Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Report submitted by the European Union pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report)

Received by GREVIO on 24 November 2025

GREVIO/Inf(2025)20

Ref. Ares(2025)10186223 - 24/11/2025

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 19.11.2025
Ref.No.: ISC/2025/07693

BASELINE REPORT

Baseline Report by the European Union on measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the 'Istanbul Convention' or the 'Convention')

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I. Introduction

Context and background of the baseline evaluation procedure

Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental rights and founding values of the EU. **Violence against women and domestic violence** endanger those very values and rights, undermining women's and girls' rights to equality in all areas of life and hindering their equal participation in society and professional life. Violence against women and domestic violence are severe violations of human rights and a persisting manifestation of structural discrimination against women. Combating them remains a key priority for the EU and part of its action to protect EU's values and ensure that the Charter on Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter) is upheld[1].

The accession of the EU to the **Istanbul Convention** in 2023 demonstrated its strong commitment to combating violence against women and domestic violence. The EU confirmed its engagement in combating violence against women and domestic violence within the EU and beyond and reinforced its political initiatives and substantive legal framework in the area of criminal procedural law, which is particularly relevant for women and girls. The EU signed the Convention on 13 June 2017 and completed the accession process on 28 June 2023, bringing the Convention into force for the EU on 1 October 2023.

All the EU Member States have signed the Convention and 22 have ratified it[2]. The EU has acceded to the Convention with regard to matters related to the institutions and public administration of the Union[3] and matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement[4]. The EU and its Member States that are parties to the Convention are bound to implement the Convention in the areas of their respective competences and to abide by its monitoring process. At the time of the EU's accession, the Council, the Member States and the Commission agreed a Code of Conduct[5], and the EU submitted a Declaration of Competence to the Council of Europe together with the Union's instrument of approval[6]. In the areas of the EU's accession, the Convention has become an integral part of the Union legal order and is binding on the institutions and the EU Member States by virtue of Union law.

On 7 May 2024, the EU adopted the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence[7] (**the VAW Directive**), which builds on the Istanbul Convention and aims to implement the main sections of the Convention in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal

[1] Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 391-407.
[2] Status of ratifications on 14.5.2025: AT (2013); BE (2016); CY (2017); DE (2017); DK (2014); IE (2019); EL (2018); ES (2014); EE (2017) FI (2015); FR (2014); HR (2018); IT (2013); LU (2018); MT (2014); NL (2015); PL (2015); PT (2013); RO (2016); SI (2015); SV (2014), LV (2024).
[3] Council Decision (EU) 2023/1075.
[4] Council Decision (EU) 2023/1076.
[5] 2023/C 194/03 of 2.6.2023, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:42023Y0602(01).
[6] 2023/C 194/02 of 2.6.2023, available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32023C0602(01).
[7] Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence (OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/OJ).

matters. The VAW Directive complements existing EU legislation, policy measures and funding in that area. Matters relating to asylum and non-refoulement are also covered by the Union *acquis*, in particular the Procedure Regulation[8], the Qualification Regulation[9] and the Family Reunification Directive[10].

The **EU's institutions and public administration** are bound by the Convention within the scope of Article 336 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Considering Opinion 1/19 (Istanbul Convention) of the Court of Justice of the European Union (the Court of Justice) of 6 October 2021[11], this report will cover different categories of persons: EU **statutory staff** (i.e. those covered by the Staff Regulations of Officials (Staff Regulations) and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants (CEOS), laid down by Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68 of the Council of 29 February 1968[12]), EU **non-statutory staff** (persons directly or indirectly working for the EU public administration), as well as members of the public visiting the premises and buildings of its institutions, agencies and bodies (**visitors**). The Staff Regulations and the CEOS are applied by most EU institutions, bodies and agencies, except for those that have adopted their own rules[13].

In paragraph 305 of **Opinion 1/19** of 6 October 2021 on the Istanbul Convention, the Court of Justice confirmed that a significant part of the obligations of the Convention relating to the adoption of preventive and protection measures are, in essence, binding on the Union as regards the staff in its administration and as regards the members of the public visiting the premises and buildings of its institutions, agencies and bodies[14]. Moreover, in paragraph 307 of the same Opinion, the Court held that, as regards its public administration, the Union should not confine itself to establishing minimum requirements or supporting measures but should itself ensure that these obligations are fully satisfied. The VAW Directive also has an indirect impact on the obligations of the EU institutions as the EU institutions must, in principle, guarantee at least the same level of protection as that the EU imposes on Member States, especially where the rules laid down by the directive are to be considered the specific expression of fundamental EU values and of general principles of EU law, according to settled case law[15].

[8] Regulation 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU (OJ L, 2024/1348, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1348/oj).
[9] Directive 2024/1347 EU on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted (*OJ L, 2024/1347, 22.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1347/oj*).
[10] Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification (OJ L 251, 3.10.2003, p. 12, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/86/oj).
[11] Opinion of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 6 October 2021, *Opinion 1/19 – Istanbul Convention*, EU:C:2021:198.
[12] OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p. 1.
[13] The European Investment Bank, the European Central Bank, the European Defence Agency, the European Union Institution for Security Studies, and the European Union Satellite Centre have their own staff rules.
[14] Opinion of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 6 October 2021, *Opinion 1/19 – Istanbul Convention*, EU:C:2021:198, para 305.
[15] See judgment of 8 November 2012, *Commission* v *Strack*, T-268/11 P, EU:T:2012:588, paragraphs 42 to 44 and the case law cited, and the judgment of 11 September 2024, *TU v Parliament*, EU:T:/2024:614, paragraphs 109 to 111.

The independent Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)[16] initiated its **baseline evaluation procedure** of the EU's implementation of the Convention on 14 January 2025. GREVIO adapted the standard baseline evaluation questionnaire for the EU to account for the differences between the state parties and the EU as a supranational organisation. The **EU is required to submit an official report (the EU report)** of maximum 100 pages on legislative and other measures taken to give effect to the provisions in Chapters I to VII of the Convention by 28 November 2025.

This document contains the EU's replies to the questionnaire. The preparation was coordinated by the Commission, as the coordinating body in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention and as the designated contact point within the EU for this baseline evaluation, based on contributions from the EU institutions, agencies and bodies. Their involvement is governed by the principle of the institutional autonomy, in matters relating to their respective roles, meaning that each EU institution has a wide discretion to organise its departments to suit the responsibilities entrusted to it.

A. Article 1 - Purposes of the Convention

Reply on the implementation of Article 1 (a-e) of the Istanbul Convention

a. The purpose of the **VAW Directive**, which is the EU's main instrument to implement the Convention, is to provide a comprehensive framework to effectively **prevent** and **combat** violence against women and domestic violence throughout the EU. It does so by strengthening and introducing measures in relation to the following areas: the definition of certain criminal offences and penalties; the **protection** of victims and **access to justice**; victim support; data collection; **prevention**; and coordination and cooperation.

b. **Equality** is a core value of the Union and the promotion of equality between women and men is a task for the Union, in all its activities, in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 8 of the TFEU. Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter moreover safeguard the fundamental rights of equality between women and men and non-discrimination. In line with its Article 51(1), the Charter always applies to EU institutions, agencies and bodies, and to the EU Member States when they are implementing EU law. Article 10 TFEU stipulates the obligation to **combat discrimination** on several grounds, including sex, and Article 21 of the Charter prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex.

The pursuit of gender equality has become a cornerstone of the EU's justice, social and economic policies, targeting, among other things, gender inequalities in employment (including pay), in social security, and in access to goods and services[17]. At the same time, the EU has promoted better work-life balance and the equal representation of women in corporate decision-making, entrepreneurship and research[18]. The EU has also taken significant steps towards strengthening the care economy, and thereby promoted women's participation in the

[16] GREVIO - Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence
[17] Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978, Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004, Directive (EU) 2023/970 of 10 May 2023, Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 June 2006.
[18] Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of 20 June 2019, Directive (EU) 2022/2381 of 23 November 2022, Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of 28 April 2021.

labour market, by supporting children's access to quality early childhood education and care and by improving access to affordable and high-quality long-term care[19].

c. Combating violence against women and domestic violence is a key priority for the EU. The Commission set out **a number of actions** in this regard in its gender equality strategy 2020-2025, including accession to the Istanbul Convention itself and adoption of the VAW Directive proposal. This political priority was reaffirmed and strengthened with the adoption of the **roadmap on women's rights** in March 2025, which sets out principles for women's rights, including the right of every woman and girl to freedom from gender-based violence[20].

The EU has also allocated a significant amount of **funding** in support of its policies to combat violence against women and domestic violence. The 'Daphne' strand of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) has dedicated funding of almost EUR 200 million for measures tackling violence against women, domestic violence and violence against children and other vulnerable groups.

d. The EU promotes **international cooperation** to eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. The joint Communication by the Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, titled *EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - An Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women's Empowerment In EU External Action* **(GAP III),** places gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls firmly at the centre of the EU's external policy agenda, and underlines the fight against all forms of violence against women and girls as a key priority. In the framework of the Generation Equality Forum, the Commission is co-leading the Action Coalition on Gender-based Violence.

The EU also launched, together with the UN, the **Spotlight Initiative**[21] in 2017. With an initial investment of EUR 500 million, it represents an unprecedented global effort by the EU to invest in gender equality as a precondition of and driver for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Since 2023, this initiative has evolved into a multi-donor trust fund, and a new generation of Spotlight programmes is currently being rolled out building on lessons learned**.** Combating gender-based violence is a priority for the EU in most partner countries, including in humanitarian settings, and fragile contexts. The EU committed a total of EUR 184.4 million in funding to prevent and/or respond to gender-based violence at country and regional levels in 2023 and 2024[22].

e. The VAW Directive establishes an obligation for Member States to ensure effective coordination and **cooperation** among relevant authorities, agencies and bodies, including with **law enforcement** and non-governmental **organisations** (Article 40) and requires Member States to cooperate and hold regular consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs) (Article 41), to ensure an **integrated approach** to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence. The EU is also providing financial and technical **support** in this regard,

[19] Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030 2022/C 484/01, OJ C 484, 20.12.2022, Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on access to affordable high-quality long-term care, OJ (2022/C 476/01), available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:C:2022:476:FULL, OJ C 476, 15.12.2022, p. 1.
[20] A Roadmap for women's rights – Commission Communication, 0c3fe55d-9e4f-4377-9d14-93d03398b434_en.
[21] https://spotlightinitiative.org
[22] The data presents the sum of G1 and G2 commitments for actions allocated to OECD DAC CRS Purpose Code 15180 ('Ending violence against women and girls'). The data for 2024 is preliminary.

through providing operational funding or funding for projects for CSOs, as well as through facilitating dialogue between civil society and Member States.

B. Article 2 and Article 3 - Scope of the convention and definitions

In light of the scope of the convention set out in its Article 2, paragraph 1, ***the report submitted by the EU should focus on measures taken in relation to all forms of violence against women****,* ***including domestic violence****, which disproportionately affects women. The term 'violence against women' used throughout this questionnaire thus refers to all forms of violence against women criminalised (or, where applicable, otherwise sanctioned) under Chapter V of the convention, which are psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence, including rape, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion, forced sterilisation and sexual harassment. It also refers to domestic violence against women, which is defined as physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence which occurs within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim. For the purpose of the convention, the term 'women' includes girls under the age of 18.*

As provided for in Article 2, paragraph 2, Parties are required to pay particular attention to women victims of domestic violence, when applying provisions of the convention to all victims of domestic violence.

Reply on the implementation of Articles 2-3 of the Istanbul Convention

The term '**violence against women**' is defined in **the VAW Directive** (Article 2(a)). It encompasses the definition of '**gender-based violence against women'** in Article 3(d) of the Istanbul Convention and combines it with the definition of violence against women in Article 3(a) of the Convention as follows: 'violence against women' means all acts of gender-based violence directed against a woman or a girl because she is a woman or a girl or that affect women or girls disproportionately, that result in or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'.

Recital 10 explains that 'violence against women is a persisting manifestation of structural discrimination against women' (thereby reflecting the indication that this is a form of discrimination, as in Article 3(d) of the Convention), and that '[I]t is rooted in socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men' (thereby echoing the definition of 'gender' in Article 3(c) of the Convention). See also recital 9.

The **definition of 'domestic violence'** in Article 2(b) mirrors the corresponding definition in Article 3(b) of the Convention, adding however that it also covers instances of violence within a domestic unit that take place between individuals who do not share biological or family ties.

The **definition of 'victim'** in Article 2(c) reflects the corresponding definition in Article 3(e) of the Convention, with the addition of two elements: first, it clarifies that the gender of the victim has no bearing: ''victim' means any person, regardless of their gender, who has suffered harm directly caused by violence against women or domestic violence'; second it includes children who have suffered harm because they have witnessed domestic violence.

In addition, the main horizontal instrument on victims' rights – the Victims' Rights Directive[23] (VRD) – provides for a broad definition of '**victim**' (Article 2.1(a)). The objective of the VRD is to ensure that all victims of crime - including victims of violence against women and domestic violence - receive appropriate information, support and protection and are able to participate in criminal proceedings.

As regards the EU's **public administration,** the rights and obligations of **EU statutory staff** are set out in the Staff Regulations and the CEOS. Article 1d(1) of the Staff Regulations[24] clearly prohibits any kind of discrimination based on sex. Women, same as other staff, are protected against different forms of violence occurring in the workplace, notably by means of provisions addressing any action or behaviour which might reflect adversely upon the position of staff (Article 12 of the Staff Regulations[25]) and provisions prohibiting harassment (Article 12a of the Staff Regulations[26]). Article 12a covers both psychological and sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is treated as discrimination based on gender. The Commission's **new anti-harassment policy** foresees redress mechanisms to combat harassment in the world of work, such as the new informal procedure alongside with the updated formal procedure. In line with Article 24 of the Staff Regulations[27], the EU institutions, bodies and agencies applying the Staff Regulations assist statutory staff who are 'by reason of [their] position or duties' subject to threats or an attack. This includes instances of violence and harassment against women at the world of work, whether perpetrated by colleagues or third persons. Statutory staff may also lodge a complaint against a decision or where there has been failure to take a measure under Article 90 of the Staff Regulations[28]. **Non-statutory staff** and **visitors** are required to turn directly to the Commission's Disciplinary Office (IDOC) or to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) to make an allegation of harassment in line with their respective provisions[29],[30]. For these persons any protection would fall under other instruments such as the security rules[31].

