



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
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EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

WORKING GROUP ON A POSSIBLE EU AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) welcomes the opportunity given to the EC Advisory Committee to produce an opinion on a possible EU awareness raising campaign on violence against women. In order to provide with a sensible contribution, the EWL has consulted its membership as well as the experts to its European Observatory on violence against women.

Whereas such campaign would represent a strong step forward towards the political recognition of violence against women as a violation of women's rights and an obstacle to equality between women and men, it is important to **recall the commitment made by the European Commission to deliver a comprehensive strategy on the issue** (as stated in the 2010 Stockholm Action Plan).

Such EU action should be based on the 6 Ps: Policy, Prosecution, Prevention, Protection, service Provision, Partnership. It should materialise into a comprehensive *Policy* framework building on the international human rights definitions of violence against women, and encompassing legally-binding instruments to ensure that all forms of violence against women are addressed in all EU Member States (*Prosecution*) and strengthen the *Protection* of all women; a European Year on ending violence against women to raise awareness and foster long-term *Prevention*; and substantial and sustainable EU funding to support service *Providers* and build *Partnership* with NGOs working towards a Europe free from male violence against women.

Seven conditions for an efficient EU action

In order for an EU awareness raising campaign on violence against women to demonstrate its EU added-value, the following seven key conditions need to be taken into account:

1. The EU action must be based on a clear and comprehensive **definition of violence** against women.
2. The EU campaign must convey the messages that **violence against women is a violation of women's human rights**, and is a cause and consequence of the structural inequality between women and men.
3. The EU campaign should address a **variety of targets and develop specific tools** for each target group.
 - 3a. The EU campaign must encourage EU Member States to take action to eradicate violence against women and commit to the struggle by setting national targets for the 6Ps.
 - 3b. The EU campaign should provide target groups with concrete proposals for action and change, taking into account the barriers that some people might face.
4. The EU campaign should be designed and implemented as a **long-term action based on a coordinated and holistic approach** and be coordinated by an EU Coordinator to end violence against women and girls.
5. The EU campaign must be supported by an **additional, specific and sustainable funding**, and should provide financial and other support to awareness raising activities at national level.
6. The EU action should develop a **framework for elaboration and implementation**, comprise a diversity of activities, be evidence-based and involve and support NGOs.
7. The EU action should convey **positive and concrete messages**.

Seven conditions for an efficient EU awareness raising campaign to end violence against women and girls

1. Any EU action on violence against women, be it awareness raising activities, data collection or drafting of legally-binding instruments, must be based on a **clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women**. Such definition, to be found in international human rights instruments, encompasses all forms of male violence against women and acknowledges the structural dimension of the phenomenon. By basing its campaign on such comprehensive definition, the EU would provide a clear framework for its action and sets the example of what all EU Member States should yearn for.

Beijing Platform for Action (1995):

'Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement'.

CEDAW General Recommendation 19:

'Gender-based violence against women is violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately, and includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty'.

2. An EU campaign must convey the two following key messages: **violence against women is a violation of women's human rights, and is a cause and consequence of the structural inequality between women and men**. By doing so, the EU action would raise awareness on the root causes of violence against women, which are shared by all EU Member States, and raise awareness of the problem among the population.

Violence against women is a violation of women's human rights and must be considered as such: any form of male violence against women should be considered as a crime, victims must be protected and supported, and perpetrators must be punished. One root cause for violence against women is the tolerance towards it from both the general public and the public authorities (including the justice and the police). The EU campaign should aim at denouncing such tolerance and provoking a change in mentalities, reminding Member States of their duty of due diligence.

Violence against women is a cause and consequence of the structural inequality between women and men. The structural male domination, in all spheres of society, allows for violence against women to take place, to be trivialised and even legitimised. An EU campaign must address violence against women in the broader context of patriarchy in order to bring effective political and societal change.

