



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
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# CONTRIBUTION

July 2010

## EWL contribution to the JLS consultation on an EU Strategy to combat all forms of male violence against women

Prepared by the European Women's Lobby Centre on Violence against Women

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) welcomes the European Commission's initiative to carry out a consultation on a future EU strategy on combating violence against women. The EWL has been calling for years on the European institutions to initiate concrete action at European level to end male violence against women as the main obstacle to equality. The different measures delivered by the European Union over the last five years on different forms of male violence against women – legislation (on trafficking especially), reports, resolutions and other initiatives – prove that violence against women is an issue of concern at EU level, but the issue has been tackled in a fragmented way and time and political will seems now ripe for the formulation of a coherent EU strategy. Actions until now have indeed lacked the necessary vision, strategy and clear political commitment to eradicate all forms of male violence against women. **An EU Strategy would ensure a coherent and comprehensive EU action to eradicate all forms of male violence against women and ensure a uniform protection of women's human rights throughout the EU.**

### 1. Challenges

#### 1.1. What are, in your view, the main challenges (medium and long term) that a new strategy for combating violence against women should address?

Male violence against women remains the most fundamental and globally widespread violation of women's human rights. When including all forms of male violence against women, 45% of all women in Europe have been subjected to and suffered from men's violence.<sup>1</sup> Between 40 and 50 per cent of women in the European Union report some form of sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that every fifth woman in Europe has been subjected to male domestic violence, which remains a major cause of death amongst women.<sup>3</sup>

Male violence against women causes physical damage including miscarriages, broken limbs, and cuts and bruises. Thousands of women are killed every year by partners or ex-partners. Sexual offences bring the risk of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and forced pregnancies. Male violence causes psychological damage and can lead to drug or alcohol dependency as a means of coping. Women who experience domestic violence sometimes lose their job due to absence from work. Violence against women has serious impact on children. Being subjected to violence can increase women and girls' exposure to repeat victimisation, and reduce their resources for coping and responding to it.

Male violence against women impacts on the whole society. Indeed, it is estimated that the total annual cost of domestic violence in the 27 Member States of the EU could be as high as 16 billion Euros, amounting to 1 million Euros every half hour,<sup>4</sup> whereas the annual budgets of EU Member States for prevention programmes of male violence are 1000 times less.

Despite the extreme gravity of this phenomenon, political responses and resources allocated to this issue have been piecemeal, unequal and mostly inadequate at both national and European level.

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe, 2009

<sup>2</sup> EC, 1998

<sup>3</sup> EWL, *Unveiling the hidden data on domestic violence in the EU*, 1999

<sup>4</sup> Psytel, 2006 *Daphne Project on the cost of domestic violence in Europe*



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

## **Male violence against women remains invisible, underestimated, and even trivialised in our societies.**

The lack of data, both at European and some national levels, demonstrates the absence of political will to concretely address violence against women. This perpetuates the invisibility of some forms of violence against women and the underestimation of prevalence as a structural phenomenon. The EWL and its members have also witnessed a worrying trend aiming at de-politising the issue of male violence against women, through public policies tackling domestic violence without consideration of the peculiarity and prevalence of male domestic violence against women. This is reinforced by a strong trivialisation of some forms of male violence against women, such as sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of women and girls. EWL members have alerted on the 'pornification' of the public sphere, where degrading images of women referring to the pornographic imaginary are used in advertising and media, therefore trivialising women's accessibility to men and allowing for the tolerance of the prostitution of women and girls. This phenomenon makes it very difficult to raise awareness on the different forms of male violence against women and to lead to a political agenda where all forms of male violence against women are tackled, linked to discriminatory norms and behaviours.

## **Women are not equally protected against male violence against women in the EU.**

Male violence against women is prevalent in all EU Member States, yet tackled in widely differing ways in the EU, ranging from an absence of its recognition as a fundamental violation of women's human rights, to a broad policy framework based on a feminist analysis of gender power relations in our societies. This has strong consequences on the ability of women to resist and survive male violence. An overview of the very different protection systems for women victims of male violence developed by the EU Member States demonstrates how much women are unequally treated when it comes to being protected from male violence in Europe (be it in terms of information on, access to and provision of shelters, support services and rights, protection orders, help lines, rape crisis centres, etc.). EWL members have also alerted on the persistence of impunity in many Member States, leaving perpetrators without prosecution and therefore women victims without support and proper recognition by the judicial system.