The EU is [also] required to provide information on any legislative and other measures taken to secure the continued applicability of the convention in situations ***of armed conflict*** *(Article 2, paragraph 3).*

As a general principle, human rights instruments (such as the Istanbul Convention) continue to apply also in times of **armed conflict**, and they coexist with the provisions of international

[23] Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57).
[24] Applicable by analogy pursuant to Article 10(1) of the CEOS for temporary agents and Article 80(4) of the CEOS for contract agents.
[25] Applicable by analogy Article 11 of the CEOS for temporary agents and Article 81 of the CEOS for contract agents.
[26] Applicable by analogy Article 11 of the CEOS for temporary agents and Article 81 of the CEOS for contract agents
[27] Applicable by analogy Article 11 of the CEOS for temporary agents and Article 81 of the CEOS for contract agents
[28] Applicable by analogy Article 46 of the CEOS for temporary agents and Article 117 of the CEOS for contract agents.
[29] Commission Decision C(2019) 4231 of 12 June 2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings.
[30] REGULATION (EU, EURATOM) No 883/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999.
[31] Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission.

humanitarian law (IHL). EU law is applicable in various situations, including war, and it includes provisions to ensure the protection of the fundamental rights outlined in the Charter (see Article 52(1) on limitations). Article 25(7) of the **VAW Directive** states that Member States must aim to ensure that specialist support services, including support for victims of sexual violence, remain fully operational for victims in times of crises, such as health crises or other states of emergency.

The Commission proposed a revision of the VRD[32] in July 2023, which includes a proposal strengthening victims' access to support services in times of crises. The proposal is currently under negotiation by the co-legislators.

Article 4 – Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination

Throughout the preparation of its report, the EU is invited to bear in mind the general principles set out in Chapter I of the Convention, which apply to all substantive articles in Chapters II to VII.

- *It is a fundamental human right for everyone, particularly women, to live a life free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.*
- *The principle of equality between women and men must be embodied in the constitution or other appropriate legislation and effectively realised in practice.*
- *Discrimination against women must be prohibited, including through the use of sanctions, penalties, where appropriate.*
- *Laws and practices which discriminate against women must be abolished.*
- *The Convention must be implemented without discrimination on any grounds and the potential for, and effects of, multiple discrimination should be borne in mind.*
- *Special measures which are necessary to prevent and protect women from gender-based violence are not considered as discrimination.*

Reply on the implementation of Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention

Equality between women and men is a founding value enshrined in the Treaties and a fundamental right enshrined in the Charter (see above). Article 19 TFEU allows for the adoption of EU legislation to combat all forms of discrimination on the grounds listed therein, including on the basis of sex. In line with Article 153(1)(i) TFEU, the Union shall support and complement Member States' activities in promoting equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work. Article 157 TFEU further obliges Member State to ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied, and provides for the EU legislator to adopt measures to ensure the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.

In accordance with its Article 51(1), the Charter always applies to EU institutions, agencies and bodies, and to the EU Member States when they are implementing EU law. Principles 2

[32] Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, COM/2023/424 final, available at: EUR-Lex - 52023PC0424 - EN - EUR-Lex.

and 9 of the European Pillar of Social Rights[33] proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017 reaffirmed the principles of gender equality and work-life balance. At EU level, several directives[34] and recommendations[35] in the areas of gender equality and working conditions have played a major role in strengthening women's rights and fostering equality between women and men.

Violence against women and domestic violence can violate several of the **fundamental rights** enshrined in the Charter ranging from the right to life (Article 2) to the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 4), and other fundamental rights[36].

Article 21(1) of the Charter requires the EU and its Member States, when implementing EU law, to **prohibit any discrimination** based on any ground, including sex. Article 23 of the Charter and Article 157(4) TFEU, confirm that the principle of equality does not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex[37]. This is also enshrined in Article 1d(2) and (3) of the Staff Regulations.

C. Article 5 - Obligations of the Parties and due diligence

When drawing up its report on the basis of the present questionnaire, the EU must pay particular attention to its obligations to refrain from engaging in any act of violence covered by the Convention and to ensure that all those acting on its behalf conduct themselves in conformity with this obligation, as required by Article 5(1).

The report submitted by the EU should contain information on measures taken to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and provide reparation[38] for any acts of violence covered by the convention as required by Article 5(2).

This includes both the obligation of EU institutions, bodies and agencies and the obligation of state authorities, officials, agents, and other actors in EU member states when implementing EU law.

Reply on the implementation of Article 5 of the Istanbul Convention

When **implementing EU law**, Member States are obliged to respect the rights, observe the principles and promote the application of the Charter (Article 51(1) of the Charter – see answer to Article 4 above).

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[33] Interinstitutional Proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights, OJ C 428, 13.12.2017, p. 10, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017C1213%2801%29.

[34] Directives 2006/54/EC, 2010/41/EU, 2019/1158/EU, 2022/2041/EU, 2022/2381/EU, 2023/970/EU, 2024/1385/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 92/85/EEC and 79/7/EC.

[35] Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030 2022/C 484/01 (OJ C 484, 20.12.2022, p. 1) (available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H.1220(01)); Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on access to affordable high-quality long-term care 2022/C 476/01 (OJ C 476, 15.12.2022, p. 1) (available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.476.01.0001.01.ENG).

[36] For further information see the following factsheets: FS_Violence_Woman_ENG and FS_Domestic_violence_ENG

[37] Explanations relating to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, 2007/C 303/02, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2007_303_R.

[38] The term 'reparation' may encompass different forms of reparation under international human rights law such as restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantee of non-repetition (Explanatory Report, paragraph 60).

Moreover, the **VAW Directive** includes various provisions that aim to reduce the risk of state authorities or officials engaging in any act of violence covered by the Convention when handling cases of violence against women or domestic violence. This include the requirement for Member States to ensure that: training is provided or made available to officials likely to come into contact with victims (Article 36); law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities are provided with gender-sensitive guidelines (Article 21); healthcare and social service professionals are issued gender-sensitive guidelines and protocols on identifying and providing appropriate support to victims (Article 5(5)).

As to the EU's **public administration**, a significant part of the obligation to prevent and combat violence is binding on the EU as regards the staff in its administration as well as the members of the public visiting its premises and buildings[39]. This means that the EU's institutions, agencies and bodies must take adequate measures to prevent the staff in its administration and visitors from being subjected to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment at the workplace (see the reference to Article 40, below). In accordance with Article 51(1) of the Charter, the EU institutions, agencies and bodies, are bound by the Charter. This means they also have to respect the rights, observe the principles and promote the application of the Charter in accordance with their powers when implementing the Convention.

Article 6 – Gender-sensitive policies

The Parties must include a gender perspective in the implementation and the evaluation of the impact of the convention and implement policies promoting equality between women and men and the empowerment of women.

Reply on the implementation of Article 6 of the Istanbul Convention

The EU is under a Treaty obligation to implement **gender mainstreaming**. Article 8 TFEU requires the Union to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between women and men in all its activities. Under Article 10 TFEU, the Union must aim to combat discrimination on, among others, the grounds of sex in defining and implementing its policies and activities.

Since 2019**, the Commission** has strengthened its gender mainstreaming efforts with the creation of a **Task Force on Equality** to integrate an equality perspective, including gender considerations, into all policy areas. The Task Force consists of a network of representatives (equality coordinators) from all the Commission's Directorates-General (DGs), i.e. the policy departments of the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Since its inception, the Task Force on Equality has promoted consistent mainstreaming of equality grounds – including sex and gender – in policy initiatives and internal actions in all the DGs and EU policy areas, including for instance agriculture, space, digital, climate, transport, energy, financial affairs, maritime affairs and in the EU's external policies. The Task Force also highlighted and strengthened the synergies and complementarities between actions aimed at the staff in DGs and their policy actions, fostering an institutional culture of equality. As set out in the mission letter addressed to Hadja Lahbib by the President of the European

[39] Opinion of the Court 1/91; ECLI:EU:C:2021:198, point 305.

Commission[40], the European Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management is supported by the Task Force on Equality.

In line with Article 8 and 10 TFEU, the obligation to integrate a gender equality perspective at all stages of policymaking and in all areas has been underlined and reflected in several **Commission** documents. In this context, the revised Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox published in November 2021 (#Tool 29) provides guidance to Commission staff on the most important points to consider when assessing fundamental rights and the impact on equality in designing new legislation. The templates for calls for evidence include an explicit reference to equality under the 'likely impacts' section. To support equality mainstreaming efforts and build capacity within the Commission, the secretariat of the Task Force on Equality has developed a number of tools for staff: the **equality mainstreaming toolbox** explains why and how to mainstream equality when preparing, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating EU policies, regulatory measures and funding programmes. For Commission staff who would like to get a quick understanding of what equality mainstreaming is all about and how they should apply it, the Task Force secretariat has published a **series of guidance documents** on the intranet. The Task Force secretariat also provide regular training for Commission and EEAS staff on equality mainstreaming, including gender equality mainstreaming.

The Commission's **annual reports on gender equality in the EU** include a dedicated chapter on gender mainstreaming, providing information on how the Commission has integrated gender perspectives each year, including the internal dimension[41]. In **its humanitarian action**, the Commission integrates gender considerations to ensure that its programmes address the diverse needs of affected populations. Recognising that disasters impact women, men, girls, and boys differently, the Commission prioritises gender-sensitive programming to improve aid effectiveness and protect vulnerable groups from harm, including gender-based violence. In 2024, the EU funded EUR 34 million to prevent and address gender-based violence and EUR 13 million for the medical response to gender-based violence, as well as EUR 28 million for projects in reproductive health. Gender integration is essential for ensuring inclusive and effective responses, meeting the unique needs of all genders, and preventing the risks of sexual and gender-based violence.

The EU has also integrated and mainstreamed a gender perspective into its **budget**, both for **internal and external action**. The EU's budget covers several years and is adopted through the multiannual financial framework (MFF). The Commission developed its methodology to measure expenditure relating to gender equality at the programme level in the current MFF for 2021 to 2027. The methodology was used for the first time for all spending programmes for the 2021 financial year, in the context of the 2023 draft budget. In 2024, for reporting on the 2023 financial year, monitoring of gender expenditure was improved by including 'programme performance statements' for the gender-disaggregated data available for each programme. In line with the methodology, each of a programme's interventions may be awarded a gender score

[40] Mission Letter from the President of the Commission to Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner-designate for Preparedness and Crisis Management Commissioner-designate for Equality, 17 September 2024, available online: faaf33ff-c8c7-49a1-b01d-56681e11a5e6_en.

[41] See the Commission's annual reports 2021-2025 on gender equality in the EU: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/past-annual-reports-gender-equality_en; the latest European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, *2025 report on gender equality in the EU,* is available here: *https://commission.europa.eu/document/055fdbab-5786-425e-a072-652bf53d8fe4_en*.

(of 0, 0*, 1 or 2) based on its objectives[42]. In 2024, 19.5% of the EU budget (or EUR 38 billion[43]) contributed to promoting gender equality (scores 2 and 1), representing a significant increase from previous years (11% in 2023). This notable progress underscores the EU's firm commitment to integrating gender mainstreaming into the EU budget, ensuring that budget allocations actively support policies advancing gender equality. The 2024 results reflect the progress achieved by various programmes in terms of both implementation and reporting capacity, allowing the capture of the contribution of the EU budget to gender equality at a more granular level. In particular, the sustained reduction in 0* demonstrates the ongoing efforts to refine budget assessments and enhance gender-focused allocations. Over the **2021-2024 period**, a total of **12% of the EU budget** expenditure contributed to the promotion of gender (gender scores 1 and 2), amounting to a significant EUR 158.4 billion over these four years. At the same time, the share of EU budget under gender score 0* has steadily declined and now stands at just 5% for the four-year period. This reflects the effectiveness of the Commission's ongoing reassessment efforts, which have contributed to a more precise and clearer understanding of the EU budget support for gender equality. For the 2021-2024 period, 83% of allocations were assigned a score of 0, due to the systematic reassessment of 0* expenditure from 2021 to 2024. [44]

The Commission proposal for **MFF 2028-2034**[45], adopted on 16 July 2025, makes clear that financial support for CSOs will remain a priority for the next years. The proposed AgoraEU programme will merge and expand the current CERV and Creative Europe programmes, with an indicative budget of nearly €9 billion. It will support culture, media, and civil society through three strands—Culture, Media+, and CERV+—with simpler access for beneficiaries. AgoraEU will promote EU values, notably gender equality and women's empowerment. Within CERV+, the Daphne objective will address gender-based and domestic violence, protect and support victims, and advance EU implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

The **new EU financial regulation** published on 29 September 2024[46] should **be implemented taking into account the principle of gender equality**. In addition, all data collected in relation to the financial programmes' performance indicators should be gender-disaggregated, where appropriate[47]*ex ante* impact assessments for all relevant spending programmes duly consider the effects on gender equality from the start. impact assessments for all relevant spending programmes duly consider the effects on gender equality from the start.

GAP III requires further **gender mainstreaming across all EU external policies and sectors** and adopting a gender-transformative, rights-based and intersectional approach. GAP III stipulates that at least 85% of all new external actions must have gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a significant objective or as a principal objective by 2025. Furthermore, under the **Enlargement policy**, fundamental rights are considered as part of the

[42] Gender equality mainstreaming - European Commission, available at: commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/horizontal-priorities/gender-equality-mainstreaming_en.
[43] This figure is lower than the EUR 48 billion reported for 2023, mainly due to the phasing out of the Recovery and Resilience Facility commitments in 2024, which accounted for EUR 8.4 billion underscores 1 and 2 in 2023. While the total expenditure supporting gender equality is lower in 2024, the proportion of funding directed towards gender equality increased.
[44] Gender equality mainstreaming - European Commission
[45] For more information regarding the EU's proposal for the 2028-2034 MFF, see here.
[46] Financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast), available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/990fe2a6-8f52-11ef-a130-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.
[47] Article 33.3 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.

fundamental reforms that need to be addressed as a matter of priority. As such, candidate countries are expected to align with the EU *acquis* and to implement European standards, including as regards measures to promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence, underscoring that aspiring Member States must effectively address gender-based violence as part of their commitment to joining the European Union.

Through its financial assistance, including programmes implemented by the European Institute for Gender Equality, the EU helps candidate countries and potential candidates to increase their capacity to monitor and mainstream gender equality in national reforms. To measure more specifically how well gender and age are integrated into humanitarian efforts, the Commission utilises the **Gender-Age Marker**, which was introduced in 2014. This tool helps assess and improve the inclusion of gender sensitivity in EU-funded humanitarian actions. In 2024, 87% of actions funded by the humanitarian aid budget integrated gender and age considerations 'strongly' or 'to a certain extent'.

The Council of the European Union (the Council) regularly discusses issues related to gender equality and adopts sets of conclusions promoting measures to tackle the gender gap. The most recent conclusions on 'Advancing Gender Equality in the AI-Driven Digital Age: 6th horizontal review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the Member States and the EU institutions' were adopted on 19 June 2025[48]. In those conclusions, the Council called on the Commission and Member States to apply a dual approach as regards the achievement of the objectives set out in the Beijing Platform of Action. This dual approach involves a first track of targeted gender equality policies and measures and a second track whereby gender equality is mainstreamed in policies, programs and budgets to effectively reduce gender gaps in all domains.