3. The EU awareness raising campaign should **address a variety of targets**, ranging from the EU Member States themselves (heads of states and ministers) to women victims, men perpetrators, young people, professionals (police, justice, education, social workers...), the media, politicians, trade unions, regional and local authorities, NGOs, the private sector, the sport world, etc. It is very important that the EU campaign develops **specific tools for each target group**, as the messages have to be adapted in order to be efficient. The EU institutions and agencies should also be involved and develop the campaign towards their specific audience (EESC, Committee of the Regions, EC and EP offices in EU Member States, Frontex, Europol, Eurojust, EASO, CEPOL, etc.). Such systematic approach to developing and delivering prevention work is essential in order to deliver widespread, long-term and meaningful changes.

The Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence (2006-2008) had the following complementary aims:

- Raise awareness that violence against women is a human rights violation and encourage every citizen to challenge it;
- Urge member states to demonstrate political will by providing resources to deliver concrete results in eradicating violence against women.

3a. The EU campaign must **encourage EU Member States to take action to eradicate violence against women, based on the 6Ps**. One key target group of the action is the EU Member States themselves, which should place the struggle against violence against women as a policy priority. Indeed, public awareness is not the solution to eradicating violence against women, it has to be complemented with an efficient infrastructure, based on the 6Ps, and challenging inequality between women and men. The added-value of the EU action comes from the assessment that the phenomenon is widespread in all EU Member States, and however is not addressed in a consistent and coordinated way by all Member States, leaving space for impunity, absence of prevention, insufficient provision of services, lack of appropriate support to women's NGOs, and unequal protection of women and girls depending of their country of residence. The 6Ps approach is now the agreed framework for developing an action on violence against women. An EU campaign must therefore inform member states about what the Ps refer to and how to implement them efficiently. The 6Ps are: Policy, Prevention, service Provision, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. The EU campaign should therefore **foster the EU Member States to commit to the struggle by setting national targets for each P** (data collection, adoption of the minimum standards of the Council of Europe, change in legislation, implementation of the indicators of the EU 2002 Presidency on violence against women, etc.).

In its decision for the Daphne III Programme, the EC makes it clear that "...the objectives of this Decision, namely to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States because of the need for an exchange of information at the Community level and for the Community-wide dissemination of good practices, and can be better achieved at Community level due to the need for a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach and by reason of the scale or impact of the programme..."

3b. The EU campaign, while raising awareness on violence against women, should **provide with concrete proposals for action and change**. This two-pronged approach is instrumental to deliver a relevant message and provoke societal change. Raising awareness makes sense when people get information about what to do and where/who to turn to. Therefore, the EU action must deliver various awareness raising tools depending on the target group addressed. Such tools must also be designed so as to address all members of a target group, by **taking into account the barriers that some people might face** due to age, disability, migration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, ethnic origin, economic status (especially in times of crisis), housing status, etc.

Examples:

- Victims or potential victims should be informed of their rights and get information about existing hotlines, counselling services, women's organisations, so that they know who to turn too.
- Professionals (police, justice, education, social workers, etc.) should be informed of the legal framework for violence against women so that it doesn't remain unpunished.
- Private companies should be alerted on the scope of sexual harassment at work and fostered to develop measures and services for women victims.
- Awareness raising action at school/university should inform on the system of patriarchy and alert on the sexualisation of young girls, while providing concrete contacts for help.

4. The EU campaign should be designed and implemented as **a long-term action**, because attitudes that normalise and excuse violence against women are widespread. Preventing violence against women is about changing a whole set of mentalities, based on patriarchal representations and functioning, anchored in our history and culture. With a long-term action, the EU would prove that it is committed to eradicate violence against women. An effective and sustainable prevention strategy must involve all relevant actors **in a coordinated and holistic approach**, supported by a strong political will to make things change. In order to coordinate such action and allow for a long-term consistence, the EU should **appoint an EU Coordinator to end violence against women and girls**.

