

2017 focused actions to combat violence against women

On the occasion of the International Day for the elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), the European Commission is launching a year of focused actions to put an end to violence against women and girls.

Violence against women can only be combated if we address the problem from all directions and at all levels from local authorities (e.g. police officers) to national governments and international organisations. **The year of focused actions aims to connect all efforts across the European Union to stop violence against women.**

Why?

Violence against women is still a wide-spread phenomenon in the European Union¹.

Among women aged 15 and above:

- 1 in 3 women has experienced sexual violence, physical violence, or both;
- 1 in 3 has experienced psychologically abusive behaviour by an intimate partner;
- 1 in 5 has experienced stalking;
- Over 1 in 2 (55%) have experienced sexual harassment;
- for women in top management and professional occupation 3 out of every 4 women have experienced sexual harassment;
- 1 in 20 has been raped.

It happens everywhere, at home, on the streets, in the workplace. The impacts are multiple from immediate physical or psychological injuries to long term mental or physical complications, including death.

Violence against women also has important economic costs for the European Union estimated at €226 billion euro by the European Institute for Gender Equality² (lost economic output from women missing work, health services costs, welfare costs and justice costs).

We are in 2016. Girls and women must be able to fully participate in all aspects of our society, without being beaten, harassed, raped, stalked or held back by violence against them.

How?

Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, has taken the initiative to dedicate 2017 to ending violence against women. Together with Member States, European Parliament, European Institute for Gender Equality, UN Women and other International

¹ Fundamental Rights Agency (2014), Violence against women: an EU-wide survey
http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf

² European Institute for Gender Equality (2014), Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0414745EN2.pdf>

Organisations, civil society organisations, academia, businesses, trade unions, media and all European men and women willing to join, we have to make violence against women a thing of the past.

The year of focused actions will provide a framework to coordinate actions to end violence against women. Commissioner Jourová invites everyone to join these focused actions to combat violence against women.

Commissioner Věra Jourová said: *"I want 2017 to be a game-changer in ending violence against women. By the end of the year, I hope that any woman experiencing violence will feel comfortable to report it to the police and will get the support she deserves. And I want everyone in Europe to agree that sexual intercourse without consent cannot be justifiable by any circumstances."*

What?

On 25 November, the International Day for the elimination of Violence against Women, Commissioner Jourová will formally launch the year of focused actions by:

- sharing the main message: **Say no! Stop violence against women** through our social media channels, and by making materials available so that all those who want to support the message can join. The hashtag will be **#SayNoStopVAW** ;
- publishing a **Eurobarometer on gender-based violence** (2016) showing the views of Europeans on this topic (see infographic);
- opening **two calls for proposals** (6 million euros): civil society organisations will be encouraged to submit project proposals that combat violence against women or support its victims (for instance projects helping women in shelters to get back to work);
- publishing a study on **gender-based violence in sports**;
- publishing a **joint statement** of 6 Commissioners, together with a Q&A summarising European Commission activities in this area.

Throughout 2017

During the year of focused actions to combat violence against women, many more activities are planned³ by Member States, EIGE, European Parliament, civil society and other institutions, under the umbrella of the campaign.

From the Commission, this includes funding for specific initiatives in a variety of settings both in Europe and beyond:

- The Commission has made **4 million euros available to EU countries** in developing and implementing national practical and targeted information, awareness-raising and education activities aimed at preventing and combating violence against women (for instance, police authorities, ministries of education wishing to develop programmes for children on this topic, or ministries wanting to promote a helpline...) – the proposals will be selected on 10/12 ;
- The Commission will financially **support civil society organisations** that make a lasting impact on the ground, in the lives of girls and women in the European Union;

³ For more information on these and other initiatives: <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw>

- The Commission will encourage EU countries to make use of the **European Regional Development Fund to fund the creation of shelters for victims** of gender-based violence, on the basis of needs and opportunities;
- Through the **Erasmus+ Programme**, financial assistance to combat gender-based violence in sport is available;
- Internationally, the Commission will support projects fostering the rights of women victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, **in the most remote areas or fragile situations** (such as post-conflict areas or most isolated communities)
- The Commission will continue financially support projects on combating gender-based violence, including sexual violence **in humanitarian crises**: in 2016 alone, the EU has so far supported 62 of gender-based violence combating humanitarian projects with close to €24.5 million in total and will reach almost 3.4 million women, girls, boys and men around the world.

The Commission will also put violence against women on the agenda, locally and up to the highest level:

- Malta's EU Presidency will hold an **EU-wide conference on violence against women** in February 2017;
- The Commission will organise several **Learning Seminars for Member States**, where countries share their most successful policies to tackle violence against women or help victims;
- A **web tool designed to assist professionals** such as nurses, teachers, police officers in preventing female genital mutilation will be presented;
- **Trafficking of human beings as a form of violence against women** will be on the agenda at the relevant EU networks, both governmental and non-profit;
- Starting in 2017, all **EU-led human rights dialogues** with third countries will have violence against women on the agenda;
- The Commission will organise a **round-table for representatives from the film industry** at the next Berlinale film festival to encourage the film industry's engagement on the topic;
- At the **EU Sport Forum** a session will be dedicated to gender-based violence in sports.

It also includes enforcing and reinforcing the **EU legislative framework** to combat and prevent violence against women and to support victims:

- The Commission has proposed EU accession to the Council of Europe's **Istanbul Convention**, an international treaty on combatting violence against women and domestic violence;
- The Commission will continue to monitor and enforce the implementation of the **Victims' Rights Directive** which ensures special protection for victims of gender based violence.

Finally, the Commission will enhance **reporting on violence against women**:

- A new **EU survey on gender-based violence** will be developed by Eurostat and the Commission.
- The European External Action Service will produce an **Annual Report on EU action to End Sexual Violence in Conflict**;

- Violence will be addressed in the upcoming Commission Staff Working Document on "**Women in Transport**";

For those wanting to spread the message Say no! Stop violence against women, or learn more about actions taken, various communication materials and information will be available: <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw>