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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft Council Conclusions on Violence against women and domestic violence: prevention, early detection and intervention

Delegations will find attached a set of draft Council Conclusions on "Violence against women and domestic violence: prevention, early detection and intervention" prepared by the incoming Danish Presidency.

This document will be examined by the Working Party on Social Questions at its meeting on 3 July 2025.

NB. The deadline for written comments will be on 1 July (COB).

**Draft Council Conclusions on violence against women and domestic violence: prevention,
early detection and intervention**

NOTING THAT

1. Gender equality and human rights are at the core of European values. Equality between women and men is a fundamental right and a founding value of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('the Charter').
2. Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that "in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women".
3. The Charter declares that "equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas" and that "everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity".
4. Violence against women and domestic violence are rooted in historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men. Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is a societal responsibility, as violence undermines gender equality and women and girls' right to equality in all areas of life and hinders their equal participation in society and the labour market. Societies free of violence against women and domestic violence will not only be healthier and safer but also more prosperous.

5. Eurostat, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) note in the EU Gender-Based Violence Survey 2024, that although the majority of women who have experienced violence have disclosed it to a person close to them, only 1 in 5 have contacted a healthcare or social service provider and just 1 in 8 have reported the incident to the police. This means that bystanders have a central role to play by reacting to the situations they witness, including by engaging or supporting the victim of violence. Anyone can find themselves in the position of a bystander witnessing violence. Awareness-raising among the population as a whole is therefore essential in order to ensure that people know where to find help and how best to react or intervene.
6. Children who witness violence against women and domestic violence are at risk of long-term physical and mental health problems, and their participation in society, including in education, can be hindered as a result. Furthermore, children who witness violence are at a greater risk of being exposed to violent behaviour in their future relationships or of developing violent behaviour themselves.
7. Gender equality and the rejection of violence against women and domestic violence are inextricably linked. EIGE notes in its Gender Equality Index 2024 that “where gender equality is high, people are less likely to condone violence against women” which “illustrates that progress towards a gender-equal EU is key to eradicating violence against women”.
8. In March 2025, the European Commission expressed its long-term vision for achieving gender equality in its Roadmap for Women's Rights, setting out key principles and policy goals, including with regard to preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls.

9. Although women and girls are disproportionately exposed to all forms of violence, including its most extreme and brutal manifestations such as intimate partner killings, men and boys are also victims of violence, including gender-based violence, and can face gender-specific challenges in this regard, as gender stereotypes and expectations for men and boys can deter them from reaching out to a person close to them, from seeking treatment or help, or from reporting their situation.
10. According to Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence “Member States should take measures to prevent the cultivation of harmful gender stereotypes in order to eradicate the idea of the inferiority of women or stereotyped roles of women and men”, including measures “which aim to ensure that culture, custom, religion, tradition or honour is not perceived as a justification for, or does not give rise to a more lenient treatment of, offences of violence against women or domestic violence”.
11. While significant progress has been made at the EU level in efforts to combat violence against women and domestic violence, including the adoption of the Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, this unacceptable phenomenon remains prevalent and underreported.
12. Further action is therefore required, especially measures to improve the prevention and early detection of violence and measures to encourage interventions against it before it escalates.
13. This set of conclusions builds on previous work and political commitments voiced by the Council of the European Union, the Commission and the European Parliament and relevant stakeholders in this area, including the documents listed in the Annex.

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION CALLS ON THE MEMBER STATES, in accordance with their competences and taking into account national circumstances TO:

14. Pay due regard to the importance of prevention, early detection and intervention when implementing Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. With this in mind, and in order to address the problem of underreporting, it is particularly important to develop and implement effective measures to encourage any person who knows about or suspects, in good faith, that acts of violence against women or domestic violence have occurred, or that acts of violence are to be expected, to report such acts to the competent authorities without fearing negative consequences.
15. Promote training for workers in relevant fields as well as awareness-raising among the population as a whole, including bystanders, on access to information and advice concerning safe and effective ways of seeking help or otherwise intervening in cases of violence or a perceived risk of violence.
16. Promote cross-sectoral partnerships, training and cooperation between all relevant actors so as to enable, for example, healthcare workers, educators, social services, and civil society to detect signs of the various forms of violence against women and domestic violence, including physical, psychological, sexual, economic, technology-facilitated, and honour-related violence, as early as possible and to intervene early, including through referrals.
17. Support the development of tools and training for healthcare workers and care workers in order to help them detect cases of violence against pregnant women and new parents, bearing in mind that violence may escalate around the time of pregnancy and birth, that pregnancy provides an opportunity for intervention due to the contact between victims, perpetrators, and health and care workers, and that pregnancy and parenthood can also motivate perpetrators to stop their violent behaviour.

