

# Tackling Gender-Based Violence in Europe: Advancing Strategies to End Violence against Women and Girls



**Tuesday 20th February 2018**

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre



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## Overview

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) one in three women has experienced violence since the age of 15. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is linked to structural inequalities between genders in many aspects of life, representing their most terrible expression. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) 2017 Gender Equality Index showed that progress comes at a very slow pace in this matter. The overall EU's score on gender equality is now 66.2 out of 100 (just four points higher than ten years ago), but levels of inequality differ widely across Member States.

Gender-based violence constitutes a breach of human rights. Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention defines it as the "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately". The Istanbul Convention constitutes the most comprehensive binding international instrument addressing violence against women and domestic violence. All EU Member States are parties to it, but not all of them have ratified it. So far, EU institutions – often separately – have addressed gender-based violence mainly through political and soft-law instruments, guiding principles and capacity building programmes. 2017 was designated by the European Commission as a year of focussed actions to combat violence against women. During the fall of the same year, in the wake of the global sexual abuse and harassment scandals, the European Parliament adopted a resolution of strong condemnation, calling for a zero tolerance policy. Notwithstanding this, a comprehensive and common EU strategy on to address VAWG is still lacking. The fact that in June 2017 the EU signed the Convention, as the first official step of the process of its accession, may testify a renewed policy attention to the issue.

In the increasingly connected world, VAWG also affects the digital space. Further data from FRA shows that one in ten women has experienced some form of cyber violence, with effects that are as disastrous as those of off-line forms of violence. Cyber VAWG comes in many forms, but both its legal characterisation and the consequent protections are not yet clearly defined and fall within the scope of national legislation. On the other hand, a pending challenge still comes from eliminating violence caused by harmful traditions such as early and forced marriages, Female Genital Mutilations (FGMs), forced sterilisations and abortions.

This International Symposium will provide a timely opportunity to analyse the available instruments and the existing challenges in shaping a truly comprehensive and holistic strategy for tackling gender-based violence in the EU. It will also support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking and topical debate with local and regional practitioners and policy makers at EU level.

**“** *There is much to celebrate in the area of gender equality. Europe is a good address for women. Women in Europe are graduating from universities, they are breadwinners, innovators, heads of state. But there is also still some homework to do in Europe on gender equality. In Europe, too many women are, at one point or another in their lives, beaten, inappropriately touched, intimidated, stalked, raped. [...] It is an absolute disgrace that in our European Union, committed to the principles of human rights and gender equality, women and girls have their rights violated on such an endemic scale.”*

- Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality

February 2017

## Venue and Accommodation

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre  
Avenue du Boulevard 17,  
1210, Brussels



## Why Attend?

- ✓ Examine the current legislative framework for tackling gender-based violence and discuss the consequences of EU accession to the Convention of Istanbul
- ✓ Evaluate concrete actions carried out by the EU institutions to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls and reduce gender inequalities
- ✓ Understand emerging forms of online gender-based violence and abuse
- ✓ Discover sustainable solutions, preventative measures and methods for successful public engagement and awareness raising
- ✓ Discuss methods to successfully target offenders and securing prosecution
- ✓ Share ideas on holistic strategies for empowering and protecting victims of gender-based violence in social and public spaces
- ✓ Explore examples of best practice and models of intervention to protect women with specific vulnerabilities

## Who Should Attend?

- Domestic Violence Coordinators
- Police Authorities
- Families Services Officers
- Health Service Professionals
- Social Care Professionals
- Victim Support Representatives
- LGBT Rights Associations
- Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinators
- Community Support Officers
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Criminal Justice Practitioners
- Legal Professionals
- Local Authority Officers & Councillors
- Equality and Diversity Practitioners
- Academics and Researchers
- Trade Unions
- Employers' Associations
- Equal Opportunity Agencies
- Women's Lobbyist Groups
- Women's NGOs Networks
- National Coordinators on Gender Equality
- and Equal Opportunities
- Social Exclusion Officers
- Human Rights Professionals
- Disability Forums and Associations
- Women Refugees and Advice Centres

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## Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 10:10** **Reinforcing the European Framework to Combat and Prevent Gender-based Violence**
- Considering the Consequences of EU's Signature (and Ratification) of the Convention of Istanbul
  - Gaining Insight into EU's Non-Binding Actions Against VAWG: the NON.NO.NEIN Campaign
  - Discussing Prospects for a Common and Comprehensive EU Strategy
  - Evaluating Progress on Women Equality in the EU: the 2017 Gender Equality Index
- 10:40** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:10** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:30** **Developing Effective Strategies to Target VAWG Offences**
- Taking Claims Seriously: Ensuring Timely Investigations of Allegations
  - Securing Effective Prosecution of Perpetrators of VAWG
  - Training Professionals who Provide Assistance to Victims of Violence
  - Examining the Access to Justice and Services Under the Victims' Rights Directive
- 12:00** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
- 13:30** **Tackling Gender-Based Violence in the Digital Space**
- Defining Forms of Cyber Violence against Women and Girls
  - Preventing and Countering Online Sexist Hate Speech: Reducing Acceptance and Engaging Youth through Human Rights Education
  - Providing a Safe and Empowering Digital Space for Women
  - Disproving Gender Stereotypes Through Technology and New Media
- 14:00** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:30** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:50** **Ensuring Targeted Prevention and Protection of Vulnerabilities**
- Designing Protection for the Most Vulnerable Categories of Women
  - Ending FGM and Other Harmful Traditional Practices
  - Making the Workplace a Safe Environment for Women: Developing Policies to Eradicate Sexual Harassment and Gender-based Violence
  - Raising Awareness in Social and Public Spaces: Building Up a Network of Support for Victims
- 15:20** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:50** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
- 16:00** Networking Reception
- 16:30** Close

*\*Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice\**

## Event Details

- Date:** Tuesday 20th February 2018  
**Time:** 10:00am – 4:30pm  
**Venue:** Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre



## Forthcoming Events

- ✓ **Fostering Active & Healthy Ageing: Harnessing the Demographic Transition in the EU**  
**18th January 2018**
- ✓ **Fighting Air Pollution in Europe: Ramping Up Efforts for a Healthier Environment**  
**25th January 2018**
- ✓ **Food Safety in the EU: Maintaining High Standards and Ensuring Transparency of Information**  
**31st January 2018**
- ✓ **The European Asylum System: Moving Towards a Unified, Fair and Effective Framework**  
**1st February 2018**
- ✓ **Updating the European Strategy on Energy Efficiency: Making Better Use of Energy Resources**  
**15th February 2018**
- ✓ **Considering the Future of Sustainable Agriculture in the EU: Ensuring Production and Preserving Biodiversity**  
**22nd February 2018**
- ✓ **Fostering the Transition towards a Circular Economy in Europe: Turning Waste into a Resource**  
**27th February 2018**
- ✓ **Stepping Into a Digitalised Future: Integrating eHealth Into Public Healthcare Systems**  
**28th February 2018**
- ✓ **Enhancing Data Protection in Europe: Towards a Safer Digital Future**  
**13th March 2018**


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