



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 21.12.2022  
C(2022) 9981 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Nationalrat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 {COM(2020) 152 final} and its particular reference to the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence {COM(2022) 105 final}. The proposal itself is one of the main deliverables of the Gender Equality Strategy.*

*The Commission welcomes the Nationalrat's shared commitment to achieve the proposal's objective to improve targeted policies to combat and prevent gender-based violence. It is equally pleased that combating violence against women and domestic violence is a key priority of Austria's federal government, which takes a cross-sectoral approach to the matter. In a similar vein, Articles 39 and 40 of the proposal focus on a coordinated multi-agency approach.*

*Moreover, the Commission appreciates the Nationalrat's explicit support for the proposal's strong focus on data collection (Article 44) in asking for harmonised indicators. The Commission agrees that the capacity for data collection needs to be strengthened and further measures introduced to improve data collection to ensure that violence against women and domestic violence gains visibility and that targeted (preventive) measures and policy responses are developed.*

*The Commission would like to assure the Nationalrat that it will encourage the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to continue its work and research on the crucial topic of femicide.*

*The proposal contains a number of provisions aiming at preventing femicides. Firstly, femicides are often preceded by a progression of violent acts, such as sexualised violence or domestic violence, all of which fall under the scope of the proposal. Further provisions would ensure the prevention of femicides and protecting victims to intercept violence at the earliest stage possible. For instance, in requiring that complaints of domestic violence or violence against women be recorded in the official records (Article 17(3)), it would be ensured that situations of repeated violence, which bear a higher risk*

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*of resulting in femicides, are better detected. The possibility for professionals to report imminent life-threatening situations to authorities without breaching their confidentiality obligations may further contribute to ensuring that victims are protected (Article 16(3)).*

*Furthermore, the individual risk assessment should focus, among other matters, on the victim's lethality risk (Article 18(4)). The emergency barring and protection orders allow for the removal of the offender to ensure further violence is averted (Article 21). The support services proposed in Chapter 4, including shelters and emergency helplines, would empower victims to escape violent relationships. Lastly, Article 37 would require the training of relevant professionals for them to identify victims and offer support, which might also help in intercepting high-risk situations.*

*The Commission thanks the Nationalrat for its encouraging remarks and hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Nationalrat. The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future. The Commission remains committed to furthering the work to protect victims of violence against women. The most recent example in this respect is the implementing Decision of 25 November on the helpline for victims of violence against women.*

*The Opinion of the Nationalrat has been made available to the Commission's representatives in the ongoing negotiations of the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, and will inform these discussions.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*

*Helena Dalli  
Member of the Commission*