18. Take measures to protect and treat children who witness violence between adults, including with a view to reducing the risk that such children will develop violent behaviour later in life.
19. Promote awareness among children and young adults regarding gender equality, and regarding healthy relationships, including consensual sexual relationships, as well as regarding the scope, consequences and signs of violence against women and domestic violence, and ensure that they have access to help, guidance and support.
20. Promote programmes for treating perpetrators and their families, in order to support the rehabilitation of perpetrators and stop their violent behaviour, and also in order to break the intergenerational cycle of violence.

CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES, in accordance with their respective competences, and involving the European Institute for gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) where appropriate, TO:

21. Improve the collection, analysis, publication and use of data on violence against women and domestic violence and on the impact of such violence on victims and society and ensure that this data is disaggregated by sex and covers the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
22. Undertake studies of violence against women or domestic violence witnessed by children, including the extent of this phenomenon and its long-term impact on the children concerned, and raise awareness about the problem of witnessed violence.
23. Promote research, innovation and the exchange of best practice on combating violence against women and domestic violence through prevention, early detection and intervention.

24. Adopt and implement action plans for combating violence against women and domestic violence, including measures to promote prevention, early detection and intervention.
25. Undertake awareness-raising across society as a whole, especially in educational establishments, on violence against women and domestic violence, including its extent and its consequences, paying particular attention to the role of bystanders and their capacity to intervene, and addressing both women and men.
26. Support the engagement of men and boys both as agents and beneficiaries of gender equality, including through measures to combat harmful gender stereotypes and social norms online and offline, and measures to involve men and boys in prevention, early detection and intervention, bearing in mind that boys are exposed from an early age to widespread stereotypical, objectifying and sexualising representations of girls and women, both online and offline, which can perpetuate harmful gender roles and attitudes, and also trivialise gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls.

CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

27. Include measures to combat violence against women and domestic violence, both online and offline, including measures for prevention, early detection and intervention, as contained in these council conclusions, in the forthcoming gender equality strategy for the period post-2025.

References

1. EU Legislation

Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence

2. Council

Council Conclusions on the Eradication of violence against women in the European Union (Doc. 6585/10)

Council Conclusions on Combating violence against women, and the provision of support services for victims of domestic violence (Doc. 17444/12)

Council Conclusions on Preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, including female genital mutilation (Doc. 9543/14)

Council Conclusions on the Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on gender equality (Doc. 8878/21)

Council Conclusions on Economic empowerment and financial independence of women as a pathway to substantive gender equality (Doc. 8957/24)

Council conclusions on strengthening women's and girls' mental health by promoting gender equality (Doc. 16366/24)

Council Conclusions on Advancing Gender Equality in the AI-Driven Age: 6th horizontal review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the Member States and the EU institutions (doc. to follow)

3. **European Commission**

A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. (Doc. 6678/20. Commission reference: COM (2020) 152 final)

Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. (Doc. 13081/20. Commission reference: COM(2020) 698 final)

Roadmap for Women's Rights. (Doc. 6756/25. Commission reference: COM(2025) 97 final)

4. **Eurostat, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)**

EU gender-based violence survey (2024)

5. **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)**

Intimate partner violence and witness intervention: what are the deciding factors? (2020)

Combating Cyber Violence against Women and Girls (2022)

Gender Equality Index (2024)

https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-equality-index-2024-tackling-violence-against-women-tackling-gender-inequalities?language_content_entity=en

6. **United Nations**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW)

7. **Council of Europe**

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ("Istanbul Convention") (CETS No. 210)

8. **Other**

Effects of domestic violence on children

(Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2024)

<https://womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/domestic-violence/effects-domestic-violence-children#references>