The EU Coordinator to end violence against women and girls should play the same role as the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator:

“The Anti-Trafficking Coordinator will improve coordination and coherence between EU institutions, EU agencies, Member States, third countries and international actors. She will help elaborate existing and new EU policies relevant to the fight against trafficking and provide overall strategic policy orientation for the EU’s external policy in this field.” (Extract from the EC press release of 14 December 2010)

5. The EU campaign must be **supported by an additional, specific and sustainable funding**, demonstrating the genuine political will of the European Commission to play a supportive role in the area of violence against women. This action must be seen as a complementary initiative to the Daphne Programme, and cannot in any way replace the Daphne Programme, which should be continued and supported with sustainable and substantial funding. Given the scale of the costs of such violence to women, to society and to the public purse, it is clear that the EU cannot afford to not invest in preventing violence against women and girls. The EU campaign must also provide with **financial and other support to awareness raising activities at national level**, for example by providing translation of successful material in all EU languages or developing specific tools at national level. In order to be coordinated and holistic, the EU action should also allow existing EU programmes to integrate the objective of preventing violence against women in their framework.

For example, the EU campaign should be accompanied by **concrete EU actions in the field of education, including through the use of EU programmes in this field**. As stated in the Council Conclusions of 8 March 2010 on the Eradication of violence against women in the EU: “Social competences, conflict management skills and preventive measures are important for the eradication of violence against women and should be part of education systems and life-long learning.” The EWL calls on the EU and its Member States to implement training and education to equality between women and men, women’s rights, sex education and diversity.

6. Besides campaign material to facilitate effective campaigning, the EU action should **develop a framework for elaboration and implementation**, with the setting up of national focal point, a task-force gathering communication professionals and NGOs to reflect on and elaborate communication tools, and **comprise a diversity of activities**, in order to reach out to its targets groups through different ways and to be implemented at all levels, with a concrete involvement of relevant partners. Such activities should be **evidence-based**, using existing European and national facts and figures, and fostering more data collection at all levels. **NGOs should be associated** at all stages of the elaboration and implementation of the campaign, and should be included in all activities, with adequate financial support.

- Such activities should be:**
- Training programmes to national authorities on the implementation of the campaign;
 - Involvement of role models such as famous women and men (sport, cinema, music, etc.);
 - Regular meetings of the national focal points;
 - Meetings of the task-force communication/NGOs to elaborate and then assess the implementation of the campaign;
 - A series of regional information and awareness raising seminars;
 - Activities involving national parliaments;
 - Activities involving the European Parliament;
 - Activities to promote the campaign at local and regional level;
 - Seminars for exchange of knowledge between professionals;
 - Awareness raising meetings with EU agencies;
 - Coordination between EIGE and FRA for research and data collection;
 - Publication of studies and material to expand the knowledge base in different areas of prevention and combating violence against women;
 - Publication of EC annual reports on the implementation and outcomes of the campaign;
 - An EU dedicated website (like the anti-trafficking website) with material, exchange of good practices, monitoring of MS actions, contacts of NGOs and services, etc.

7. The EU action should convey **positive and concrete messages**, leading people to action. While violence against women is a crime and shouldn’t remain unpunished, women should not be re-victimised in

awareness raising tools and should be empowered as survivors. Any material should avoid gendered stereotypes.

Example of underlining messages for campaign material:

- Violence against women is not inevitable
- Another world is possible, be part of it!
- Violence against women is archaic, old-fashion
- Women are survivors of violence and can find support to start a new life

Resources:

“Another world is possible. A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent violence against women and girls”, The End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW), 2011

We can prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG): ten areas of action and recommendations

1. Develop and implement a cross-governmental gender equality strategy
2. Ensure universal delivery of a ‘whole school approach’ to prevent violence against women and girls across the education system
3. Ensure funding for specialist VAWG services to deliver prevention interventions
4. Invest in research, monitoring and evaluation of prevention interventions
5. Produce long-term, targeted and evidence-based public awareness campaigns
6. Facilitate and fund community mobilisation to challenge VAWG
7. Promote leadership at all levels to champion gender equality
8. Tackle the sexualisation of women and girls in media and popular culture
9. Commission the voluntary VAWG sector to deliver quality training on violence against women and girls to a range of agencies as part of vocational qualifications and ongoing professional development
10. Target interventions to ensure prevention of violence against women and girls addresses intersections of gender with other social inequalities such as race, disability, socio-economic status, age, sexuality and gender identity

“Innovative legal measures addressing violence against women: new strategies and practices in Europe”, Carol Hagemann-White, in Law&Gender, December 2009, p.11-21