



European  
Commission

# Let's put an end to Violence against Women

Factsheet | November 2021

**Violence against women** takes many different forms, ranging from intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and online abuse to honour-related violence, female genital mutilation and can ultimately lead to femicide. Sexual violence can even be used as a war weapon. Gender-based violence takes place at home, at work, at school, in the street or online. It affects the victims' health and well-being, and it restricts their possibility to thrive in society, in education and employment. Combatting violence against women, through legislative and policy measures, financial support and awareness raising, is a priority for the European Commission.



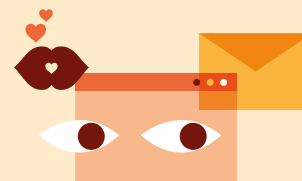
**1 in 3**

women in the EU aged 15 or over have experienced physical and/or sexual violence



**1 in 2**

women in the EU have experienced sexual harassment



**1 in 10**

women in the EU have faced online harassment

*There are many myths concerning violence against women. Let's get our facts straight:*

**MYTH 1: Domestic violence is a private issue and we should not get involved**

Domestic violence is a crime. It is against the law and thus it is not a private matter. If you commit a crime in your own home, it is still a crime for which you should be prosecuted. Silence around domestic violence enables it to continue. Everyone, women included, has the right to be safe and free from fear everywhere, including at home. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that for some women, home is far from being a safe place.

**MYTH 2: Addressing gender-based violence means imposing ideas and values onto other cultures**

Violence is not a legitimate part of any culture. Gender-based violence exists in every country, culture or community and governments around the world have outlawed most acts

of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence cannot be allowed to continue. It is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the world today. Women are being harassed, raped, mutilated, beaten and even murdered. This must end.

**MYTH 3: There would be fewer rapes if women refrained from risky behaviours (for example, revealing clothing, being drunk...)**

The victim's behaviour can never be taken as a sign of consent to sexual activity. This victim blaming discourse perpetuates the idea that rape can be justified: 27% of EU citizens say non-consensual sex could be justifiable in certain situations. This shifts the blame to the victim/survivor, while the fact is that the only person responsible for rape is the perpetrator.



## EUROPEAN UNION FOCUS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

What is the European Union doing to tackle the issue?

### COMMITMENT AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The European Union signed the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women on 13 June 2017. The European Commission is committed to concluding the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention. In case of no progress, the Commission will propose measures to achieve the same objectives as the Convention.

Together with Member States the Commission co-leads the UN's Action Coalition on countering gender-based violence under the Generation Equality Forum.

### COMMITMENT AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The European Commission committed to better protecting victims of crime and achieving gender equal Europe.

Among others, the Commission will present a new legislative initiative on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence and launch a campaign to address stereotypes.

Already now, the Commission is leading a social media campaign #SayNoStopVAW to stop violence against women.

### POLICY MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is monitoring violence against women policy within the Gender Equality Index. It is collecting data on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide in the EU. Eurostat is developing an EU-wide survey to get updated figures on violence against women in the EU. The survey will be run in Member States from 2020 onwards and results are expected in 2023.

### FUNDING

Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, and its successor, the Commission finances projects to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children. During the programme period of 2014-2020, the budget of these projects is approximately €105 million.



## MAINSTREAMING EU ACTION TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The fight against violence against women is reflected in a range of other policy areas:

### INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:

With €500 million from the EU, the Spotlight Initiative is the world's largest targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls as a precondition and driver of sustainable development. It has already led to stronger laws and policies in 17 countries, provided gender-based violence services to 650,000 women and girls, and reached more than 65 million people with behaviour change campaigns.

### HUMANITARIAN AID AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

During 2019 and 2020, the EU allocated more than €56 million in humanitarian aid for the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide. The Commission is also an active member of the global initiative Call to Action on Protection of Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT:

Ending discrimination and violence against women is the focus of an EU-UN Women programme in the Western Balkans and Turkey, as well as regional and bilateral programmes in the Eastern Neighbourhood. In the Southern Neighbourhood, a regional campaign on violence against women promotes gender responsive education, legislation and media.

### TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Women and girls remain the vast majority of the victims of trafficking in human beings, and are disproportionately targeted for sexual exploitation. The EU anti-trafficking legal and policy framework is victims-centred, gender-specific, child sensitive and anchored in human rights.

### ASYLUM AND MIGRATION:

The Common European Asylum System prescribes the need to take a gendered approach. The Commission supports measures taken in migrant reception centres to protect and support women and girls affected by violence.

### COHESION POLICY:

The European Regional Development Fund supports women's economic and social empowerment and social infrastructure investments in women's shelters and safe public spaces for women and girls. The European Social Fund (Plus) supports targeted actions to empower women victims of violence, notably women in vulnerable socio-economic situations, including women with disabilities.

### TRADE POLICY:

Under the Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+), the EU closely monitors human rights violations and violence against women in beneficiary countries.

### EMPLOYMENT:

The European Social Fund supports programmes for the social reintegration of survivors. The **No More Fear programme** of the Piedmont Region helped free local women from domestic violence, human trafficking and prostitution by offering assistance, safety, entry into the job market and support for their independence. The **Regional Network of Gender-Based Violence Intervention Centres** in Murcia, Spain, empowered survivors of gender-based violence by giving them the skills they need to become competitive in the jobs market, and provided incentives for employers to hire them.

### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION:

The Commission funds research on gender-based violence, especially human trafficking. The 'Science with and for Society' programme will investigate gender-based violence in research organisations and universities.



## FUNDING ACTION TO COMBAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The European Commission co-funds a number of Europe-wide, national and local projects to prevent violence against women and children and to support victims. The Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme has provided funding

for over **200 projects** which focus on preventing and combatting gender-based violence, violence against children and awareness-raising campaigns on national level.

Some examples of the funded projects include:



The **TEAMWORK** (combAt sExuAl harassMent in the WORKplace) project aims at strengthening the combat against sexual harassment in the workplace (SHW) in Greece, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy. <https://www.teamworkproject.eu/>



**DESTALK** (crosscutting strategy for detecting and removing stalkerware in intimate relationships) has the objective of developing a multi-level strategy for combating online violence and stalkerware in intimate relationships in Germany, through a capacity building action for both professionals of victims support services and perpetrator programmes and local governments. <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/destalk>



**ENHAGA** (End Sexual Harassment in Gaming) aims to prevent and combat psychological online harassment especially for girls and young female gamers and prepare the future ground for appreciation, respect for equal rights as well as the promotion of gender equality in Italy. <https://enhaga-project.eu/>



**VRperGENERE** (Virtual Reality Prevention of Gender-Violence in Europe based on Neuroscience of Embodiment, peRspective and Empathy) has the goal of reducing intimate partner violence through the deployment of cost-effective prevention and rehabilitation tools for domestic violent offenders based on immersive virtual reality in Spain. It also aims to induce behavioural and attitudinal changes in the general public with respect to IPV by raising awareness and empowering bystanders to react in a helpful manner, and to promote healthy dating relationships by empowering young women to respond assertively to psychological abuse. <https://www.vrpergenere.com/>

## The funding continues under the new Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)

Under the **DAPHNE** strand of the CERV programme, a [call for proposals](#) to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children will be launched on 15 December 2021 with a budget of 27 million EUR. The funding priorities of the 2022 call are large-scale and long-term transnational actions to tackle gender-based violence, prevention of harmful practices and primary prevention of gender-based violence. This call for proposals will also support actions to support child victims of violence and data collection on violence against children. The closing date of the call is 12 April 2022.

Under the 2021 **DAPHNE** call for proposals of the CERV programme, 30 projects were awarded to be funded with a budget of 13 million EUR. These projects tackle early detection, prevention and protection of and/or support to women, children, and youth victims or potential victims of violence, with specific attention paid to situations emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the awarded proposals, 10 projects focusing on prevention of gender-based violence by addressing masculinities and the engagement of men and boys were selected to be funded with an overall budget of 4.6 million EUR.