ensure that the nuanced nature of the perpetrators control is captured in the statement. A dedicated DV sergeant will be appointed to work with LWLDVS and will be charged with the task of following up on Gardaí commitment to address DV crime.

Working with Children: LWLDVS secured additional funding for a pilot project "Safe Space" to explore working with children through their protective parent (current clients) and to develop a way to make a "SAFETY PLAN" for the children themselves that should help their mothers and will be useful to CPS, Family support agencies and maybe even used by the Judge when he/she is implementing access orders for these children. (Bill 13 of 2017)
More information: http://www.lwl.ie/services/domestic-violence/



UK - A campaign to make misogyny a hate crime

The Fawcett Society are campaigning to make misogyny a hate crime after a two year study by Nottingham Women's Centre reveals the success of Nottinghamshire Police's decision to become the first police force in the UK to record misogyny as a hate crime.

This research found that found nearly half of women in the city had experienced unwanted sexual advances, groping and over a quarter experienced indecent exposure.

'Categorising misogyny as a hate crime won't end violence against women, but if we can challenge the normalisation of these attitudes on our streets and in public life we can challenge violence against women and girls in wider society.'

http://www.edf.org.uk/fawcett-society-campaign-make-misogyny-a-recorded-hate-crime-for-every-police-force/

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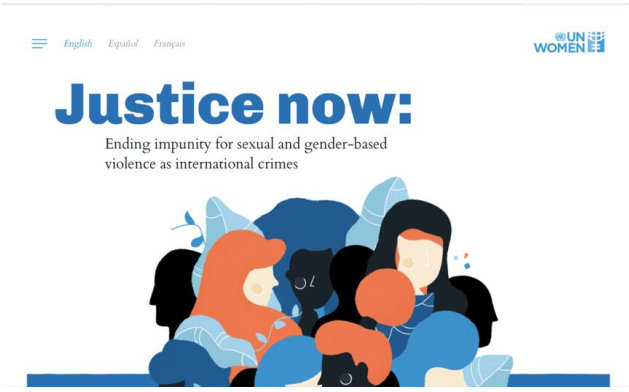


WOMEN. A new campaign called "Justice Now" was launched by UN Women and Justice Rapid Response. campaign aims to end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence as international crimes.

http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/infostory/justicenow/en/index.html

EAPN's position

Poverty can be both the cause and the consequence of violence against women.

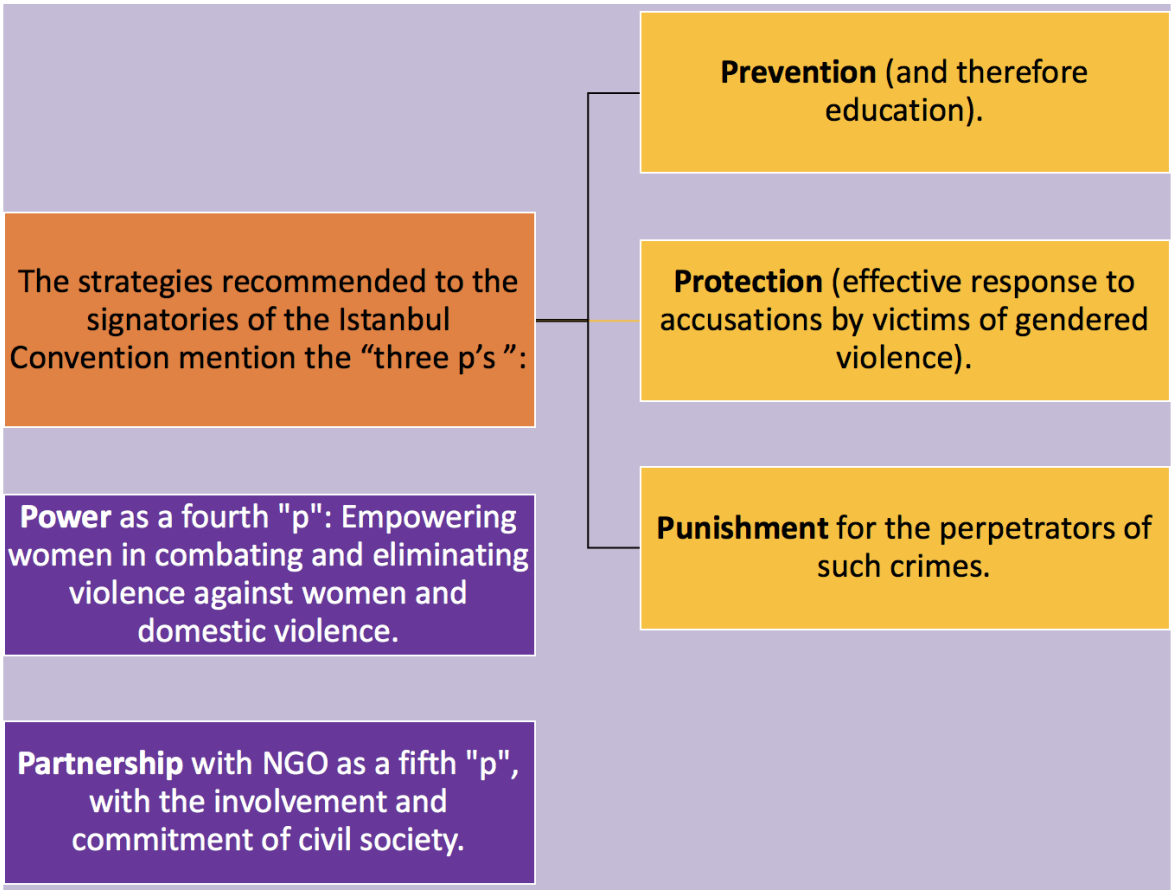
When a woman is beaten by her husband or intimate partner and she is economically dependent on him, it will be more difficult for her to make the decision to leave or file a complaint, knowing that she will have to start from scratch, homeless, with little money.