## **Women experience male violence in very diverse ways.**

Women are not a homogenous group; they have a diversity of needs which have to be taken into account when protecting them from male violence. For example, women with mental health problems and learning disabilities are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence - and yet, these groups are least likely to see the perpetrator brought to justice. Migrant women might face additional legislative barriers to accessing protection such as the denial of access to shelters or a legal status attached to their spouse or employer; the situation is even worse for undocumented women who might face deportation when reporting facts of male violence. Girls and women with a migrant background might also experience particular forms of violence, such as forced marriage, female genital/sexual mutilation and crimes in the name of honour. Lesbian and bisexual women face targeted sexual harassment and abuse, and may often receive an inappropriate response from authorities. Transgender women are particularly vulnerable to violence, especially in public space and in street prostitution. Girls and young women are more likely to experience sexual violence; and older women are more likely to be abused by carers than older men. Women with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic violence or forced sterilisation or abortion. Women with fewer economic resources are often constrained from escaping violent environments because they are unable to afford alternative accommodation or support themselves independently.

## **Women and girls are at greater risk of male violence in recession times.**

A recent EWL/Oxfam study<sup>5</sup> shows that economic recession puts pressure on families and create conditions associated with increased domestic/intimate relationship violence, increased trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, and a rise in prostitution and attacks on prostitutes. Women experiencing male violence should

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<sup>5</sup> 'Women's poverty and social exclusion in the European Union at a time of recession. An invisible crisis?', Oxfam International / European Women's Lobby, a GenderWorks Paper, 2010



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

therefore be supported more strongly, which implies resourced public services and support to mainstream services such as health, employment, housing and education, instead of recovery measures which often lead to less State intervention and support to public services and NGOs.

## 1.2. What, in your opinion, are the main causes of violence against women and how should they be addressed?

**Male violence against women is a structural violation of women's human rights** and is also recognised as such by international human rights instruments. The General Recommendation No. 19 of the CEDAW Committee states that *"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"*. The EWL has chosen to use the expression "male violence against women" which brings into light the social dimension of violent acts perpetrated by men against women and supported by social norms and stereotypes. Male violence against women is a structural historical phenomenon arising from our patriarchal societies, where the domination of men over women has been naturalised in all areas of public and private life. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995), which has been endorsed by all EU Member States, states that *"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"*.

As well as the direct impacts on individuals and the aggregate costs to society, male violence against women shapes the structure of women's place in society; their health, access to employment and education, integration into social and cultural activities, economic independence, participation in public and political life, and relations with men. As such, male violence against women is a crosscutting issue that is relevant to a range of policy fields and national or international institutions, and so a holistic and coordinated approach is needed. **The EWL advocates for an EU Strategy comprising a comprehensive policy framework which would mainstream male violence against women in all policy areas.**

The fight against all forms of **violence against women has to be intrinsically linked to the EU commitment to achieve gender equality and promote women's rights**, a fundamental and founding value of the EU, as stated in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union<sup>6</sup> and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU<sup>7</sup>.

**The EWL strongly believes that the EU Strategy on eradicating all forms of male violence against women should be consistent with all EU gender equality instruments, especially the forthcoming new strategy on gender equality.** As the Strategy should be endorsed by the Council of the EU, EU Member States play a key role in ensuring synergies in the implementation of the right to gender equality in the EU. As previously highlighted by the EWL, stronger future EU Strategic Action Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men between women and men applying to a wide range of areas with concrete commitments and measures and strong accountability mechanisms, as well as adequate and increased resources should also work towards achieving equality between women and men and the full enjoyment of women's rights.<sup>8</sup> This long term vision would include the eradication of all forms of male violence against women as a key priority and as recommended by the Council in its Conclusions on the Eradication of violence against women in the EU (8 March 2010).

<sup>6</sup> "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail." (Art 2 TEU)

<sup>7</sup> the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU states that 'Equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas' (art. 23).