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has created a working group on gender-responsive and inclusive auditing to explore the integration of a gender perspective into audit reports.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (**EIGE**) contributes to and strengthens the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming, in all EU policies and the resulting national policies. EIGE provides research, expert knowledge and data and develops methodological tools to provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in all EU and national policies by addressing gender inequalities in policies, services and public sector initiatives. To facilitate this process, and to achieve the EU's objectives to identify and assess gender impacts under the 'Better regulation' Framework, **EIGE** has created a step-by-step **toolkit** that provides practical know-how and support to assess gender impacts and implement gender-responsive evaluations within the EU evaluation framework. The toolkit provides concrete guidance on how to integrate a gender and intersecting inequalities perspective into each step of the evaluation cycle[49]. EIGE has also conducted studies on gender budgeting[50], on estimated costs of gender-based violence[51], and has provided hands-on technical support to key

[48] Council Conclusions on Advancing Gender Equality in the AI-Driven Digital Age: 6th horizontal review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the Member States and the EU institutions, available ad: pdf.
[49] Available here: https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-responsive-evaluation-sustainable-future-all-greena-step-step-toolkit.
[50] Gender Budgeting | European Institute for Gender Equality
[51] Costs of gender-based violence in the European Union | European Institute for Gender Equality

EU institutions. In 2025, EIGE established **a system for the regular monitoring** of the state of institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality in the EU and in the Member States, which includes an indicator on the commitment and use of gender mainstreaming[52]. EIGE's Gender Statistics Database contains data on the numbers of women and men in key decision-making positions across a number of different life domains. EIGE provides reliable statistics that are used to monitor the current situation and trends through time. The public administration domain includes statistics on women and men presiding the monitoring and auditing bodies and amongst the top two levels of senior civil servants at European and national level[53].

The EU's public administration fosters working environments that are free from violence, safe and inclusive. In **the Commission** and its **Executive Agencies,** the overarching goal of the diversity and inclusion policies is to foster a working environment that is diverse and inclusive in the broadest sense. This approach to diversity is based on the six grounds of discrimination defined by the treaties: sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. It is not limited to preventing discrimination, but also sees these grounds as contributors to diversity.

The Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO) of **the Commission** works in close collaboration with the Equality Task Force Secretariat. The DIO promotes equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the HR community and leads the mainstreaming into all HR policies and processes within the Commission. The DIO coordinates with similar bodies in other EU institutions and other stakeholders. The Commission adopted its first Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2017, which was then complemented by reports and updated action plans in 2018, 2019 and 2022. The Commission has since 2019 adopted a series of 'Union of Equality' communications, each containing clear internal commitments regarding diversity and inclusion. A key priority is to consolidate gender balance at management level and ensure safe and respectful work environment. With the adoption of its new anti-harassment Decision in 2023[54] the Commission launched a new policy to further prevent and combat psychological and sexual harassment, ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all. It comes with an easy-to-use guide for staff, an action plan on prevention and it introduces a new function: the Chief Confidential Counsellor (CCC). The new policy package updates the formal and informal redress mechanisms introduced with the previous framework, providing victims with streamlined and more accessible options for addressing harassment, and making the access to available procedures easier.

In the **General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (GSC)**, the Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO) coordinates the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The new strategy for 2030[55] aims to promote diversity and inclusion while ensuring respect and unity. It covers six diversity areas (gender, disability, LGBTI, ethnic diversity, socio-

[52] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/data-talks/eu-member-states-need-strengthen-institutional-mechanisms-promotion-gender-equality.
[53] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/wmidm.
[54] Commission Decision of 12.12.2023 on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment, and repealing Decision C(2006) 1624/3, C(2023) 8630 final, available at: https://www.era.europa.eu/system/files/2024-05/MB%20Decision%20n%C2%B0%20350%20-%20Annex%20-%20C_2023_8630_F1_COMMISSION_DECISION_EN_V6_P1_3034149.pdf?t=1716299982.
[55] Diversity and inclusion strategy 2030.

economic diversity, age) and acknowledges intersectionality. It combines targeted actions with longer-term integrated objectives. The DIO reports yearly on the implementation of the strategy. The GSC has also established an Action Plan for Gender Equality in Management, which lays down measures to achieve gender balance in management positions within 45% to 55% at the latest by the end of 2026. In 2021 the GSC adopted a new anti-harassment decision which strengthens the group of anti-harassment counsellors, provides for mandatory training for staff with people management responsibility, recognises the role of bystanders, and combines formal and informal procedures to support the persons involved. The three Council agencies (EDA, EU ISS and SatCen) broadly follow the same approach as the GSC and the Commission, in line with their administrative possibilities and size.

The European Parliament (EP) is committed to Gender Mainstreaming under Rule 249 of its Rules of Procedure. Under this rule, the Bureau[56] approves a gender action plan aimed at incorporating a gender perspective in all Parliament's activities, at all levels and all stages. The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) is in line with Annex VI of the Rules of Procedure responsible for gender mainstreaming in all policy sectors. Therefore, the FEMM Committee organises the work of the Gender Mainstreaming Network, consisting of Members responsible for gender mainstreaming in the work of each committee. The High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity (HLG), a working group[57] of the Bureau, ensures that the institution reflects the diversity of the European society, both in its administration and its political representation. This group also initiates and monitors strategic actions, such as roadmaps on gender equality or diversity, and maintains dialogue with internal diversity networks and external stakeholders. The Bureau adopts the action plans and the roadmaps, including for staff matters that are the framework for all Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) actions. All DGs implement these roadmaps and report back on progress to the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit (EIDU). The EIDU coordinates the implementation of D&I measures and exchanges best practices with all DGs and the political groups through a network of gender and diversity coordinators, as well as with similar bodies in other institutions and other stakeholders, including staff support groups.

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) fosters a culture of zero tolerance towards violence. In order for its staff to operate in an ethical, inclusive and safe working environment, it has put in place an internal comprehensive system. It includes, in particular, the Staff Code of Conduct; the internal policy on equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion; the policy on health and well-being at work and prevention of psychosocial risks and the policy on the dignity of the person, preventing and combating harassment. In addition to a dedicated department within the HR Directorate and a "parity referent", the Institution has set up a network of confidential counsellors and a Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities (COPEC), to examine all relevant issues and to establish suggestions and opinions regarding measures and actions that can be taken into consideration by the CJEU's administration. Besides, an interdepartmental working group on the Istanbul Convention was set up in February 2023. Its objective was to review the CJEU's internal system and assess it against the standards stemming from the principles and provisions of the Istanbul Convention. An action plan was created to align all actions and to organise additional informative and training actions for staff. In addition to its existing Medical and Social Service, the CJEU hired two part-time occupational psychologists in 2024. Their main activities (along with the social worker) are to

[56] The Bureau is composed of the President of the European Parliament, 14 Vice-Presidents, and 5 Quaestors.
[57] The working group is composed of 6 Vice- presidents and a quaestor.

support the institution and its staff in a variety of ways (workshops, discussion groups, conferences, individual or multi stakeholder interviews) and on a variety of work-specific themes (including adaptation to organisational change, prevention of certain psychosocial risks, etc.).

The ECA's D&I Policy for 2021-2025 aims to foster a diverse working environment and an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential. Implementation of the policy is led by the ECA D&I officer. The D&I officer collaborates with all ECA Directorates ensuring that diversity and inclusion are mainstreamed across the institution. The D&I officer also represents the ECA in the interinstitutional meetings of the D&I advisers. Within the D&I framework an ECA Member has taken on the role of ECA equality ambassador, with the aim of supporting and promoting all actions related to gender equality. The ECA D&I policy is structured around ten priorities, two of which specifically target gender balance among ECA leadership in audit teams and management. To support these goals, the D&I action plan sets measurable targets to advance gender equality. The action plan also addresses anti-harassment, proposing synergies with EIGE. It incorporates the work of the internal working group on dignity at work, which monitors the ECA's anti-harassment policy and recommends further actions and training.

At **the European Central Bank (ECB)**, a Diversity and Inclusion Adviser in the Directorate-General for Human Resources (DG-HR) promotes equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation and leads their mainstreaming into all ECB processes and staff policies. The ECB's approach to D&I is anchored in its D&I Strategic Intent. Since the year 2012 the ECB has a dedicated Gender strategy with a set of aspirational targets to reach gender balance. The binding rules around dignity at work at the ECB, as enshrined in the ECB staff rules, set out ways to address inappropriate behaviour, and include all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment. Informal and formal avenues exist to allow ECB staff members to address dignity at work issues and get adequate assistance where required. The ECB is currently reviewing its handling of dignity at work issues, with a view to improving accessibility and better implementing international best practices.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has had diversity and inclusion strategies in place since 2012. Its diversity, equity and inclusion EIB group approach has gender equity as one of its five priorities. Alongside a group-wide target to reach 40% women managers by end 2026, the group aims to continue leading the way on gender equity by a continuous review of policies. It ensures that managerial conversations and decisions do not differ based on gender, and provides an ongoing education and awareness raising for staff and managers on gender equity, gender-based violence and harassment. In addition, the EIB Group Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment and corresponding gender action plan further commit the EIB to uphold the rights of women and girls in its operations. The EIB is a signatory of the Joint Statement on Continuous Advancement of Standards to Prevent Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Exploitation and promotes zero tolerance for gender-based violence and harassment in its operations. In 2023, the EIB was assessed and audited on policies and practices, including with regard to policies on sexual harassment.

In 2022, **the European Economic and Social Committee** (the EESC) strengthened its policy on preventing and combating harassment by adopting a new decision concerning the procedures for preventing and dealing with both psychological and sexual harassment at work

within its general secretariat. Beyond combating harassment, this decision establishes both a robust network of trained confidential counsellors and a coordinator for this network. In 2023, the EESC also adopted its first D&I strategy for its general secretariat.

The Secretariat of the **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)** defined a Diversity & Inclusion strategy and action plan for 2022-2026, focusing, among others, on gender balance perspectives and the empowerment of women at work through equal representation at managerial level. Decision (No 108/2021) on protecting dignity at work, managing conflict and combatting harassment, ensures a safe and respectful workplace for all. The decision is currently being updated.

The European Ombudsman (EO) has a clear and comprehensive anti-harassment policy to prevent and combat all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment as gender-based discrimination. The policy is accompanied by implementing guidelines, which explain the policy's formal and informal procedures and their aims and provide detailed information about how to prevent harassment and what to do if you are a victim of harassment. Under the informal procedure, the staff member can consult the confidential counsellors or ask the conciliation committee to intervene. Alternatively, the staff member can request for assistance or for an administrative investigation under the formal procedure. The EO is also part of the interinstitutional diversity and inclusion group, which meets several times per year to discuss diversity and inclusion-related matters.

EU Executive Agencies, Decentralised Agencies and Joint Undertakings (Agencies and JUs) adhere to the policies of the Commission on non-discrimination. Under Article 110(2) of the Staff Regulations, implementing rules adopted by the Commission to give effect to these Staff Regulations apply by analogy to agencies (both decentralised and executives). However, if these rules are not suited to the specificities of agencies and joint undertakings, they can adopt model decisions that strictly adhere to the principles of the Commission's implementing rules but are tailored to fit their circumstances. For executive agencies, the Commission recently adopted the model decision on preventing and combating psychological and sexual harassment, and from 1 October 2025 the CCC is providing its services to their staff. For Decentralized Agencies, discussions on the model decision are still ongoing.

In addition, in 2021, the **Network of EU Agencies and Joint Undertakings** (EUAN) established a Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion (EUAN WG D&I). It promotes cooperation, shares information and good practices, and defines a harmonised position on Diversity and Inclusion topics. The working group has several areas of action including organising awareness-raising campaigns and delivering individual projects.

Significant progress has been made on the EUAN D&I Charter, with over 70% of its members adopting it. The goal is to encourage all Agencies and JUs to endorse and implement the Charter in the coming years. The involvement of Executive Directors, who sponsor and support various projects, was a key driver in increasing the visibility of these efforts and inspiring others to follow suit. Notable initiatives include the Gender Social Procurement Workshop and the Women Support Network (WSN), a platform for women in leadership positions with more than 250 staff members. The group continues to improve its internal and external

communication to make sure that all D&I activities within the EUAN and other satellite groups are aligned.

D. Bodies, agencies, institutions and organisations involved in the preparation of the report submitted by the Party in application of Article 68, paragraph 1

Please indicate which official body is responsible for co-ordinating the collection of information in response to this questionnaire and the preparation of the report.

Please also specify:

a. *which EU institutions, bodies and agencies contributed to the preparation of the report;*
b. *which other bodies, institutions or organisations were consulted when preparing the report (non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civil society actors, etc.).*

The Commission, as the EU's coordinating body and the designated contact point for the baseline evaluation process, has been responsible for distributing the questionnaire to the relevant institutions, bodies and agencies within the EU, coordinating their responses and submitting the consolidated version of the EU report to GREVIO. The Commission adopted a Communication to the other institutions on the baseline evaluation process outlining the monitoring process set by the Convention and the procedures the Commission intended to put in place to comply with it[58].

Annex A lists the EU institutions, agencies and bodies that have contributed to the preparation of the report or that have been consulted on it.

Recognising the valuable expertise of **CSOs**, particularly in relation to policies on violence against women and domestic violence, the Commission has created a dedicated CSO network to support the EU's implementation of the Convention. The Commission has kept this network informed throughout the evaluation process.

II. Integrated policies and data collection

*Please provide information on the adoption of comprehensive and co-ordinated **policies** on violence against women, the **financial resources** dedicated to the implementation of these policies, and **support of the work of international organisations**, states, NGOs and other civil society actors, in particular women's organisations, the establishment of **effective co-operation** with these organisations, as well as **data collection**.*

A. Article 7 – Comprehensive policies

*Please provide details of action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure adoption and implementation of **comprehensive policies** at the EU level and at the level of EU*

[58] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, the Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of Regions and the European Investment Bank on the baseline evaluation procedure of the European Union's implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), *COM(2025)172 of 10.4.2025, Available online: EUR-Lex - 52025DC0172 - EN - EUR-Lex.*

member states when implementing EU law to address violence against women, as referred to in Article 7. Please describe in particular:

1. *which forms of violence are covered;*
2. *the timeframe(s);*
3. *how the human rights of victims are placed at the centre of these policies;*
4. *how policies are co-ordinated to offer an effective holistic and comprehensive response;*
5. *progress made in their implementation.*

At the level of EU Member States, the **VAW Directive** transposes the requirements of Article 7 of the Convention in Article 38 ('Coordinated policies and coordinating body'), Article 39 ('National action plans for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence') and Article 40 'Multi-agency coordination and cooperation'.