Similarly, women from poorer social strata are less likely to seek justice from a judicial system that is sometimes discriminatory or indifferent to them. Victims of violence who belong to marginalized and disadvantaged groups are also often denied the kind of assistance that may be available to women from wealthier backgrounds or better introduced to the authorities.

In summary, gender-based violence is not really recorded among low-income people, although many women in poverty and living in unfavourable backgrounds have less alternatives to escape from violence. On the other hand, because of violence, many women lose their previous economic stability, and get into poverty or social exclusion**. These involve these families' children, who are often unprotected by the law.**

In Europe, most of the murdered women are killed for gender-based reasons, but this major violence is not properly taken into account by laws, nor by academia, nor in many cases for a significant sector of civil society.

We need to lobby in favour of the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention as key part of our work in favour of social cohesion, against discrimination, violence and poverty; this involves the three relevant "P", plus the empowerment of women and partnership with civil society organizations.



More specifically, EAPN should demand the EU, national and local governments, other institutions and civil society to:

1. Cease all sorts of violence against women and their children. Tolerance on gender-based violence is inadmissible in any form, or expression.

2. Combat gender-based violence in every area, prioritizing this matter at the same level as the fight against terrorism.

3. Change Member State’s Criminal Codes, introducing new criminal offences for domestic violence and/or tougher penalties, in line with the Istanbul Convention.

4. National action plans against gender-based violence should cover all forms of violence against women and specific budgets should be allocated to primary prevention and to secondary prevention of health and societal consequences of exposure to physical, sexual and psychological violence, including digital (IT) violence and harassment. And there should be specific funding for a coordinating body.

5. Implement economic support of victims during the acute phases of violence and their full recovery, including benefits for orphan children, who are not recognized as victims in many countries, and consequently not granted enough securement for their human development.

6. Support the introduction of topics related to teen dating violence in primary and secondary education.

7. Invest in the awareness and training of judges so that the issue of violence against women is seen as relevant as other type of crime.

8. Implement anti-discrimination and anti-violence messages towards women through the education system, the media and the cultural practices. Invest in prevention and public discussing of violence. Long-term and broad public campaigns can contribute to this.

9. Change their methodological approach to data gathering, in the sense of including all forms of violence in order to differentiate murders and abuses due to sexist violence, from those that are not. It would be essential to include data from hospital admissions of women and children who have been injured due to aggressions, or to establish a direct relationship between the abused/murdered women and their previous police reports. Data should be interrelated in order to assess the real scope of this huge issue, and to propose adequate policies to prevent and tackle it (EUROSTAT and the Member States Statistical Offices). Survey techniques such as those of the FRA research so that the results are reliable and comparable. Research should be repeated regularly, so that trends emerge and policy effectiveness can be measured.

10. Change the proceedings regarding rape reporting, as it seems to be discouraging for victims and, therefore, vastly underrepresented. Changes must be implemented in order to facilitate reporting and to provide further protection to victims.