<sup>8</sup> See the full EWL contribution on

[http://www.womenlobby.org/SiteResources/data/MediaArchive/policies/Gender%20equality%20legislation/2009/EWL\\_CONTRIBUTION\\_CONSULTATION\\_FUTURE\\_ROADMAP\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.womenlobby.org/SiteResources/data/MediaArchive/policies/Gender%20equality%20legislation/2009/EWL_CONTRIBUTION_CONSULTATION_FUTURE_ROADMAP_FINAL.pdf)



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

## 2. Content of an EU strategy to combat violence against women

### 2.1. What should the general and specific objectives of the strategy be?

**The EWL believes that an EU strategy to combat violence against women should aim at eradicating all forms of male violence against women by acknowledging the structural nature of such violence in our societies, and developing a comprehensive definition of male violence against women.**

In its Conclusions on improving prevention to tackle violence against women and care to its victims within the scope of law enforcement (26 April 2010), the Council of the EU “urges that the problem of violence against women be tackled from a comprehensive perspective. It should cover the study of the causes and effects of such crimes, the exchange of information and good practices, prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution, punitive measures, the protection of victims, including legal aid and other assistance and redress for damages suffered.”

The EWL stresses that the EU Strategy should take action on all fronts (prevention, protection, prosecution, provision) and address all facets of male violence against women, with the aim of leaving no girl or woman behind. It should also ensure that all sectors of government and society play their part and that EU and national policies take a gendered approach so that they further equality and the human rights of women, through both specific measures for the promotion of women’s rights and gender mainstreaming.

**In terms of specific political objectives, the EU Strategy should aim at:**

- **Preventing male violence by raising awareness on the issue and influencing social attitudes and behaviour**, through concrete actions in the field of formal and informal education and training, the development of raising-awareness campaigns, the training of public services and professionals, the establishment of self-regulation codes in the media sector;
- **Supporting and protecting all women and girls, recognising their diversity**, by establishing sufficient and easily accessible information and advisory services, ensuring coordination between the various institutions and bodies involved in assisting and caring for victims/survivors, training all professionals to gender equality and women’s human rights;
- **Addressing the prosecution of perpetrators**, by implementing the due diligence principle, emphasising on the crucial need to hold perpetrators accountable for their violence, ensuring access to justice and remedies for all women ;
- **Providing services to victims/survivors**, by encouraging Member States to set up national and local helplines, accessible and appropriate shelters, rape crisis centres, health and legal services, economic security, and setting up the highest standards of such service provision.

### 2.2. What specific actions should the strategy include?

The strategy should include a wide range of actions, going from legally-binding instruments to awareness-arising activities. The EWL stresses that any action undertaken under the EU Strategy should be allocated sufficient and sustainable human and financial resources. All these actions should be developed at all relevant political levels, including EU and national levels, and the strategy should set the roles and responsibilities of each level to ensure its effective implementation.

#### - **A European Action Plan**

The EU strategy should include a European Action Plan with objectives and timetables for the eradication of all forms of violence against women. The strategy should call on Member States to ensure and compose their national



action plans. The EU Action Plan should create concrete targets and instruments to reach its objectives. Each objective and target should be accompanied by sufficient and sustainable human and financial resources. The EU Action Plan should include an annual reporting and monitoring mechanism to ensure its implementation. It should include internal coordination mechanisms and objectives such as training targets for all EU personnel (including MEPs), and bodies carrying out EU external activities (such as ESPD missions).

- **Legal instruments, including a European Directive on all forms of male violence against women**

Legal instruments should be at the core of the EU Strategy, to ensure that it becomes an obligation of the Member States. Legally-binding instruments can offer effective drivers to comprehensively address male violence against women at EU level and to enforce fundamental rights. The EU strategy should work towards a European Directive to be delivered as a key legally-binding instrument to address all forms of violence against women. A Directive would ensure that all Member States develop policies based on the same definition and that all victims can claim equal protection and support in the European Union.

- **Coherence in internal and external policy**

As stated in the Council conclusions of 8 March 2010 ("Coherence and coordination should be ensured between the EU's internal and external policy on violence against women"), it is crucial that the EU Strategy also concerns the EU external action, including promoting the universal protection of women's human rights in EU external measures such as all EU development instruments, ESDP missions, cooperation agreements, and aid programmes, and addressing the issue of women, peace and security and in particular male violence against women in conflict.

- **Data collection, research and policy development**

Knowledge about the scope, nature and consequences of the different forms of violence against women is a fundamental prerequisite for targeting such violence. Data collection needs to be done based on an EU definition of violence against women, and on an agreed common set of indicators aiming at ensuring a consistent and harmonised collection of data measuring the extent and prevalence of all forms of violence against women in the EU and each Member State. In order to inform effective policy development that meets the needs of all victims, the research should produce highly disaggregated statistics on: the link between victim and perpetrator, the age of both parties, the type of violence and location; if the victim has a disability or suffers from one as a result of violence; sexual orientation, gender identity, social class, ethnicity and nationality of the victim and perpetrator; and other salient characteristics. Measuring the impact on the effectiveness of policies and the implementation of commitments should also be part of the data collection<sup>9</sup> as well as the economic and social costs of violence against women. Mechanisms of coordination and exchange of information and good practices between member states, and with civil society, should be established.

- **A European Year on the eradication of all forms of violence against women**

A European Year on violence against women should be established for 2013. The European Parliament issued a written declaration demanding such Year in April 2009 and MEPs are currently mobilizing to issue a new written declaration asking the European Commission to establish a European Year on the eradication of all forms of male violence against women. The European Year would renew impetus to the delivery of the strategy, and would provide a check point to examine evidence and assess progress. All male Commissioners could be asked to express their commitment to end violence against women by joining the UN network of men leaders to combat violence against women. Such political stands (both collective and individual) are very important in setting the tone for delivery and implementation of the strategy.

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<sup>9</sup> The EWL has developed a set of indicators to measure progress in combating violence against women. See: *Towards a Common Framework to Monitor Progress in Combating Violence against Women* (2001)



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

## - Awareness raising and education activities

The EU strategy should provide with EU-wide campaigns and encourage member states to develop national campaigns on all forms of male violence against women. It should also include concrete EU and national actions in the field of education and training<sup>10</sup>. This should apply throughout formal and informal education and in all levels of the education system, and should include conflict management skills, gender equality, women's rights, sex education and diversity, gender stereotypes including stereotypes on masculinity.

## - Support to civil society

The EU Strategy should include concrete support to women's NGOs working with women victims/survivors of male violence.<sup>11</sup> This should include consolidating the existing Daphne programme by ensuring its continuation after 2013, providing additional sustainable and substantial resources and dedicating more funding to actions aiming at eradicating all forms of violence against women, recognising the gender dimension in the two other target groups (namely children and youth). Alternatively the EU should dedicate a new strong programme specifically on this issue. It should also provide for CSOs to get funding to work on violence against women through other EU programmes.

### 2.3. What thematic priorities, if any, should the strategy address?

Here are a set of thematic priorities identified by the EWL and its members and which the strategy could address:

- **The trivialisation of male violence against women:** the strategy should make male violence against women visible and warn everyone, especially young people, about the pornification of the public space and the trivialisation of pornography and prostitution.
- **Holding men accountable:** the strategy should encourage member states to prevent men and boys from perpetrating violence against women and girls and could develop education/training/awareness-raising activities both at EU and national level, with the aim to involve men in the prevention of violence against women and creating solidarity between women and men towards a Europe free from all forms of male violence against women and girls.
- **Women's economic and legal independence:** the strategy should stress on the responsibility of the EU and its member states to create the conditions where the victims are no longer economically or legally (including immigration and marital status) dependent on the perpetrators of violence, taking into account more vulnerable/marginalised groups of women.
- **Ensuring the protection from male violence against women of all third country nationals residing in the EU, independent of their legal status:** the EU strategy should ensure the rights of asylum seeking women in their access to the asylum determination processes and the recognition of the gender-specific nature of persecution, on the basis of the UNHCR Gender Guidelines on International Protection and on the UNHCR's guidance note on refugee claims relating to sexual orientation and gender identity<sup>12</sup>; the EU strategy should ensure that immigration legislation, including on family reunion and labour migration, enable third country national women, independent of their legal status, to be protected in case of violence against women.
- **Stop impunity:** the strategy should address the lack of justice done for women victims of male violence and should therefore foster the judicial system to hold perpetrators accountable.

<sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> As stated in the Council Conclusions of 8 March 2010 on the Eradication of violence against women in the EU: "Civil society, in particular, NGOs, women's associations and where appropriate, other public and private voluntary organizations concerned with the issue of violence against women, play an important role in the effort to combat all forms of violence against women."

<sup>12</sup> (2008) <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/48abd5660.pdf>



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

## 3. Complementarities and synergies

3.1. How can complementarities and synergies between the Commission's initiatives and: actions by Member States, processes in Europe (such as the Council of Europe's future Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) and internationally, actions by civil society, be achieved?