Any **form of violence** falling under the definition of violence against women and domestic violence, as defined in Articles 2(a) and 2(b) of the Directive, is covered by these obligations. The VAW Directive defines certain criminal offences and penalties in the area of sexual exploitation of women and children and computer crimes, within the meaning of Article 83(1) TFEU. These are female genital mutilation (Art 3) and forced marriage (Art 4) as well as the most common forms of cyberviolence: non-consensual sharing of intimate images (Art 5), cyberstalking (Art 6), cyber harassment (Art 7) and cyber incitation to violence or hatred (Art 8). In addition, the Directive's provisions on protection and support for victims as well as their access to justice and measures of prevention apply with respect to all offences of violence against women and domestic violence that are criminalised under other EU legislation or national law.

As regards **the applicable timeframes**, the coordinated policies and mechanisms for multi-agency coordination and cooperation must be put in place by 14 June 2027, but Member States have until 14 June 2029 to adopt national action plans. The **transposition period** is still running. The Commission helps steer the timely and correct transposition of the VAW Directive by organising implementation workshops with Member States.

Recital 83 of the Directive explicitly indicates that state-wide comprehensive and coordinated policies should **'place the rights of the victims at the centre** of all measures'. This is reflected in various provisions of the Directive, e.g. the requirement that training given to judges and prosecutors should be human-rights based and victim-centred (Article 36(3)).

Policy **coordination** will be achieved through: (i) the creation of one (or more) official coordinating body or bodies; (ii) coordinated not only at central, but also at the regional or local level, where appropriate; (iii) the establishment of mechanisms to ensure effective coordination and cooperation among relevant authorities, agencies or bodies, support services, NGOs, social services, education and healthcare providers, social partners and other relevant organisations and entities, with the aim of protecting and supporting victims. These coordination and cooperation mechanisms will work, in particular, on the individual assessment of the protection and support needs of victims, the provision of protection and support measures, the drawing-up of guidelines for law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities and training activities for relevant professionals.

The EU has also put in place comprehensive **policies** to combat violence against women and domestic violence. On 7 March 2025, the Commission adopted the **roadmap for women's rights**[59]. Central to the roadmap is the 'Declaration of principles for a gender-equal society', which sets out a long-term vision to guide the EU's gender equality agenda in all aspects of society and the economy. The declaration is structured around eight key principles, with freedom from gender-based violence as Principle 1. The principle reaffirms that every woman and girl has the right to security and to be treated with dignity, both online and off-line, in public and private life. To achieve this, Principle 1 lays down the following objectives: preventing and combatting all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, femicide and technology-facilitated gender-based violence; preventing and combatting sexual violence, including rape, based on a lack of consent, and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage; making the digital environment a safe place for women and girls; preventing and combatting exposure of boys and girls to sexualised violence online and other harmful sexist digital content; preventing and combatting all forms of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict; preventing and combating all forms of sexual exploitation; and providing adequate, victim-centred support and protection to victims and ensuring their affective access to justice. The Commission invited all interested parties to endorse this declaration in the course of 2025. The upcoming Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030 will come with concrete actions contributing to the realisation of the Roadmap's principles and objectives.

The main strategic framework for the EU's work in this field is the **EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025**[60]. Combating violence against women is one of the three pillars of the strategy, which sets out a range of measures in this area. The Commission has developed the gender equality strategy monitoring portal to allow policymakers, researchers and stakeholders to assess progress in implementing the strategy's policy objectives, including in the area of gender-based violence[61]. As announced in the political guidelines, to strengthen the commitment to gender equality, the Commission will propose a new Gender Equality Strategy for post-2025. It will set out the Commission's plan to strengthen women's rights from across the board, including the fight against gender-based violence.

In June 2020, the Commission adopted the **first EU strategy on victims' rights** (2020-2025)[62]. The strategy deals with all victims of crime, but pays particular attention to the most vulnerable victims, such as victims of gender-based and domestic violence. The main objective of the strategy is to ensure that all victims of all crime, no matter where in the EU or under what circumstances the crime takes place, can fully rely on their rights. The next EU strategy on victims' rights will be adopted in 2026 after the expiration of the current one.

Protecting children from all forms of violence is an important objective of the EU, based on Article 3(3) TEU and in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter. Combating all forms of violence against children, including gender-based violence, forms the third pillar of the **EU**

[59] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of The Regions - A Roadmap for Women's Rights, COM/2025/97 Final, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0097.
[60] Commission Communication of 5 March 2020 'A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025' COM(2020) 152, available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en.
[61] Gender Equality Strategy Monitoring Portal.
[62] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions EU Strategy on Victims' Rights (2020-2025), COM/2020/258 Final.

strategy on the rights of the child. It complements and reinforces, where necessary, the actions envisaged under the EU strategy on combating trafficking in human beings[63], as well as the Strategy for an effective fight against child sexual abuse[64].

The Commission Recommendation of 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening **integrated child protection systems**[65] in the best interests of the child is the EU commitment under the third pillar of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. It calls on Member States to take all appropriate measures to protect children from any form of violence - meaning all forms of physical or mental violence, including domestic violence - in a multidisciplinary and comprehensive way, and through a whole-of-society approach.

The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, to which the EU and all its Member States are party, requires state parties to recognise that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discriminations, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 6). The **2021-2030 EU strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities** promotes an intersectional perspective, which means that, among persons with disabilities, women need particular attention[66].

The **pact on migration and asylum** tackles gender-based violence by ensuring that vulnerable individuals are identified and given support as soon as possible. This applies to people who have been subjected to trafficking in human beings, torture, rape or other serious acts of psychological, physical or sexual violence, including violence committed with a sexual, gender, racist or religious motive. This approach requires the provision of necessary medical and psychological treatment and care, including rehabilitation services and counselling to support victims. The **2017 Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration**[67] highlights the need for specific attention to children who are victims of gender-based violence to ensure prompt access to protection.

The EU's commitment to taking long-term action against violence against women and girls **globally** is expressed in numerous policy documents. Notably, **GAP III** places gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls firmly at the centre of the EU's international policy agenda. The EU is a global front-runner in promoting gender equality as a key political objective of its external action and common foreign and security policy. GAP III calls for decisive EU action through a gender-transformative, rights-based, and intersectional approach, positioning gender equality as a cross-cutting priority in EU external action. GAP III sets out objectives and actions in six areas of engagement, with ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence being one of them. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2027[68] also underscores the objective to eliminate, prevent, and protect

[63] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021- 2025, COM/2021/171 final.
[64] Combating violence against children and ensuring child protection - European Commission
[65] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/1238 of 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202401238.
[66] Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legissum:4532503.
[67] Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament And The Council on the Protection Of Children In Migration**,** COM/2017/0211 Final, available at: Eur-Lex - 52017dc0211 - En - Eur-Lex.
[68] EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2027.

women and girls from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including harmful practices like female genital mutilation, infanticides, and forced marriages. This involves partnering with international actors like the Council of Europe to uphold obligations from international agreements, such as the Istanbul Convention. It also supports using different tools, such as the EU Guidelines on Violence Against Women and Girls[69], to achieve its objectives.

In 2024, in the area of international partnership and development policy, **the Commission** created a 'Diversity, Equality, Equity and Inclusion' working group to improve inclusivity and equity across the organisation. A key aspect of this initiative was the creation of a sub-group specifically tasked with proposing stronger anti-harassment measures, focusing particularly on addressing gender-based harassment at both the Commission headquarters and in delegations. Moreover, in the area of **Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid**, the Commission has created an Equality Working Group to work on mainstreaming equality in its daily work and internal operations (including by developing an equality mainstreaming work plan), and within its policies in these areas.

EIGE plays a crucial role in providing research and information on specific forms of violence against women across the EU and its Member States. This work supports policymakers in developing effective strategies to prevent and combat gender-based violence. Over the years, EIGE has contributed to the advancement of policies and legal frameworks through various research initiatives. Three key projects include: (i) Estimating the Risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)[70]; (ii) Intimate Partner Violence: Risk Assessment and Risk Management for Police[71]; and (iii) Addressing Femicide: Strengthening Legal Responses and Data Collection[72]. Together with the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), EIGE was also involved in the 2024 **EU-wide survey on gender-based violence** (see below under Article 11).

The FRA contributes to EU policies by providing evidence-based advice on the application of law in practice with respect to fundamental rights. In the area of violence against women, FRA conducts socio-legal research to inform EU policy. This can involve large-scale quantitative surveys as well as in-depth qualitative research on women's experiences of violence and reporting of violence. In addition to these projects, FRA's EU Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS)[73] facilitates access to up-to-date information on EU Member States' commitments to human rights treaties, including details of Member States' acceptance of individual complaints, and assessments made by the monitoring mechanisms (such as GREVIO) based on the states' international obligations.

As regards **the EU's public administration**, several Commission DGs have adopted equality workplans to mainstream equality, including in the gender dimension, in their respective areas of work, covering for the most part both policy work and human resources.

[69] EU guidelines on Violence against women and girls
[70] Female genital mutilation | EIGE
[71] For further information see: Risk assessment principles and steps | European Institute for Gender Equality and Guide to Risk Assessment and Risk Management of Intimate Partner Violence for Police.
[72] For more information, see: 'Improving Legal Responses to Counter Femicide'.
[73] Between 2012 and 2020, the EIGE conducted multiple studies on FGM in different EU countries, see an overview here: Home | FRA EFRIS.

The Commission's **renewed anti-harassment policy** was adopted on 12 December 2023 and comprises a Commission Decision[74], a guide for staff and an action plan. It applies to all forms of harassment, as defined in Article 12a of the Staff Regulations and to all persons (except to local staff working in the Union Delegations) directly or indirectly working for the Commission at the time the alleged harassment took place, including persons who are not subject to the Staff Regulations or CEOS, without prejudice to the respect of the relevant legal provisions and conditions applicable to them. It is based on three main principles: victim-centricity, early prevention and support of managers.[75] Articles 12 and 12a of the Staff Regulations prohibit violent behaviour on the part of a staff member, and breaches are liable to severe disciplinary sanctions. The key novelty of the anti-harassment policy concerns the informal procedure to fight psychological and sexual harassment, steered by the Chief Confidential Counsellor (CCC) who began work on 1 September 2024. The Chief Confidential Counsellor is the main contact point for victims of harassment and provides prompt and confidential advice, and information on the services and support available to victims during and after the informal procedure. Moreover, the CCC coordinated a network of 25 trained confidential counsellors from across Commission services, who can provide support to victims as part of the informal procedure. The informal procedure with the CCC is available to statutory and non-statutory staff.[76]

In line with Article 24 of the Staff Regulations, **the Commission** assists statutory staff who have been subjected to threats or attacks to which the staff member or a member of their family is subjected by reason of their position or duties. This includes violence or harassment against women in the workplace, whether perpetrated by colleagues or third persons. The support offered by the Commission can include: (i) direct assistance e.g. from the Security Directorate, the Medical Service or the psychosocial service; (ii) holding the perpetrator accountable after conducting an inquiry and, where appropriate, instigating disciplinary proceedings; and (iii) legal support for the victim. Security measures in the Commission are based on Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission[77]. The Decision applies not only to Commission statutory staff but also to non-statutory staff, such as national experts seconded to the Commission, service providers and their staff, trainees and to any individual with access to Commission buildings or other assets. Thus, any security measures that can be taken under the Decision will apply to these persons, in particular with a view to ensure their security on Commission premises. The latter includes: (i) protection on the premises of the Commission, i.e. in form of regular security patrols, access to support by the Duty Office in a Commission building, being in a situation of distress or undergoing a medical emergency would be taken care of[78]; (ii) interventions to counter threats[79] and (iii) mandated security inquiries into incidents including criminal offences[80].

[74] Commission Decision C(2023) 8630 of 12 December 2023 on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment, and repealing Decision C(2006) 1624/3 and its Corrigendum (2024) 2878 of 25 April 2024.
[75] Commission Decision C(2023) 8630 of 12 December 2023 on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment, and repealing Decision C(2006) 1624/3 and its Corrigendum (2024) 2878 of 25 April 2024, Art.2
[76] Commission Decision C(2023) 8630 of 12 December 2023 on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment, and repealing Decision C(2006) 1624/3 and its Corrigendum (2024) 2878 of 25 April 2024, Art.26
[77] Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission, Art.2(3)
[78] Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission, Art.7(1)
[79] Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission, Art.12(1)
[80] Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission, Art.13(1)

The GSC has a zero-tolerance policy on harassment based on SG Decision 23/2021 on psychological and sexual harassment at work. This Decision strengthens the group of anti-harassment counsellors ('confidential counsellors'), recognises the role of bystanders, provides the possibility to carry out informal procedures including conciliation and mediation, and provides for mandatory training of staff with people management responsibility.

In 2023 and 2024 **the EP** sought to improve its anti-harassment procedures and to develop a more preventive approach. In July 2023, the EP modified the functioning of its advisory committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning MEPs and its procedures for dealing with complaints to improve the existing rules and align with recent case law. In November 2023, the Bureau of the EP established a Mediation Service. On 8 March 2024, the Secretary-General took a new Decision establishing a network of confidential counsellors in the European Parliament for all MEPs and staff members. In April 2024, the EP adopted amendments to Parliament's Rules of Procedure concerning the training on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace and on good office management[81]. In October 2024, the EP launched the 'United Against Harassment' campaign to raise awareness, educate and empower all staff members and MEPs to recognise, prevent and address any form of harassment.

The CJEU has put in place a comprehensive and holistic internal system that includes the Staff Code of Conduct, which sets up the ethical framework of the CJEU[82]; several internal policies which aim to maintain good working conditions and protect staff health (such as policies on equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion; health and well-being at work and prevention of psychosocial risks) and Communication No 18/06 on respect for personal dignity, where the CJEU set out its approach to preventing and dealing with cases of moral and sexual harassment.

The ECA updated its Ethical Guidelines in October 2022 and adopted its **decision** and policy on a respectful and harassment-free workplace in December 2022 (Decision 50-2022). The policy focuses on prevention, awareness raising and early detection, while offering a range of measures (confidential counselling, mediation, accompanying measures) to deal with perceived cases of harassment. The policy also provides for enhanced coordination of the various actors involved (in the form of a **'Dignity at work' group**, chaired by the HR Director) and yearly, anonymised reporting from all these actors to be communicated to all staff. The ECA's formal procedure for dealing with harassment involves conducting an inquiry and launching disciplinary proceedings where appropriate.