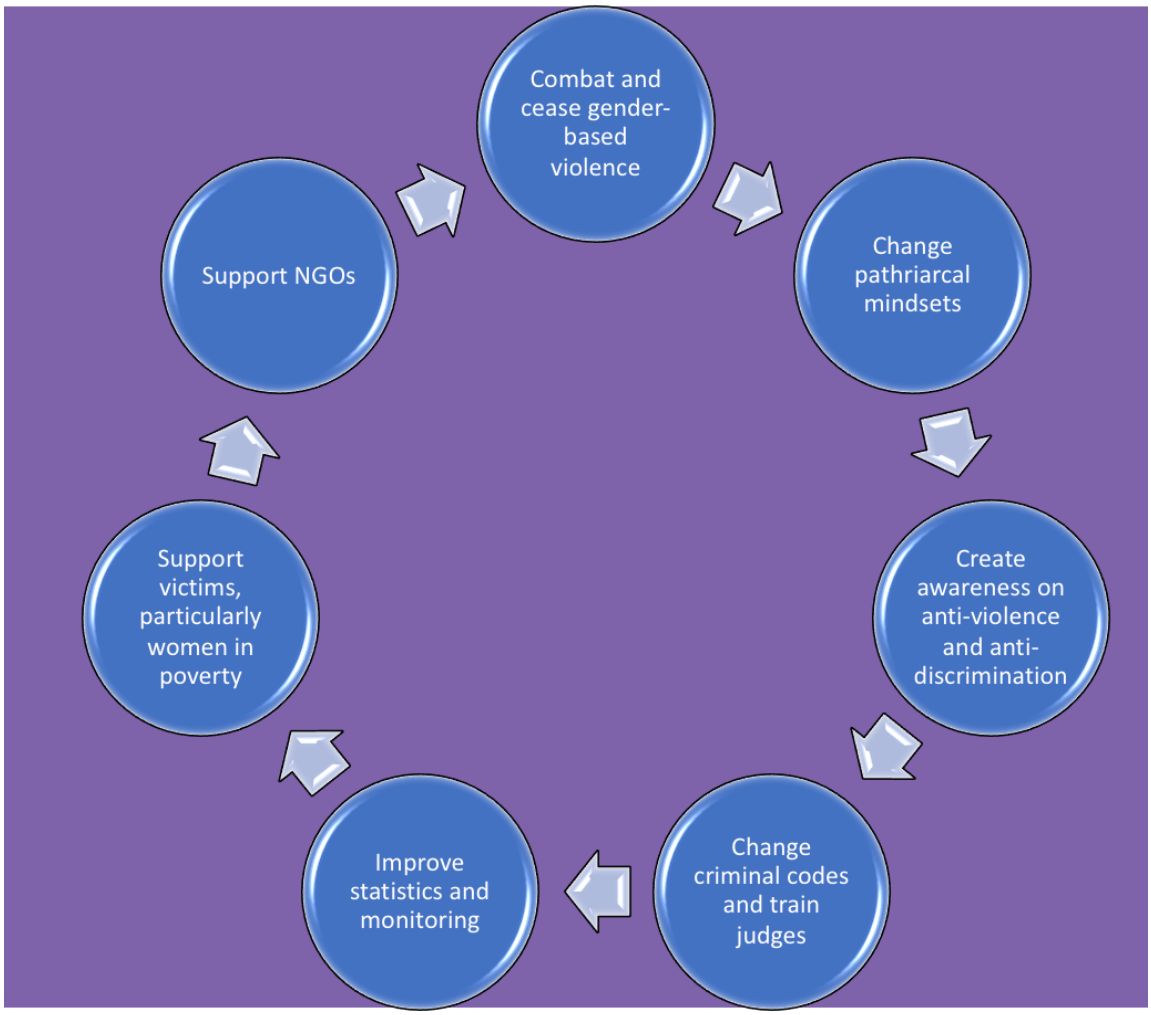
11. The European Union must enforce economic sanctions to Member States without active legislation (or without complying with the existing legislation), and without solid policies against gender-based violence via Structural Funds.

12. Implement norms and change mindsets. Analyse and control the representation of violence against women in the media, as it generates/reinforces stereotypes for actual gender-based violence. Control that so-called cultural or religious “traditions”, including the concept of “family honour revenge” never prevail over women and girls’ rights, for any reason or circumstances, throughout Europe.

13. Support women in poverty and social exclusion fleeing from violence, with income, housing and police protection.

14. Monitor the correct transposition and functioning of the Anti-trafficking Directive in every Member State, and sanction those that are not complying.

15. Support women’s organizations that fight against gender-based violence.


Combat and cease gender-based violence
Change pathriarcal mindsets
Create awareness on anti-violence and anti-discrimination
Change criminal codes and train judges
Improve statistics and monitoring
Support victims, particularly women in poverty
Support NGOs

To learn more

WHO (2009), **Violence Prevention. The evidence. Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women.** http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/gender.pdf

PARKS, Jenny (editor) (2015), **Gender violence in poverty contexts. The educational challenge**. Routledge, London. Part I, in particular.

You can also check….

WHO (2018), **Compilation of studies on this matter.** http://apps.who.int/violence-info/intimate-partner-violence

The ***Journal of Gender-Based Violence*** (JGBV), is the first international journal based in Europe to showcase the work of scholars across disciplinary and topic boundaries, and from a range of methodologies.

SIDA (2015), **Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence: Expressions and Strategies.**https://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/preventing-and-responding-to-gender-based-violence.pdf

Council of Europe (2012) **Safe from Fear. Handbook for Parliamentarians, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),** CETS No. 210
http://www.assembly.coe.int/Communication/Campaign/DomesticViolence/HandbookParliamentarians_EN.pdf#page=1

Useful data:

COE, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) at https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e

UN WOMEN, **Violence against women - Facts everyone should know,** http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2017/11/infographic-violence-against-women-facts-everyone-should-know

Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (2017), **Combating violence against women in the OSCE region. A reader on the situation in the region, good practices and the way forward.** https://www.osce.org/secretariat/286336?download=true

For the past 20 years the **WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe)** has been in a unique position to address and prevent violence against women (VAW) and their children. Founded in 1994 as part of the Austrian Women's Shelter Network, it has been an independent association since 2014 and currently has 130 members in 46 European countries. https://www.wave-network.org/resources/research-reports

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The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is an independent network of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union, established in 1990.

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