The EWL believes that the **EU Commission and in particular the Commissioner in charge of gender equality and women's rights** should play a key role to ensure complementarities and synergies, by facilitating exchange of information and communication between all relevant involved EU bodies, and informing the EU institutions and Member States of interesting processes and actions in place. She should take the lead on the issue at EU level, closely working with all EU Commissioners and ensuring the implementation of the Women's Charter with regards its point 4 'Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence'. She should organise an annual meeting with all Commissioners on the issue of violence against women. She should liaise with other international Human rights organisations and monitoring bodies such as the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women or the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. The EWL stresses on the crucial need for the EU Strategy to **build on international human rights standards and instruments**, to ensure the best synergy between EU action and international processes. The EU Strategy should also promote the highest standards existing in Europe and build on the **best national and local practices** identified, and provide for exchange of information between member states to ensure complementarities and synergies.

Synergies should also be ensured with the future **Council of Europe Convention** on violence against women. The draft of the Convention contains a provision allowing the EU to become a party to it: there are clear areas of communitarian competence in the Convention. If the EU were to become a party to the Council of Europe Convention, the areas where the EU has community competence could become community law for all the EU Member States. The best way to ensure synergy between the Council of Europe process and the EU process would be to **give negotiation mandate to the EC representatives attending the negotiation meetings in Strasbourg**, so that the voice of the EU can be heard and taken into account.

3.2. How can Member States authorities, relevant international bodies and civil society organisations working on violence against women be involved in the proposed strategy to combat violence against women?

The best way to involve the EU member states would be to **have the Council of the EU endorse the EU strategy**. This would then lead to a commitment by all member states to implement the strategy, the respect of annual progress reporting mechanisms, the commitment to implement all aspects and actions of the strategy, including the European Year and the EU Observatory on violence against women.

**Civil society organisations, and especially women's NGOs, should be involved at all stages of the EU strategy.** The annual progress reporting processes, both from the EU and the member states, should consider women's NGOs' shadow reports or contributions on violence against women. The Fundamental Rights Agency, through its systematic consultation of NGOs, can also support coordination and involvement of civil society. The European Institute for Gender Equality should also include the issue in its work programme and different activities (research, data collection, awareness raising, information dissemination, etc.) and consult with civil society organisations. The European Observatory should systematically cooperate with NGOs, especially with the EWL European Observatory on Violence against Women, which comprises experts from 30 countries with extensive knowledge of violence against women and representing civil society organisations working on the issue all over Europe.



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

## 4. Evaluation and monitoring

### 4.1. What monitoring mechanism should be put in place to assess the progress and effectiveness of the strategy?

The EWL believes that the EU Strategy should comprise a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, with adequate human and financial resources. The impact of the strategy should be monitored and evaluated regularly through robust evidence gathering and analysis, and amended or extended as necessary. Evaluation/monitoring reports should include progress measuring of the implementation of the strategy, as well as quantitative targets and data and qualitative aspects.

The European Commission should require an annual progress report from all Member States, in relation to the fulfilment of agreed targets. It should also deliver an annual report on the progress in the implementation of the EU Strategy on the eradication of male violence against women, monitoring all aspects of the EU Strategy, including implementation both at EU and national level, involvement of other EU bodies (such as the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Institute for Gender Equality) and mainstreaming of the issue of male violence into the portfolios of all EU Commissioners. Such report should include information on the fulfilment of targets and benchmarks defined in the European Action Plan and analysis of obstacles and good practices. The European Commission should require from the EU Observatory the production of monitoring data and analysis to evaluate the impact of the strategy. A study should be carried out every 5 years to assess strategic progress. Monitoring should be complementary to the work of the Council of Europe, the CEDAW Committee, the UN Special Rapporteur on VAW and other Conventions or institutions.

The **European Parliament** should hold an annual debate involving main stakeholders, including women's NGOs, and deliver an annual report on the implementation of the strategy.

**EU Member States** should produce annual progress report on the implementation of the EU Strategy at national level, and appoint national rapporteurs or gender focal points to work on the issue of male violence against women. They should meet annually to discuss the implementation of national action plans and EU legally-binding instruments.

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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 27 EU Member States and the three candidate countries, as well as to 21 European-wide organisations, representing a total of more than 2500 associations.

Male violence against women is a core priority of EWL policy work. In this purpose, the EWL has set up a European Observatory on violence against women which brings together experts from 30 European countries with expertise knowledge of violence against women. The work of the EWL European Observatory is facilitated and promoted by the EWL Centre on violence against women, the operational branch of the European Women's Lobby dedicated to violence against women.