The EO's anti-harassment **policy** was adopted on 18 December 2017 and comprises the EO's Decision on a Policy for the prevention of and protection against harassment and Guidelines for implementing the EO's office's anti-harassment policy. This victim-centric policy is structured around an informal procedure (confidential counsellors and conciliation committee) and a formal procedure (request for assistance and administrative investigation).

The EESC adopted a new decision on preventing conflicts at work on 31 December 2022. Like the Commission, the EESC also has a formal and informal procedure with a system of key

[81] Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0315_EN.html.
[82] Under Article 15 of the Code of Conduct ('Respect and Dignity'), staff members, regardless of their hierarchical rank, must behave with dignity and civility, both in their dealings with those who work within the institution and with those they come into contact within the performance of their duties, particularly users of the public justice service.

players, such as the health service, the social worker, confidential counsellors, and ethics counsellors for whistleblowing. An ethics coordinator leads and supervises the networks of confidential and ethics counsellors. An annual anonymised report on these counsellors' activities is presented to the EESC's HR Directorate with recommendations. The formal procedure is assured through the Directorate of Human Resources, with in-house legal advisers and the possibility to mandate investigations, either in-house or under the auspices of the IDOC.

The CoR follows the **zero-tolerance policy** towards harassment, as stated in several CoR decisions, first of all the dedicated decision No 108/2021 on protecting the dignity of staff, managing conflict and combating psychological and sexual harassment, accompanied by a guide to protecting the dignity of staff, managing conflict and combating psychological and sexual harassment, but also the decision No 157/2023 on ethical rules, the decision No 508/2015 on the rules on whistleblowing and notably the decision No 83/2019 on administrative investigations and disciplinary proceedings, that proceeds with alleged harassment cases. Confirmed harassment cases are sanctioned pursuant to the disciplinary procedure. The main contact persons for victims of (sexual) harassment at the CoR are the Contact Persons, the Confidential Counsellors, the Medical Service, and the Social Worker. All these contact points, together with the legal service, can assist victims.

At the **EIB**, the EIB Group Staff Code of Conduct[83], its whistleblowing policy[84] and the EIB Group Dignity at Work Policy[85] provide the framework for addressing issues related to gender-based violence and harassment. The Dignity at Work policy defines a **zero tolerance**, helps to raise awareness and prevent harassment of all forms. The procedures for dealing with harassment include a formal procedure and a mediation procedure. The EIB Group's Whistleblowing Policy gathers the various provisions requiring staff to report wrongdoings and provides measures of protection for any whistle-blower acting in good faith. The EIB provides guidance on gender-based violence and harassment to staff via its all-staff portal with definitions, including an overview of the EIB policy framework, learning resources and support organisations and services to survivors in Luxembourg, where the EIB has its headquarters. As an EDGE certified organisation, in 2023 the EIB was also assessed and audited on policies and practices with regard to sexual harassment.

The rights and obligations of the staff and short-term employees of the **ECB** are set out in the Conditions of Employment[86], the Staff Rules[87], the Conditions of Short-Term Employment[88] and Rules for Short-Term Employment[89]. Any form of direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, as well as physical violence, psychological and sexual harassment is prohibited. The dignity at work rules are part of the ECB Staff Rules. ECB staff members can use the informal procedure by reaching out to designated employee partners, to the social counsellors, or to the staff representatives. ECB staff can also reach out to the ECB mediator. The ECB introduced this mediator role in September 2023 as a new independent, informal, impartial, and confidential resource for workplace conflict prevention and resolution aligned with the model

[83] EIB Group Staff Code of Conduct
[84] European Investment Bank Group Whistleblowing Policy
[85] EIB Group Dignity at Work Policy
[86] Consolidated Conditions of Employment
[87] Staff Rules
[88] Conditions of Short-Term Employment
[89] Rules for Short-Term Employment

of organisational Ombuds predominantly existing in the U.S. The ECB mediator reports directly to the ECB President. While the mediator does not initiate formal processes or receive notice for the organisation, they can provide information on the appropriate services to connect with when interested in such processes. Staff members can also formally raise issues with their management and/or report incidents, either via a whistleblowing tool which offers an option of anonymous reporting, or via the Director of Internal Audit or the Director-General of HR or the Deputy. Incidents of non-compliance with the ECB's rules, including inappropriate behaviour, can be followed up internally within the organisation via investigations to establish the facts which may lead to disciplinary procedures, as a result of which appropriate penalties may be imposed. Practices for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promoting equality between women and men and empowering women are integrated into the ECB's core HR processes, with a particular attention to recruitment, training and development, leadership and wellbeing. The ECB also makes use of the Executive D&I Sponsors, D&I Ambassadors in all Business Areas and several staff networks.

EU Delegations are placed under the authority of the High Representative and form an integral part of **the EEAS**. Each EU Delegation is under the authority of a Head of Delegation, who is accountable to the High Representative for the overall management of the work of the Delegation. The staff in Delegations comprises EEAS staff and, where appropriate for the implementation of the EU budget and EU policies other than those under the remit of the EEAS, Commission staff. Following the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention, and with the aim of creating a safe, equitable and inclusive working environment at the EEAS, and to streamline its internal work, the **Istanbul Task Force** was set up in January 2024. The Task Force brought together all relevant services and units at the EEAS (the Secretary General's office, human resources, Mediation, Medical, Inspection Service, the Missions and Operations from the Common Security and Defence Policy, led by the Head of the Equality Task Force) to ensure a coherent and holistic approach. The EEAS Istanbul Task Force has made an internal analysis of internal policies, practice and gaps in handling cases from Delegations, and met with relevant external experts on the topic. This led to a Final Report accompanied with **an Action Plan**, adopted by the EEAS Secretary General in April 2025. The implementation of the actions to improve EEAS's implementation of the Istanbul Convention is commencing, and the Istanbul Task Force is overseeing the implementation on a quarterly basis. The **EEAS anti-harassment policy** aims at preventing and addressing psychological and sexual harassment in the workplace, which includes any form of violence against women. The EEAS promotes a safe and respectful working environment, as further emphasised in the EEAS 2023-2025 Diversity and Inclusion Agenda and related Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.

Article 8 – Financial resources

*B. Please provide an account of **financial resources** allocated to the implementation of the above-mentioned policies, as required by Article 8, with an indication of the sources of financing (amount of financing allocated and its percentage of the total annual budget; amounts from other sources).*

The EU has allocated a significant amount of funding in support of its policies to combat violence against women and domestic violence. As part of funding within the EU, under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF), the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme** has a dedicated strand – the 'Daphne' strand – which aims at

funding measures tackling violence against women, domestic violence and violence against children and other vulnerable groups. The overall budget earmarked for the Daphne strand is about EUR 27 million a year, which is about 15% of the CERV programme's annual budget. The budget of the 2025 Daphne call for proposals is EUR 23 million. The main objectives of this support are to combat violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children, by:

1) preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and domestic violence at all levels, including by promoting the standards laid down in the Istanbul Convention;
(2) preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, young people and other groups at risk, such as LGBTIQ people and persons with disabilities;
(3) supporting and protecting all direct and indirect victims of the forms of violence referred to in points (1) and (2), such as the victims of domestic violence perpetrated within the family or within intimate relationships, including children orphaned as a result of domestic crimes, and supporting and ensuring the same level of protection throughout the EU for victims of gender-based violence.

The CERV programme's legal basis, Regulation (EU) 2021/692[90], specifically refers to the Istanbul Convention in Article 6(1), where it is stated that the Daphne strand shall promote the standards laid down in the Convention (see also recital 12). The Daphne strand's budget is mostly spent on grants to projects by civil society organisations and public authorities in Member States that are selected under calls for proposals published every year (see section on Article 9 below). In addition, the Daphne strand supports the Commission's own policy measures. Notably, it funds **the EU-wide network on the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence** (see section on Article 13 below) and the **EU-wide survey on gender-based violence** (see section on Article 11(2) below). For more detailed information on how the EU has integrated a gender perspective into its **budget,** please see section on Article 6 above.

In addition, the EU's research framework programmes fund research on violence against women and domestic violence. As of 1 January 2025, **Horizon Europe** (2021-2027) had allocated EUR 17.9 million to a number of research projects and initiatives to tackle gender-based violence and promote a culture of zero tolerance (see section on Article 11(1) below). Horizon Europe has also introduced a new eligibility criterion requiring public bodies, research and higher education organisations from Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place, with recommended areas of intervention including actions against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. To support this, the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool provides universities and research organisations with practical advice and tools to address gender-based violence and sexual harassment[91].

[90] Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014, OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1-20, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/692/OJ.
[91] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gearhttps://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/measures-against-gender-based-violence-including-sexual-harassment.

Moreover, the **European Social Fund Plus** (ESF+) is the principal funding mechanism for social inclusion, employment, and equal opportunities between 2021 and 2027. It plays a significant role in supporting women who are victims of gender-based violence through various targeted and integrated initiatives: funding for specialised services (safe houses and counselling), employment and economic employment, legal assistance, awareness and prevention.

The EU has championed and financially supported various **global efforts** to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence. These include being: (i) a co-leader of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (ii) an initiator and chair of the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls; (iii) an active member of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies; and (iv) a major partner of the UN[92].

The EU continues to support **the Spotlight Initiative**, the largest global initiative aiming to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030, launched in 2017 by the EU with the United Nations. The Spotlight Initiative was selected as one of the 12 High-Impact Initiatives within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the initiative enters its 2.0 phase, the EU and the UN are working to sustain the achievements and knowledge the initiative has built. This will be done through the EUR 16.5 million **Spotlight Initiative High-Impact Programme for Violence Elimination by 2030** (HIVE programme) and the EUR 22 million **Advocacy Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence Against Women and Girls** (a dedicated programme to support the work on gender-based violence by women's rights organisations and feminist movements implemented by UN Women). The EU and the UN will also continue to invest in new country and regional programmes (including in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ecuador, Regional Africa Programme). The EU support to the second phase of Spotlight already amounts to EUR 85.5 million, on top of the initial EUR 500 million from the first phase. Spotlight Initiative's flagship digital engagement campaign, **#WithHer**, focuses on curating online conversations among cultural influencers and providing a platform for the stories of activists and survivors to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes through its carefully designed messages. The success of the #WithHer campaign led to the launch of the **With Her Fund** to provide resources directly to a group of six **grassroots women's organisations** working to end violence against women and girls. Approximately 70% of the funds (USD 500 000) have gone directly to organisations as flexible unrestricted grants, enabling them to cover core organisational costs that are rarely covered by project-based funding.

Other activities around communication that aim to continue challenging harmful gender norms and practices include the set-up of: (i) the **SHINE Hub**, an online hub for a global knowledge exchange on ending violence against women and girls; (ii) the **Global Learning Centre**, an online resource platform aimed at individuals and organisations designing, implementing and managing comprehensive programmes to end violence against women and girls; and (iii) the **Global Knowledge Product Tracker**, a centralised space for global, regional and country programmes to document their knowledge products, learn from other knowledge products developed as part of the Spotlight Initiative, and build synergies across knowledge production.

[92] Joint mid-term report on the implementation of the EU gender action plan (GAP III), https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/Joint%20mid-term%20report%20on%20the%20implementation%20of%20the%20EU%20Gender%20Action%20Plan%20%28GAP%20III%29.pdf.

On 12 June 2023, **the Council** adopted a set of conclusions on 'Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in policies, programmes, and budgets'. The Council called on the Commission to ensure that gender equality considerations are integrated in the implementation of the EU budget, in order to close persisting gender gaps, particularly by financing measures to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment in accordance with the respective spending programmes within the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)[93].

The VAW Directive requires Member States to dedicate financial resources for the implementation of policies to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence as follows:

- Article 22 – 'role of national bodies, including equality bodies', read in conjunction with recital 50 that clarifies that Member States should ensure that these bodies (called to provide additional support and prevent violence against women and domestic violence offences) are given sufficient human and financial resources;
- Article 25(3) requires Member States to ensure sufficient human and financial resources for specialist support services. It also specifies that Member States must ensure support services provided by non-governmental organisations have adequate funding. In general, under Article 288 TFEU, EU directives are binding with respect to the result to be achieved. Therefore, even if the choice of form and method is left to their authorities, Member States are bound to mobilise the means (including financial and human resources) necessary to achieve the results sought by the VAW Directive.

As regards **the EU's public administration,** the Commission has a dedicated legal and policy team dealing with preventing and combating violence against women which also fulfils the role of the coordinating body under the Convention (see Article 10). The **Istanbul Task Force at the EEAS** has developed an Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention that is cost neutral, but requires the use of existing human resources. While the other **EU institutions and bodies** do not dedicate financial or human resources exclusively for implementing the Convention, all of them devote a significant amount of internal resources to relevant matters and functions. For example:

The European Commission's HR services, such as the DIO, the CCC's office, the Disciplinary Office, and teams dealing with ethics and legal matters, are actively involved in implementing the Convention.

The GSC provides support and assistance through its Diversity and Inclusion Office, legal advisers, social assistants, and confidential counsellors, among others. Victims can also receive support from the security team if they wish to take action with the Belgian police.

The EP has several structures involved in implementing the Convention, including the Equality, Inclusion, and Diversity Unit, medical services, and the network of confidential counsellors.

The CJEU has established an interdepartmental working group to review its internal system and align it with the principles and provisions of the Convention. The CJEU has also hired occupational psychologists and provides training and support to staff on topics such as

[93] Draft Council Conclusions on Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in policies, programmes, and budgets, available at: pdf.

prevention of psychosocial risks and adaptation to organisational change. It is renewing its network of confidential counsellors.

The ECA has dedicated internal resources, including a HR officer, D&I officer, and confidential counsellors, to ensure a harassment-free and respectful workplace.

The EO's HR and other designated teams (confidential counsellors, conciliation committee, Staff Committee) deal with matters related to the Convention, and staff receive training on topics such as prevention of harassment and conflict resolution.

The CoR has allocated budget to its social service to implement necessary measures.

The EIB has teams involved in implementing the Convention, including the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team and the Medical Services Unit.

T**he ECB** also has several units contributing to ensuring the content of the Convention is applied.

Overall, despite not having dedicated resources exclusively for implementing the Convention, all EU institutions are taking proactive steps to ensure that the principles and provisions of the Convention are integrated into their internal policies and practices.

B. Article 9 – Non-governmental organisations and civil society

*1. How is the work of **NGOs and other civil society actors**, in particular women's rights organisations, recognised, encouraged and supported by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, as required by Articles 8 and 9*[94]*?*

The Commission regularly consults NGOs through EU public consultations and strategic dialogues. Financial support to **women's rights CSOs** and other relevant actors (such as public authorities) active in the field of gender-based violence is provided through a dedicated strand of the EU 2021-2027 **CERV programme** with an annual amount of about EUR 27 million (see section on Article 8 above). Every year some **EUR 23-25 million** is available under the Daphne call for proposals for targeted projects to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children.

