



THE EUROPEAN COALITION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

On 8 March 2017, International Women's Day

Violence against women and girls: will Europe rise up in 2017?

This year's celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March comes as a new opportunity for the European Union to take action against violence against women: The European Commission has declared 2017 the European Year of focused action to combat violence against women and girls.

[Mental Health Europe](#) (MHE) is part of the **European Coalition to end violence against women and girls**, a unique coalition of more than 25 European-wide networks and NGOs dedicated to social justice and equality. Together we call on the EU decision-makers to mark International Women's Day with concrete actions.

Violence against women and girls continues to be the most pervasive violation of women's human rights in Europe and worldwide, and affects the lives of millions of women and girls. The European Coalition to end violence against women and girls warmly welcomes the Malta Joint Statement of 3/02/2017: a landmark initiative where three European Institutions (European Parliament, European Commission and the Council Presidency) have jointly made a strong call for action to the Member States, asking them to ratify and fully implement the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and to approve the EU's accession to this Convention in a meaningful way.

"The European Union should ratify the Istanbul Convention without further delay. This has also been one of the human rights recommendations that the European Union received from the United Nations in 2015, as a key step to ensure protection of women and girls with disabilities since they are at even higher risk of violence, abuse and forced sterilisation", says Ana Peláez, Chair of the Women's Committee of the European Disability Forum.

The European Coalition to end violence against women and girls considers that it is extremely important to acknowledge how certain women face greater risk of violence because of motives fuelled by sexism coupled with racism, xenophobia, homophobia as well as discrimination based on age, disability, ethnicity or religion. Women and girls with migrant background, undocumented migrant women, refugee women and asylum seekers, women and girls with disabilities, lesbian, transgender or intersex women, Roma women and girls, young women and elderly women, homeless women, black women, Muslim women.... Many women in Europe face intersecting forms of discrimination that prevents them from accessing justice and support and protection services, and from enjoying their fundamental rights.

Today in Europe - Facts and figures:

- Violence against women can have life-long implications for the physical and mental health of women.
- Certain women face a greater risk of violence because of motives fuelled by sexism as well as racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. Furthermore, intersecting forms of discrimination limit access to justice and support and protection services.
- Women with disabilities are 2 to 5 times more likely to be victims of violence than non-disabled women and are subjected to sterilisation and abortions against their will. There are 46 million women and girls with disabilities in Europe, representing 60% of the overall population of persons with disabilities.
- 34% of women with a health problem or disability have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime.

Main sources: FRA survey on violence against women 2014 and other FRA surveys; Studies developed by the European Parliamentary Research Services; European Studies funded by DAPHNE and Academic and NGO studies; National surveys.

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Note to editors:

The **European Coalition to End violence against women and girls**, convened by the European Women's Lobby, is a strategic alliance of (right number) European NGOs and civil society networks dedicated to social justice and equality in Europe. Addressing the issue of violence against women and girls from different angles, they have joined forces to advocate together for the signature and ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU and all Member States and for a meaningful EU year of focused actions against violence against women. [Find here a factsheet with more information on our demands.](#)

The **European Women's Lobby** (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. EWL membership extends to organisations in all 28 EU Member States and three of the candidate countries, as well as to 20 European-wide organisations, representing a total of more than 2000 associations.

The **Istanbul Convention- Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence** is the first legally binding treaty in Europe that criminalises different forms of violence against women including physical and psychological violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment and rape, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilization. In March 2016 the European Commission made a proposal for the EU to become party to the Convention. The proposals made by the Commission are currently being discussed in Council. The European Parliament will then need to consent to the EU's accession.

Malta Joint Statement - European institutions' call for action, was signed by the Council Presidency, the European Commission and the European Parliament on the 3 February 2017, at Conference on the EU responses to violence against women organised by the Maltese Presidency. [Find the joint statement here.](#)

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Campaigns and Initiatives of the members of the European Coalition to end violence against women and girls:
Find them [here](#).

European wide NGOs engaged in the European Coalition to end violence against women and girls:

- [AGE Platform Europe](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [COFACE Families Europe](#)
- [End FGM- European Network](#)
- [EuroMed Rights](#)
- [European Disability Forum \(EDF\)](#)
- [European Forum of Muslim women \(EFOMW\)](#)
- [European Network against Racism \(ENAR\)](#)
- [European Network of Migrant Women \(ENoMW\)](#)
- [European Network for the Work with perpetrators of Domestic Violence](#)
- [European Network on Religion and Belief \(ENORB\)](#)
- [European Roma Information Office \(ERIO\)](#)
- [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#)
- [European Women's Lobby \(EWL\)](#)
- [European YWCA](#)
- [European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless \(FEANTSA\)](#)
- [International Alliance for Women \(IAW\)](#)
- [International Planned Parenthood Federation- European Region](#)
- [ILGA-Europe - The European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#)
- [Mental Health Europe \(MHE\)](#)
- [Men Engage Alliance](#)
- [PICUM - the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants](#)
- [Social Platform](#)
- [Transgender Europe –TGEU](#)
- [WAVE Network –Women against violence Europe](#)
- [Womankind Worldwide](#)
- [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts \(WAGGGS\)](#)