## Facts and figures on male violence against women in Europe

### Violence is a gendered problem

- 'In the UK, two women die each week at the hands of a partner or an ex-partner. 80,000 women experience rape or attempted rape. There are male victims, yes, but the truth is that this is a war against women because they are women.' (*Trevor Phillips, Chair Equality and Human Rights Commission, 26/11/07*).
- 'Over 99 percent of rape is perpetrated by men, but it's a women's issue?' (*Katz: Violence Against Women Is a Men's Issue, 2008*).

### The home: the most dangerous place

- In Ireland, 1 in 5 women is raped in marriage (*Statistic, Women Helpline Ireland, 2008*).
- In France, one woman is killed every three days by her partner (*Mission Égalité des Femmes et des Hommes, 2009*).
- In France, during 2007 and 2008, over one million acts of violence (including sexual 142,000) were committed within the family (*French National Observatory on Crime, 2009*).

### Living with fear

- 75.3% of adult women in Lithuania do not feel safe from the risk of assault by men in every day life. This fear deprives women of their ability to enjoy fundamental rights and violates their freedom to live their lives as they want (*Purvaneckienė: Violence against women: victim survey report, 1999*).

### Rape

- Reporting rates per 100,000 vary considerably across Europe from a low of less than three to 46.5. Only a tiny proportion of countries have matched increased reporting with parallel increases in prosecution and conviction. The majority of women reporting rape across Europe do not see justice done, and rising attrition rates make this more likely in 2009. This is the outcome of the continued influence of stereotypes of rape, rape victims and rapists at all stages of the legal process, and a failure to modernise investigation and prosecution practices. (*"Different systems, similar outcomes? Tracking attrition in reported rape cases in eleven countries", CWASU, European briefing, April 2009*).

### Sexual harassment in the work place

- 33% of women employed by the Finnish Parliament state that they have experienced sexual harassment in their workplace. In half of the harassment cases, the perpetrator was a Member of Parliament (*Finnish Parliament, European Industrial Relations Observatory Online*).
- Women experience sexual harassment throughout their lives. Between 40 and 50 per cent of women in the European Union reported some form of sexual harassment in the workplace (*United Nations Factsheet, 2006*).

### The costs of violence

- It is estimated that the total annual cost of domestic violence in the European Union could be as high as 16 billion euros in 2006, amounting to 33 euros per capita per annum, or 1 million euros every half hour (*Psytel, 2006 Daphne Project on the cost of domestic violence in Europe*).

### Violence against migrant women

- For migrant women, violence can be the reason they have chosen to leave their home country, or something they experience on the journey to, or on arrival in, their destination country. Institutional and structural racism may prevent police and judicial authorities from recognizing or taking seriously forms of racist and sexist violence which occur against migrant and refugee women in their societies (*Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network - Violence Against Migrant and Refugee Women, 2008*).



- The vulnerability of migrant women is aggravated by language barriers, discrimination, legal dependency on their partners (residence status) and enforced isolation (*P. Fagan: Migrant Women and Domestic Violence in Ireland, 2008*).

### Violation of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights

- If all women who desired it had access to modern contraceptive methods, 52 million unintended pregnancies would be prevented annually, which in turn would result in 23 million fewer unplanned births, 22 million fewer abortions, 142,000 fewer pregnancy related deaths, and 505,000 fewer children losing their mothers. Of the 500,000 annual maternal deaths worldwide, complications from unsafe abortion account for approximately 70,000, or 13 per cent, of all deaths. (*IPPF - International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2009*).

### Prostitution

- More than half of **UK** women in prostitution have been raped and/or seriously sexually assaulted at the hands of pimps and punters (*UK Home Office 2004*).
- Nine out of ten prostitutes surveyed would like to exit prostitution but feel unable to do so **in UK** (M. Farley et al, 2003).

### Trafficking in women

- The UN recently released a study which estimated that about 250,000 people are trafficked **in Europe** each year. The same study found that 79% of trafficking in human beings is for sexual exploitation and more than 80% of these victims are female (*UN Office on Drugs & Crime – Trafficking in Persons – Analysis on Europe, 2009*).