A new **re-granting scheme** was launched in 2023 as part of the Daphne call for proposals for preventing and combating gender-based violence. The scheme provides, via intermediaries, smaller grants under simplified conditions to a large number of small, grassroot CSOs (including those in remote and rural areas), which tend to have more limited capacity and funding sources. The intermediaries also actively support capacity building of such small organisations in applying for, managing funds and successfully carrying out projects.

In addition, the **CERV programme** provides **operating grants**, i.e. funding for their core support and everyday functioning, to European civil society organisations networks active in the field of preventing and combating gender-based violence for an annual amount of some

[94] Support for NGOs and other civil society organisations means allocating appropriate financial resources for the activities by those organisations and recognising their work by, 'for example, tapping into their expertise and involving them as partners in multi-agency cooperation or in the implementation of comprehensive government policies which Article 7 calls for' (See Explanatory Report, paragraphs 66 and 69).

EUR 2 million. This funding is provided under the 'Union values' strand, so needs to be added to the amounts provided under the Daphne strand. To ensure more stable and longer-term support, three- or four-year **framework partnership agreements** are signed with these EU-wide networks[95].

The **Daphne 2025 call for proposals** published at the beginning of February 2025 with an indicative budget of EUR 23 million, with reference to the Istanbul Convention (as all Daphne calls), is strongly focused on funding initiatives (mainly by NGO actors) in support of specific requirements under the VAW Directive, in particular referring to the following Articles: Article 30 (shelters and interim accommodation), Article 15 (tools to help authorities to swiftly identify and address domestic violence), Article 16 (individual assessment of risk from offender), Article 21(g) (identify enhanced protection needs for victims), Article 35 (prevent rape and to promote the central role of consent in sexual relationships), Article 34(8) (strengthen digital literacy skills of online users), and Article 36(8) (combat stereotypical portrayals of women and men in the media).

In order to improve the EU's implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Commission created a **network with CSOs on the Istanbul Convention** in 2024, which includes its above-mentioned framework partners. The network aims to update framework partners on steps taken to implement the Convention and to receive their input and expertise on how to improve the implementation. The network meets regularly before the meetings of the Commission's internal inter-service group on the Istanbul Convention, which involves representatives from all relevant DGs, tasked with mainstreaming the Convention within their relevant policy areas.

The **Council** has recently recognised the central role of CSOs and human rights defenders in the application of the EU's fundamental rights policies in Member States, as well as the importance of funding for their activities. In another set of conclusions adopted in 2023, the Council invited Member States to protect, support and empower CSOs and human rights defenders, providing them with a range of opportunities to cooperate and ensuring that no unnecessary or arbitrary restrictions were adopted. Member States were invited to support CSOs by tackling challenges relating to the availability, accessibility and sustainability of funding[96].

In its resolutions, **the EP** supports CSOs working to advance women's and girls' rights and gender equality, including in circumstances of violence, as it did for example in the recommendation of 19 December 2024 to the Council concerning the EU priorities for the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2024/2057(INI))[97]. Furthermore, experts from the civil society are regularly invited to hearings in the relevant committees of the Parliament focusing on combating different forms of violence against women.

The **EESC**, as the voice of organised civil society, regularly consults CSOs when drafting its opinions on EU legislation and policy. Regarding violence against women, the EESC has

[95] a https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/cerv-2025-og-fpa.

[96] Council Conclusions on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; The role of the civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights in the EU, available here: pdf.

[97] Available here: Texts adopted - Recommendation to the Council on the EU priorities for the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women - Thursday, 19 December 2024.

adopted opinions on the VAW Directive[98]; the Anti-trafficking Directive[99], the Victims' Rights Directive[100], and recently adopted an own initiative opinion on violence against women[101]. It also adopted the EESC's contribution to the EU's priorities for the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2025)[102]. For these opinions, a number of CSOs at EU and national level were consulted and their input is indispensable for the opinions.

*2. Which measures are taken to ensure that **effective co-operation** is established with these organisations at **the level of the EU** and have any legislative or other measures been taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to place obligations on **EU member states** to establish such effective co-operation?*

The VAW Directive requires **Member States** to cooperate and hold regular consultations with CSOs, in particular concerning: the provision of adequate support to victims; policymaking initiatives; information and awareness-raising campaigns; research and education programmes; training; and the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of measures to support and protect victims (Article 41). The special role of civil society in combating violence against women and domestic violence is reflected throughout the VAW Directive. Recital 84 recognises their expertise and the added value of their involvement and contributions during the design and implementation of governmental policies. The Directive recommends Member States to consult CSOs when designating national equality bodies (Article 22), when adopting preventive measures, such as awareness-raising campaigns (Article 34), and recognises their involvement in training of professionals (Article 36). Article 41 stresses the general need for cooperation between Member States and CSOs, especially through regular consultations.

GAP III outlines a strong support for civil society, alongside women and men working for gender equality and women's empowerment, including women human rights defenders. EU action should strengthen women's rights organisations and CSOs addressing the intersectional dimensions of gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence. GAP III also emphasises the inclusion of civil society partners, particularly at the local level. To facilitate inclusion, and monitor progress, the Commission has committed to a structured dialogue with civil society that includes an annual event, aiming to engage a wide range of stakeholders, such as local authorities, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, and private sector associations, ensuring comprehensive input and continuity in mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women and girls.

At country level, data collected by **the Commission** shows that 85% of EU Delegations held a high-level dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment with civil society, including women's and girls' organisations in 2023 within the framework of the EU civil society roadmaps, Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs), EU human rights dialogues and the gender-development partners groups, among other things. A report published by the Commission on civil society consultations in partner countries published in 2024 highlighted EU delegations' sustained engagement with organisations representing women and youth and those focused on gender equality and women and youth empowerment. These organisations made up 28% of the total number of CSOs consulted in 2023 (15% of women's CSOs and 13%

[98] Combating violence against women (SOC/726).
[99] Anti-trafficking directive (SOC/752).
[100] Revision of victims' rights directive (SOC/780).
[101] Violence against women as a human rights issue: state of play of measures across the EU (SOC/798).
[102] EESC contribution to the EU's priorities at the UNCSW69, available here: (SOC/821).

of youth CSOs) – underscoring the EU's commitment to these groups, as outlined in GAP III and the Youth Action Plan[103].

As reported in the 2024 annual report on the implementation of the EU's **external action** instruments in 2023, the number of external actions with gender equality as a principal or significant objective has increased significantly, from 64.71% in 2019 to 82.7% in 2023. This corresponds to EUR 13.262 million in financial commitments for international partnerships, humanitarian aid, foreign policy, the Eastern neighbourhood, enlargement as well as for the Middle East, Northern Africa and the Gulf. Since the launch of the GAP III, 3.8% of all gender-responsive/targeted actions have gender equality as a principal objective, including actions to end gender-based violence. The financial commitments to end gender-based violence increased from EUR 56 million in 2021/22 to EUR 169 million in 2023/24. This is based on preliminary data for 2024.

EIGE works with NGOs and other civil society actors at both project level, throughout the different stages of project implementation and strategic level, including through annual meetings with CSOs and social partners. Through these structured interactions, EIGE ensures that the voices of NGOs and civil society actors are recognised and integrated into policy discussions and implementation efforts[104].

FRA manages the Fundamental Rights Platform which is the Agency's cooperation network with CSOs. FRA consults the platform on matters related to its work, including CSOs focusing on combating violence against women. Among other things, the platform also provides space for CSOs to coordinate their work and identify cooperation opportunities. For example, FRA's quantitative survey on violence and related human rights abuses against women who fled Ukraine and are residents in the EU directly involved civil society organisation in recruiting interviewees and supporting them during the interview process[105].

In the EU's **public administration**, **the Commission** regularly exchanges with its staff representatives. In the field of anti-harassment, the CCC have commenced to interact with other EU institutions and international organisations to facilitate the exchange of best practices.

In **the GSC**, the DIO has discussions with staff representatives in the Joint Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, and the confidential counsellors meet regularly to discuss their cases including cases of perceived harassment.

The EP administration regularly has exchanges on all matters related to gender equality, diversity and inclusion via the gender and diversity coordinators' networks. The coordinators ensure close inter-service coordination on all thematic activities in the Secretariat of the EP. Each Directorate-General and each political group has appointed up to two coordinators to ensure the smooth implementation of the strategic actions adopted by the Bureau.

The EP is continuously improving and adapting its resources, structures and processes to prevent and address harassment. For example, it created a network of confidential counsellors (2018) and recently reviewed its mandate to cover all categories of staff (2024-2025) as well

[103] Report available here: Civil Society Consultations in Partner Countries - 2023 Report on EU Delegations' Engagement with Civil Society | Capacity4dev.
[104] https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/institutional-mechanisms-gender-equality-eu-present-realities-future-priorities.
[105] Civil society and the Fundamental Rights Platform | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

as a mediation service (2024). It also runs campaigns (such as the 2024-2025 'United against Harassment' campaign), raises awareness and communicates through multiple channels. Training is now compulsory for MEPs, accredited parliamentary assistants and managers in the EP administration and is supported by the exchange of experience through various professional networks and coaching. The EP has reviewed its formal procedures concerning the work of the two Advisory Committees for Harassment and the application of Article 24 of the Staff Regulations.

At **the CJEU**, the HR representatives have regular exchange with the Medical and Social service, the Staff Committee and, on an interinstitutional level, with their homologues on diversity and inclusion, ethics, well-being and confidential counselling

The ECB maintains a regular dialogue with its staff representatives on the topic of anti-harassment through various fora. Staff representatives participate in disciplinary committees and have been contributing to the ongoing review of the disciplinary and investigation framework. In addition, the Social Counsellors regularly report back to the institution on an anonymous basis, flag patterns or systemic issues, and help implement international best practices.

The ECA maintains regular dialogue with its staff representatives. The ECA staff committee and Committee on equal opportunities (COPEC) provide feedback on staff's experience, including on the topic of anti-harassment. The HR Director holds regular meetings with the confidential counsellors and chairs the Dignity at work group composed of representatives of the Staff Committee, COPEC, confidential counsellors, mediators, Legal Service, Medical Service and HR. An ECA HR officer represents the ECA in the informal interinstitutional network of confidential counsellors, an ECA initiative.

The EO has regular exchanges with its staff representatives. When delivering their annual report, the Office's confidential counsellors meet with HR to flag - based on their contacts during the year and within the limits of confidentiality - any systemic issues or recurring patterns to which the EO should be alerted (so that targeted measures such as dedicated training, policies, initiatives etc. can be taken).

The **EESC** ethics coordinator regularly participates in all interinstitutional exchanges on the issue of preventing and combating harassment at work and exchanges best practices with her peers.

In the **CoR**, social service, confidential counsellors' team, contact persons, D&I team and Staff representatives all coordinate regularly.

C. Article 10 – Coordinating body

*Please provide details on the **body(ies) established or designated in application of Article 10.***

1. Have one or more official bodies[106] *been established or designated for the co-ordination and implementation of EU policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the convention?*

[106] The term 'official body' is to be understood as any entity or institution within the EU.

If so, for each body, please indicate the:

a. name;
b. administrative status;
c. powers and competences;
d. composition (in particular, please specify if NGOs active in combating violence against women are members);
e. annual budget;
f. human resources (namely number of staff, their general professional backgrounds and any training on the convention received); and
g. *main results obtained since its establishment.*

When the EU acceded to the Convention, **the Commission** was appointed as the **EU's coordinating body**, in line with Article 10 of the Convention. The Gender Equality Unit of the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers currently coordinates this work and has allocated 1.5 Full-time Equivalents to it. The unit contributes to the design, coordination and implementation of EU policy instruments, legal measures and financial support mechanisms to CSOs to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. This includes, for example, steering Member States towards timely and full transposition of the VAW Directive through implementation workshops, drafting soft law acts, and drafting the CERV programme's calls for proposals under the Daphne stream (contributing to the project selection and follow-up, etc.). Following the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention, the coordinating body has:

- addressed various **legal and practical implications** of the EU's accession to the Convention;
- represented the EU in the **meetings** of the Committee of the Parties **(CoP)**[107];
- created an internal **inter-service group** to support cooperation, share best practices and maximise synergies between the Commission's departments in the area of violence against women and domestic violence in relation to the matters of the Convention that fall under the EU's competence;
- created a **network with CSO**s on the implementation of the Convention (see above section on Article 9);
- created a **network of all coordinating bodies** and **CoP representatives** in the EU, which aims to improve cooperation and ensure their expertise can inform the EU's positions ahead of CoP meetings;
- appointed the legal expert Prof. Sara DeVido to write the report 'EU law in light of the Istanbul Convention: legal implications after accession'[108];
- participated in selecting 30 projects from the 2023 and 2024 **Daphne calls** for proposals for some EUR 50 million (another EUR 17.3 million from these two Daphne calls were allocated to 13 intermediaries selected out of which 6 focus (one partially) on child safeguarding for a budget of 12.706.347,40); overall, this represents funding of around EUR 24.9 million annually.

[107] Committee of the Parties - Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence
[108] European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination 'EU law in light of the Istanbul Convention: legal implications after accession', available at: https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/6247-eu-law-in-light-of-the-istanbul-convention-legal-implications-after-accession.

*2. Have one or more separate body(ies) been established or designated for the **monitoring and evaluation of EU** policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the convention?*

If so, for each body please indicate the:

a. name;
b. administrative status;
c. powers and competences;
d. composition (in particular, please specify if NGOs active in combating violence against women are members);
e. annual budget;
f. human resources (namely number of staff, their general professional backgrounds and any training on the convention received); and
g. main results obtained since its establishment.

No separate body has been set up or specifically designated for this purpose. For monitoring EU policies on violence against women and domestic violence, several EU bodies and agencies contribute through data collection – ESTAT, EIGE, FRA and OSHA (see section on Article 11 below). Furthermore, **the ECA** is competent to audit the implementation of EU policies and measures with regard to the financial resources involved. The ECA has, for example, produced a Special Report on the Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls[109].

D. Article 11 – Data collection and research

*1. Please specify which **EU** institutions, bodies and agencies **collect data** on violence against women and domestic violence, the type of data collected and the respective data categories in use. Please also specify the obligations on data collection and reporting placed on **EU member states** by EU legislative or other measures, in as far as they pertain to the area of preventing and combating violence against women.*

Article 44 of the **VAW Directive** requires **Member States** to:

- have a system in place for the collection, development, production and dissemination of **statistics** on violence against women and domestic violence;
- cover with those statistics, *at least*, the following existing data, available at a central level, disaggregated by sex, age group (child/adult) of the victim and of the offender and, where possible and relevant, relationship between the victim and the offender and type of offence:
  (a) the annual number of **reported offences and convictions** of violence against women or domestic violence, obtained from national administrative sources;
  (b) the number of **victims who have been killed** due to violence against women or domestic violence;
  (c) the number and **capacity of shelters** per Member State;
  (d) the number of **calls to national helplines**.
- endeavour to collect administrative data on the basis of common disaggregation developed in cooperation with and in line with the standards developed by EIGE, to ensure comparability;

[109] Special report 21/2023: The Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls – Ambitious but so far with limited impact.

