



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
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NEW EU law on combatting violence against women & domestic violence

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The EU institutions reached a provisional deal on the first-ever EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

This new law establishes definitions of criminal offences and penalties in the areas of sexual exploitation of women and children and computer crimes. It also defines the rights of all victims.



WHAT CHANGES? >

Violence against women as a crime

For the first time, the EU defines seven forms of violence against women as crimes:

- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- non-consensual sharing of intimate and manipulated material
- cyberstalking
- cyberharassment
- cyberflashing
- cyber incitement to hatred or violence



Victim protection and access to justice

The law contains measures to enhance the early identification of victims of VAW and DV and early intervention.

It obliges the Member States to create accessible and easy-to-use channels for reporting, including for victims of cyberviolence, and to adopt key protection mechanisms to ensure the safety of victims from immediate danger.



Attention and support

The law sets standards for comprehensive specialist support services for victims of VAW and DV like 24/7 helplines and shelters that are accessible to all women victims and their children.

It also obliges Member States to set up rape crisis centers to provide counselling and medical, psychological and trauma care, SRHR services to victims of sexual violence and rape, and specialist support for victims of FGM and sexual harassment at work.

Victims experiencing intersectional discrimination shall receive specific protection and support.



Victim Centered - Gender sensitive and Intersectional approach

The Directive proposes:

- a **victim centered approach**
- a **gender-sensitive perspective**

These are fundamental to ensure that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all victims are taken into consideration and that the root structural causes of male violence against women are addressed for protection and the prevention of violence.

The crucial role of women's organisations and women's specialist services is referenced.



Offence of Rape based on consent

Regretfully, Member States failed in their responsibilities by refusing to include a harmonised definition of rape based on lack of consent in this law.

However, the negotiating team of the European Parliament secured an article in the chapter on prevention that calls to address root causes and raise awareness on the fact that freely given consent is a key element in relationships.

The definitions of the offences of sexual harassment at the workplace and forced sterilisation were also excluded.



Next steps

Once the Directive is formally adopted, the EU Member States will have 3 years to align their national laws to ensure they meet minimum standards in the EU law.

The work also continues to ensure that the scope of the Directive is soon extended to address all forms of sexual and reproductive exploitation, including sexual violence and abuse.



THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Our fight for Europe where all women and girls can live safe from violence and harassment continues, both in Member States and at the EU level.

Help us win this battle by voting for feminist leaders in national and European elections!

We thank all EWL members, partners, decision-makers and citizens who helped bring about this historic victory for women's rights!



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