### Femicide

- Femicide has been defined as the murder of women because they are women. The number of femicides has continued to grow in Mexico and Central America since the 1990s, between January 2007 and July 2008 alone, 1,014 femicides were registered in Mexico, according to the National Citizen Observatory on Femicide (*Central America Women's Network, 2009*).
- 'The rise in femicide... results from permanent State impunity as regards persecuting perpetrators, and the social system that permits men to control women's bodies' (*Katherine Ronderos, 2009*).

### Violence against women in conflict

- 'Raping, sexually assaulting and mutilating, forcibly impregnating and infecting with HIV/AIDS the wives, daughters and mothers of the 'enemy' not only have terrible physical and psychological effects on the victims themselves, but are capable of disrupting, if not destroying, whole communities' (*Council of Europe Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men - Report, 2009*).
- Nearly 5,400 cases of rape were reported in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo in the first six months of 2009 (*United Nations, 2009*).

### Female genital mutilation

- More than 130 million girls have been subjected to female genital mutilation/cutting. The practice, most prevalent in Africa and some countries in the Middle East, is also prevalent among immigrant communities **in Europe** (*United Nations Factsheet, 2006*).

### Gender Identity

- Four out of ten women have experienced one or more homophobic incidents in the past 12 months and just over two thirds have experienced some form of homophobic/ transphobic abuse or assault in their lifetime. *Women's Experience of Homophobia and Transphobia, Survey Report, commissioned by the Metropolitan Police Service, Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate, September 2008*



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# CONTRIBUTION

## The European Women's Lobby: for an EU free of all forms of male violence against women

### EWL Charter of principles on male violence against women:

- Feminist perspective: male violence against women is a structural phenomenon, the cause of which is a direct result of gender inequality
- Women's rights are human rights: all forms of male violence against women are violations of women's human rights
- The autonomy and the empowerment of women: all actions undertaken by the EWL to combat male violence against women should work to achieve the autonomy and the empowerment for all women
- Prostitution, and the accompanying phenomenon of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, are serious forms of male violence against women and constitute a fundamental violation of women's human rights
- Recognition of diversity: differences among women must be taken into account when dealing with issues of male violence against women

Male violence against women is a core priority of the European Women's Lobby policy work. In this purpose, the EWL has set up a **European Observatory on violence against women** which brings together experts from 30 European countries with expertise knowledge of violence against women. The work of the EWL European Observatory is facilitated and promoted by the EWL Centre on violence against women, the operational branch of the European Women's Lobby dedicated to violence against women.

Through its national coordinations and experts, the EWL has contributed to the setting up of **7 EWL national observatories**: Ireland and Denmark (2002), Greece and France (2003), Finland (2004), Portugal and Poland (2009). These EWL observatories at national level share the same goal: be and independent critical voice for women's NGOs on combating all forms of male violence against women.

### In 2010, the work of the EWL and its Centre on violence will aim at:

- Ensuring visibility of the issue of male violence against women in Europe.
- Lobbying for and advocating the necessity for a European legislation on all forms of male violence against women, ensuring protection of women.
- Ensuring the adoption of a strong Council of Europe Convention on all forms of VAW, with the adoption of international standards and to prevent VAW, protect women and hold governments accountable.
- Increasing the visibility of the gender dimension of trafficking in Europe and its links with the sexual exploitation of women in the prostitutional system in order to ensure alternative solutions and support for women in prostitution and to promote policies focusing on the demand side.
- Ensuring visibility of the EWL Observatory and its experts, as well of NGOs working in combating all forms of male violence against women.
- Leading a campaign on the abolition of prostitution in Europe and raising awareness on the tolerance for the prostitutional system being a serious form of male violence against women.

### EWL deliverables on male violence against women, including sexual and reproductive health and rights:

- *EWL Motion on Prostitution and Trafficking* (1998)
- *Unveiling the hidden data on domestic violence in the EU* (1999)
- *EWL Motion on Make it a crime to buy women in prostitution and develop strong policies against pimping* (2001)
- *Towards a Common Framework to Monitor Progress in Combating Violence against Women* (2001)
- *EWL position paper on Women's sexual rights in Europe* (2005)
- *EWL position paper on Religion and Women's human rights* (2006)
- *The links between prostitution and sex trafficking: a briefing handbook* (2006, EWL-CATW)
- *Film 'Not for sale'* (2006, EWL-CATW)
- *Reality Check - When women's NGOs map policies and legislation on violence against women in Europe* (2007)
- *Working together – Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, Assistance and prevention* (2008, Nordic Baltic Project)