- send this administrative data to EIGE on a yearly basis; and
- make the statistics collected available to the public in an easily accessible manner.

Article 44 also requires Member States to endeavour to conduct population-based **surveys** at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the Directive. Survey data must then be sent to the Commission (Eurostat).

Eurostat is the statistical authority of **the EU**. Its mission is to provide high-quality statistics for Europe. Regarding indicators on violence against women, annual data is collected on victims of homicide. The data is disaggregated by age group and sex of the victim and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator. Annual data on victims of sexual exploitation is collected by sex and age group of the victim. Annual data is collected on victims of trafficking in human beings by sex of the victim and disaggregated by adult/child.

In addition, **EIGE** collects and analyses data on gender equality with an intersectional perspective, develops methods to improve gender statistics and data collections, and communicates comparable and reliable data and information. The **2024 Gender Equality Index** dedicated its thematic focus to violence against women, presenting recent policy and legal developments in the EU and its Member States. The comprehensive overview of the current state of violence against women in the EU, including legal and policy developments, survey findings and societal attitudes, is described in the report and with country-specific information[110]. **EIGE** has analysed the availability and comparability of administrative data on violence against women across the EU. It has proposed common definitions for statistical purposes and indicators on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide for the police and justice sectors. It has also developed country specific recommendations and guidelines to offset comparable data collection challenges[111]. EIGE has also developed a conceptual framework to measure **cyberviolence against women and girls** in line with the VAW Directive[112]. By 2024, EIGE introduced a comparable measurement framework along with operational definitions that can be used for both surveys and administrative data collection.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) carries out the OSH Pulse survey on a representative sample of 27 250 employed workers on occupational safety and health in the workplace in EU countries. The survey covers a number of psychosocial risks, including violence, harassment and other stressful aspects of work.

2. *With regard to each type of data collected or data category in use, please indicate if it is **disaggregated** by sex, age, type of violence as well as the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, geographical location, and any other factors deemed relevant, for example disability.*

Article 44 of the VAW Directive requires **Member States** to collect statistical data **disaggregated** by:
- sex;
- age group (child/adult) of the victim and of the offender;
- relationship between the victim and the offender (where possible and relevant);
- type of offence.

[110] Violence against women | Thematic Focus | Gender Equality Index | European Institute for Gender Equality
[111] Data Collection on Violence Against Women | EIGE
[112] Cyber violence against women | European Institute for Gender Equality

EIGE developed 13 indicators for the police and justice sector to measure reported violence on:

- **intimate partner violence** (all types based on Istanbul Convention definitions) and domestic violence;
- **sexual violence**, including: **rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking;**
- femicide.

Disaggregating variables were sex of the victim and perpetrator, the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, and the offences that fall under each form of violence. The age of the victim and perpetrator and the sex of the perpetrator had to be removed due to the unavailability of recorded data.

EU-OSHA disaggregates data in the OSH Pulse survey by sex, age, third-party violence and harassment by colleagues/managers in EU countries.

*3. How is this data collated and **made public** at the level of the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies?*

Eurostat's data is published on the **Eurostat website**: data and metadata is accompanied by 'statistics explained' articles. The following indicators are published in the database[113]:

- intentional homicide victims by victim-offender relationship and sex (crim_hom_vrel);
- victims of intentional homicide and sexual exploitation by age and sex (crim_hom_vage);
- persons involved in trafficking in human beings by legal status and sex (crim_thb_sex).

The following 'statistics explained' articles have been published based on annual crime data:

- crime statistics;
- trafficking in human beings statistics.

EIGE's data is available on its website[114]. The methodological report[115] provides details on data completeness, accuracy and comparability. Individual country profiles[116] present in-depth country analysis. The gender-based violence entry point of EIGE's Gender Statistics Database provides access to exiting statistical data from different data sources, aiming to support institutions and experts engaged in preventing and combating gender-based violence[117].

EU-OSHA collects data by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) and disseminates the data through publications, infographics and research reports on their website[118].

Data from **FRA's** surveys and other research is available on the agency's website[119]. Survey data sets (survey microdata) is also available to researchers who would like to further analyse the data.

[113] Eurostat website: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat.
[114] Intimate partner violence indicators | Gender Statistics Database | European Institute for Gender Equality
[115] Intimate partner and domestic violence: EIGE's data collection (2023–2024) – Methodological report | European Institute for Gender Equality
[116] Country profile for Belgium | European Institute for Gender Equality
[117] Gender-based violence | Gender Statistics Database | European Institute for Gender Equality
[118] Publications | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA
[119] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights | Helping to make fundamental rights a reality for everyone in the European Union, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Main_Page.

As regards **the EU's public administration**, the institutions strictly apply Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on data protection for EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies. They do not systematically collect sensitive personal data. Instead, they often conduct voluntary staff surveys on selected topics that help to evaluate the impact of the human resources policy actions, measure progress towards the goals and assess the general perception of the respondents (see further below). For example, several DGs in the EP have conducted psycho-social risk assessment surveys amongst their staff. The Commission and the EP also use the findings of EIGE and FRA as far as the internal policy dimension is relevant.

The CJEU applies data protection rules, including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. Sensitive personal data are processed by the psychologists, medical counsels of the Court and confidential counsellors in full respect of confidentiality. Where necessary, in response to questions from the discharge authorities, the CJEU can provide information on the application of its internal policies.

F. Article 11(1) – Supporting research

*Please give information on **any research** supported by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in relation to Article 11 paragraph 1b. Please also provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to place obligations on EU member states on supporting research, in line with Article 11 paragraph 1b.*

Article 34 of the **VAW Directive** – 'Preventive measures' – requires **Member States** to conduct or support targeted awareness-raising campaigns and programmes. These programmes may include **research** and education programmes that aim to increase awareness and understanding among the general public of the different forms and root causes of violence against women and domestic violence, the need for prevention and, where appropriate, the consequences of this violence, in particular on children.

Moreover, Article 44 obliges **the Commission** to support or conduct research on the root causes, effects, incidences and conviction rates of violence against women and domestic violence, until at least the end of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. Research on gender-based violence has also been funded under the EU's research framework programmes. As of 1 January 2025, **Horizon Europe** (2021-2027) had allocated EUR 17.9 million for research on gender-based violence. The following projects and initiatives have been supported to tackle gender-based violence and promote a culture of zero tolerance. The objective of IMPROVE (2022-2025) is to equip victims of domestic violence with the knowledge and confidence to assert their rights and seek support. A cutting-edge conversational AI chatbot has been developed, which provides personalised guidance, risk assessment and support to victims. ISEDA(2022-2025) develops **training programmes** for police officers, supports victims in reporting domestic violence and provides court-proof evidence and records by combining cutting-edge technologies and practices from social sciences, humanities and expertise from the field. INCELNOR-MA project (2023-2025) sheds light on how the incels' anti-feminist and misogynist ideas are displayed via **incel artefacts** and aesthetics. The **UnveilGBD** project (2024-2026) explores how globalisation intersects with the causes of violence against women using social-ecological theory. **Horizon Europe** projects funded under the topic of 'Feminism for a new age of democracy', including UNTWIST, FIERCE, CCINDLE and RESIST, also partly explore aspects of gender-based violence in the context of anti-gender and anti-feminist

movements in the EU and beyond. Several projects, such as FemSMed (2024-2029) or VIOLENDINGS (2022-2024), investigated gender-based violence in an historical perspective, while others focus (or focused) on gender-based violence in specific geographical areas (e.g. INRES, SaRe-DiGT) or contexts (GYNEPI, ECOVI, TURNING VIOLENT, WarEffects). These include war crimes, gender-based violence against transgender and intersex people, obstetric violence, and online hate against female leaders.

Increased attention has also been paid to the topic of gender-based violence in **academia and research** as one of the priority areas of the European Research Area (ERA) policy agenda. The Horizon 2020–funded project, UniSAFE (2021-2024), has conducted the largest prevalence survey of gender-based violence in academia and research in the EU to date, gathering responses from over 42 000 staff and students. Almost two thirds of the respondents indicated that they had experienced instances of gender-based violence in their academic and research institutions, especially those from marginalised communities. The Commission has organised dedicated events on the topic, including the session *Towards an ERA Free from Gender-based Violence in Science* at the European R&I Days 2024[120], and a stakeholder exchange event in September 2025 *Research on Gender Equality and Intersectionality*, which included sessions gender-based violence in R&I (in cooperation with the Research Executive Agency).

The UniswithHeart project (2021-2024) investigated how social movements were tackling sexual violence at universities and empowering victims to speak up. Also targeting gender-based violence in research and academia are some of the Horizon Europe coordination and support actions. These actions consist primarily of accompanying measures, such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising and networking. For example, the META-TOO project (2024-2027) addresses the issue of online gender-based violence in virtual spaces; the GenderSAFE project (2024-2027) aims to increase the robustness of gender-based violence zero-tolerance policies with mutual learning, exchange and co-design in a community of practice; the GENDERACTION plus project (2022-2025) identifies policies in EU Member States and associated countries. The projects supporting implementation of inclusive Gender Equality Plans implemented between 2023 and 2027, such as BUDGET-IT, AGRIGEP, NEXUS, INCLUDE, SEE-ERA, GEPINC, and especially SUPPORTER also target gender-based violence.

Some of these activities informed the development of the **Zero-tolerance Code of Conduct** on counteracting gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in the EU research and innovation system, which was published in September 2024. The Code of Conduct provides guidance on how to tackle incidents of gender-based violence in research and higher education settings by setting out a unified approach, definitions and a set of principles to inform Member States, stakeholders and individuals. With the ERA policy agenda 2025-2027, one of the key outcomes is to implement this Code of Conduct.

In 2024, as part of its monitoring of the gender equality strategy, the Commission published the policy brief '**Breaking the silence: Violence against women in politics**'[121]. This explored violence against women in politics in Europe and its implications for victims' well-being and

[120] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-L-evh48GU.
[121] JRC Publications Repository 'Breaking the silence: Violence against women in politics', available at: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC136860.

representation in politics and for society at large. Furthermore, the Commission's Competence Centre on Composite Indicators and Scoreboards continues to conduct **statistical audits** of the composite indicators of EU institutions and international organisations to improve the reliability of their results and research. In 2023, the Commission published **a study on intimate partner violence and help-seeking**[122], which found that information campaigns and public discussion can foster help-seeking from survivors of gender-based violence. In 2025, the Commission published a **policy brief** that assessed gender attitudes and their evolution across the EU, including attitudes towards violence against women[123]. It showed that while most EU citizens do not accept physical and sexual violence against women, there are higher rates of acceptance of online violence, such as non-consensual image-sharing and sexist, demeaning and abusive comments. Furthermore, young men are more likely to accept violence than older men in certain contexts[124]. Lastly, the Commission is planning to conduct **a study in 2025** to analyse gender norms and gender-based violence through the lens of behavioural insights.

The **EP's** Policy Departments and Research Service regularly produce and procure research related to gender equality, removal of all forms of discrimination and violence and women's empowerment[125]. In June 2025, the Research Service published the briefing Violence against women in the EU: State of Play in 2025[126]. On 19 May 2025, the FEMM Committee organised a workshop on consent-based rape legislation in the EU[127]. In 2024, DG EPRS published a briefing on the legislative work of the FEMM and LIBE Committees on the VAW Directive[128]. In June 2025, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee) and the FEMM Committee organised an exchange of views on Female Genital Mutilation in the EU. In May 2025, the FEMM Committee organised an exchange of views on sexual violence in conflict. In April 2025, the FEMM Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Health (SANT Committee) held a hearing on 'chemical submission: non-consensual administration of psychoactive substances'. In November 2023, the FEMM Committee together with the Committee on Development (DEVE Committee) organised the hearing 'The Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls'. Furthermore, the FEMM Committee regularly conducts stocktaking exercises and exchanges of best practices with third country interlocutors on measures and challenges in combating violence against women, for example the exchange of views with Brazilian Members of Parliament on the topic of women in politics and the fight against violence in April 2025.

The EP also organises fact-finding missions to third countries and inside the EU on the topic of violence against women, for example, the FEMM Committee mission to Nicosia, Cyprus in May 2025 on the impact of conflict and post-conflict trauma on women and girls as refugees, mothers, widows, survivors of rape and sexual violence. In order to support an informed debate

[122] JRC Publications Repository 'Intimate partner violence and help-seeking: The role of femicide news', available at: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC130121.

[123] JRC Publications Repository 'Gender Attitudes in the EU: Uneven Progress and Partial Polarisation', available at: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC141299#:~:text=This%20Policy%20Brief%20uses%20data%20from%20several%20Eurobarometer,need%20to%20be%20studied%20as%20a%20multidimensional%20phenomenon.

[125] See relevant briefings and studies (on obstetric and gynaecological violence etc.) here: Search database | Supporting analyses | Committees | European Parliament and Pol Dep Expertise for FEMM 2019 - 2024.pdf.

[126] Available here: Violence against women in the EU.

[127] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/consent-based-rape-legislation-in-the-eu/product-details/20250508WKS06321

[128] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/739392/EPRS_BRI%282023%29739392_EN.pdf

on women's rights at EU level with national parliaments, every International Women's Day (IWD) the FEMM Committee organises an Inter-Parliamentary Committee meeting on a relevant theme. For example, its 2025 theme was 'Strengthening the Women, Peace and Security Agenda - Upholding Women's Rights in Defence, Security and Peace Building'[129].

EIGE supports Member States in recognising and addressing **femicide**. The Institute advocates for the consistent and public collection of administrative data, which is crucial for effective prevention efforts. EIGE's study, **'Improving Legal Responses to Counter Femicide'**, provides a comprehensive analysis of legal responses across the EU. *Shedding Light on the Invisible Victims'* highlights the need to protect children and provide them with measures to ensure compensation and restitution. It also emphasises securing their rights during criminal proceedings and suspending parental authority when necessary. Another way in which EIGE supports Member States in addressing femicide is through consultation meetings with policymakers, in order to discuss the need for the criminalisation of femicide. Through these efforts, EIGE aims to enhance legal frameworks, improve data collection, and strengthen policy responses to prevent femicide and support affected individuals. EIGE's gender statistics database feeds into its Monitoring Portal and helps further breakdown data by other personal characteristics. This database allows users to analyse indicator data from an intersectional perspective, by providing options for further disaggregation to enable the visualisation (through either charts or data tables) of how personal and socioeconomic variables affect gendered experiences[130].

EU-OSHA published an article on 'Cyberviolence and cyber harassment committed by third parties in February 2025'[131]. The article discusses the impact of digitalisation on work-related violence and harassment, highlighting how new technologies enable third parties (patients, clients, customers, parents or other members of the public) to perpetrate acts of cyberviolence and cyber harassment against workers. It acknowledges that women are disproportionately affected and emphasises the need for updated policies, procedures and protocols for prevention.

On 20 March 2025, **FRA** published its report, 'Towards Integrated Child Protection Systems', which makes several references to the Istanbul Convention, including children as victims and witnesses of crimes[132]. The report presents the findings of FRA research on the 2023 mapping of child protection systems across all EU Member States. The FRA report on online content moderation (November 2023) highlighted disproportionate levels of online hate and violent posts targeting women and girls[133]. Of the relevant online posts analysed as part of the research, women faced over twice as many hateful posts compared to any other target group in the study.

In 2025, the **EESC** published its own-initiative opinion *Violence against women as a human rights issue: state of play of measures across the EU*[134]. Preparatory work for this included a public hearing and two Member State visits.

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[129] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/femm/international-women-day.
[130] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/data-talks/monitoring-eu-gender-equality-commitments-through-intersectional-lens.
[131] Available here: Cyberviolence and cyber harassment committed by third parties - OSHwiki | European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.
[132] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Towards Integrated Child Protection Systems - Challenges, promising practices and ways forward', available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2025/integrated-child-protection.
[133] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Online content moderation - Current challenges in detecting hate speech', available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/online-content-moderation.
[134] EESC opinion: Violence against women as a human rights issue: state of play of measures across the EU.

G. Article 11(2) – Population- based surveys

*Please provide information on any **population-based survey(s)** conducted by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, on violence against women as required by Article 11, paragraph 2. Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to place obligations on EU member states to conduct population-based surveys, in line with Article 11 paragraph 2.*

For each survey, please indicate:

1. *the form(s) of violence covered;*
2. *its geographic reach;*
3. *its main results; and*
4. *whether the results were made public (with an indication of the sources).*

Article 44 of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to endeavour to **conduct population-based surveys** at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence against women and domestic violence. Survey data must then be sent to the Commission (Eurostat) as soon as they become available.

In November 2024, the results of **the EU gender-based violence survey** (EU-GBV survey) were published jointly by Eurostat, FRA and EIGE[135]. The **forms of violence covered** in the EU-GBV survey are: (i) violence by intimate partner: psychological, physical sexual; (ii) violence by non-partner: physical, sexual; (iii) violence by domestic perpetrator: physical, sexual; (iv) violence by any perpetrator: physical, sexual; (v) sexual harassment at work; (vi) violence experienced in childhood: emotional abuse or serious physical violence by parents and between parents, sexual violence by any perpetrator; and (vii) stalking by any perpetrator: intimate partner, non-partner. As regards **the geographic reach**, Eurostat coordinated data collection in 18 EU countries[136] where the survey was implemented by national statistical authorities. For eight EU countries[137], FRA and EIGE coordinated the data collection, which was carried out by private companies based on the EU-GBV survey guidelines. The survey was implemented in the following non-EU countries: Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia and Kosovo[138], while Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania conducted some methodological work.

The survey's **main results** show that around 50 million women aged 18-74 in the EU (31%) experienced physical violence (including threats) or sexual violence in adulthood. When comparing the prevalence of gender-based violence by age group (the survey covers the population aged 18-74), 35% of women in the youngest age group (aged 18 to 29) reported experiencing gender-based violence, compared with 24% in the oldest age group (aged 65-74). Data also shows that home is not always a safe place for many women. In 2021, 18% of women who had ever had a partner experienced physical or sexual violence by their partner; if

[135] Overview - Gender-based violence - Eurostat, Joint press release is available at: One in three women in the EU have experienced violence.

[136] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Italy provided comparable data for the main indicators based on its national survey.

[137] Czechia, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania and Sweden.

[138] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

psychological violence is also taken into account, 32% have or have had a violent partner in their lifetime. 20% of women experienced physical violence (including threats) or sexual violence by a non-partner, with 9% experiencing degrading or humiliating acts other than rape, another 7% pointing to physical violence and not sexual violence, and 4% having experienced rape. The data was **made public** in the Eurostat database, where more detailed analyses are available[139]. A **podcast** to discuss the challenges of designing the survey on gender-based violence was published by Eurostat[140]. Eurostat is preparing the next wave of EU-GBV data collection in 2027-2028 and a legal basis for regular data collection for the next waves. **FRA**'s Fundamental Rights Report 2025 provides an overview and analysis of the VAW survey[141].

FRA's survey on violence and related human rights abuses against women displaced by the war in Ukraine[142] includes interviews with a sample of 1 200 women in Czechia, Germany and Poland who had left Ukraine since the start of Russia's war of aggression in 2022. The survey includes data on women's experiences of physical and sexual violence and sexual harassment in Ukraine during the war, during their journey to seek safety in the EU, after arrival in the EU and by intimate partners. The results will be published in the second half of 2025.

In **the EU's public administration**, a survey on 'Respect, diversity, and inclusion in the Commission' was launched in May 2025. It includes questions about the Commission's new anti-harassment policy to set a baseline for the policy. An additional survey on psychosocial aspects at work is planned around the end of 2025 or beginning of 2026.

In **the GSC**, the clinical psychologist maintains a database that includes the consultations carried out along with the reason for the encounter. Based on this database, a general and anonymised report is prepared for internal use by the Healthcare and Social Services Unit and the Organisational Development and Services Directorate-General. The general staff surveys in 2021 and 2023 included questions on anti-harassment and diversity and inclusion. A new staff survey, together with a dedicated survey on diversity and inclusion, was launched in September 2025, once again including specific questions on harassment situations and questions on diversity and inclusion.

Up to June 2025, five **EP** DGs carried out a survey to assess wellbeing at work, including questions on psychological safety and harassment. Further DGs are planning to join the exercise in the future.

The **CJEU**'s administration also carries out surveys on working conditions and wellbeing at work.

The **EESC** conducted its latest Staff Engagement Survey in the beginning of 2025 and its first diversity and inclusion survey in May 2025. Both surveys had questions related to the effectiveness of actions undertaken by the administration in regard to the respect at work policies. In 2024, the EESC and the CoR conducted a survey on preventing sexism at work,

[139] See: Gender-based violence statistics - Statistics Explained; Joint key results publication by Eurostat, FRA, EIGE and Statistical report on the main findings.
[140] See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/wdn-20241122-1.
[141] See: Fundamental Rights Report 2025 (chapter 2, p. 58-77)
[142] Violence and related human rights abuses against women fleeing the war in Ukraine | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Results were shared with staff during a 'Preventing Sexism at Work' training course, which took place during the 'Orange the World' campaign at the CoR and the EESC.

At **the ECA,** HR conducts pulse surveys via the ECA Intranet to collect anonymous feedback on various HR and D&I topics, including harassment. The staff exit survey also includes questions related to harassment, allowing departing staff to anonymously share their experiences at the court.

EIB runs regular staff engagement surveys which include questions on diversity, inclusion as well as on ethics and conduct. In addition, EIB has run health and wellbeing surveys and a speak-up survey to improve wellbeing at the workplace and in 2024 a plan was launched to further improve wellbeing in the workplace.

The ECB conducts engagement surveys on a number of topics that impact work experiences, including respectful behaviours which are analysed by gender. Data from these surveys is aggregated and tracked over time to guide actions aimed at strengthening the work experience and to measure progress. The ECB included questions related to dignity at work (e.g. unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, actual or threatened physical violence in the workplace, and shouting/use of an aggressive tone) in its April 2023 staff survey. As a follow-up, an action plan was implemented in 2023 and 2024, and a next survey is planned in 2025 or early 2026.

The EO launches an anonymous survey on staff awareness and perceptions on ethical matters every year. The purpose is to see where this Office stands on ethics and to better focus the trainings and info sessions organised on those matters. The confidential counsellors and the conciliation committee draw up a yearly report, which is shared with HR and published on the Office's intranet. Regarding, in particular, harassment, both the confidential counsellors and the conciliation committee keep anonymous statistical record of the informal procedure for each case handled.

In May 2025 the **EUAN Network** launched the DEI Survey to assess diversity aspects in the workplace including the gender aspect

III. Prevention

*In light of the overarching general obligations in the area of prevention provided for in Article 12, paragraphs 1 to 6, please provide an account of **any preventive action taken**, including to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men. Such preventive action must address the specific needs of persons made **vulnerable by particular circumstances** and place the human rights of all victims at their centre. It must also encourage all members of society, especially **men and boys**, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence, and include the promotion of programmes and activities for the empowerment of women. Please also indicate which measures have been taken to ensure that culture, custom, religion, tradition or **so-called honour** are not considered as justification for any acts of violence. Please bear in mind that the above principles apply to all preventive measures taken in accordance with the obligations contained in Chapter III.*

A. Article 13 – Campaigns and programmes

*1. What **campaigns and programmes** on any of the forms of violence covered by the Convention have been promoted or conducted by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in accordance with Article 13, paragraph 1?*

Throughout 2023, the **Commission** ran a communication campaign to challenge gender stereotypes. The **#EndGenderStereotypes** campaign targeted young adults and was run mostly on social media, but also through influencers and media outreach. The campaign tackled gender stereotypes in different areas of life such as career choices, sharing care responsibilities and decision-making. The campaign was also displayed during the Commission's Open Day, on the Europe Day celebrations on 10 May 2025.

In January 2023, the Commission launched an **EU campaign** on victims' rights, '**Keep your Eyes Open**'[143]. This campaign focuses on particular types of crimes, including gender-based violence, in 10 EU Member States. Between January-June 2024, it reached over 22 million people. The Commission also aims to raise awareness about **children's rights**, including awareness raising of the crime of violence against children. In 2024, the Commission promoted this campaign during the Olympic Games in Paris, the Brussels Book Fair and the EU Open Day. The Commission will prolong the "Keep Your Eyes Open" campaign for a second phase of the campaign which will be implemented during May 2026 – May 2027. The geographical scope will be extended to additional EU Member States.

Both the **EEAS** and the **Commission** support the UN-led yearly campaign for the 16 days of activism around the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls**. In 2024, the EEAS and the Commission coordinated key messages and ran a joint campaign with all EU Delegations around the world, highlighting 10 key messages aimed at raising awareness of violence against women and advocating for people to actively show their support. **The Commission** lit up the Berlaymont building in orange, provided audiovisual campaign materials to all departments and published a statement by President von der Leyen on social media and the Commission's website. The Commission has also used the date to release data from a Flash Eurobarometer on Gender Stereotypes on Violence against Women. The College, which consists of all 27 Commissioners, marked this day with the Commissioners wearing orange scarfs. In addition, the Commission's Representations in the Member States are involved (in a decentralised manner) in various activities linked to awareness raising and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The activities included conferences, discussion panels and meetings with stakeholders, active participation in communication events organised by external partners, media appearances and publication of press material. The Commission also published posts on social media to increase awareness and understanding among the general public on the different forms of violence covered by the Convention as well as related EU policies. Similar initiatives were held in 2025.

The 'Louise Weiss' **EP** building in Strasbourg was lit up in orange and orange flags were displayed in front of its buildings in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg on 25 November 2024. President Roberta Metsola, Vice-President Antonella Sberna, and Lina Gálvez, Chair of the FEMM Committee, made statements marking that day. In addition, the EP organised the 5th **European Gender Equality Week** in December 2024, with one of the main topics being violence against women and their safety, both online and offline[144]. During this week, committees and delegations, political groups and individual MEPs hold events, with almost all

[143] Keep Your Eyes Open - campaign on raising awareness on victims' rights | European Youth Portal.
[144] 2024 European Gender Equality Week | European Parliament

directorates-general of the European Parliament participating. A big number of external stakeholders also join this initiative. Since the first edition of the Gender Equality Week in 2020, violence against women has been one of the main topics of discussions. For example, a workshop on femicide was held in 2021, a hearing on sexuality and relationships education of boys was organised in 2022, and an event on combating violence against women in cities and regions was held in 2023. In 2024, several events focused on violence against women, including sessions on gender-based violence in sports and sexual violence as a weapon of war as well as a high-level online discussion on elimination of violence against women and their empowerment in the digital world.

EIGE ran a communication campaign in 2024 entitled 'A new push for European democracy' in light of the EP elections. EIGE's report 'Gender equality in the European Parliament and national parliaments in the EU' was expanded and enhanced to better capture information related to violence against women, harassment, including sexual harassment, and sex-based discrimination in parliaments[145]. The joint release of key results from the EU GBV-survey by Eurostat, FRA and EIGE in November 2024, marked the launch of EIGE's communication campaign to raise awareness of the widespread violence women face[146]. Running through 2025, the campaign focuses on specific forms of violence, like workplace sexual harassment. EIGE regularly monitors women's and men's representation in decision-making positions in the security sector of the EU[147].

As regards the **EU's public administration**, the **Commission** organised **awareness-raising sessions** with the Chief Confidential Counsellor in each Commission service on the new anti-harassment policy. An internal communication campaign was launched in 2025 to highlight the new network of confidential counsellors. The Commission has also put in place clear and user-friendly **tools and procedures** to inform staff of their rights and obligations and assist them as necessary. Those tools include an IT portal on various staff-related matters, including specific pages on ethics and staff conduct where staff can find related legal documents, clearly written descriptions and contact points; HR Service desk for staff; comprehensive overview of applicable Staff Regulations and implementing rules.

The GSC also takes action to raise awareness about its anti-harassment policy with articles and information on the intranet, awareness raising events and targeted training for managers, newcomers and trainees.

In October 2024, **the EP** launched the 'United Against Harassment' campaign to raise awareness, educate and empower all MEPs and staff members to recognise, prevent and address any form of harassment. The campaign created intranet pages listing all available resources, updated information brochures and a poster campaign. The EP provides regular gender equality training and workshops for MEPs and staff, raising awareness on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias, promoting thus inclusive behaviour in the workplace. Every year the EP organises inclusion events on International Women's Day and issues a prize for good practices in equality and diversity in the EP administration twice per legislature, namely the Simone Veil **Award for Equality and Diversity.** In 2023, it rewarded two initiatives

[145] Available here: https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-equality-european-parliament-and-national-parliaments-european-union-2023-state-play.
[146] EU Gender-based Violence Survey | European Institute for Gender Equality
[147] Available here: https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-balance-security-sector.

fostering gender equality in the workplace. Every year the EP publishes a 'Women in the EP' brochure to raise awareness on gender equality and on the implementation of gender policies[148].

The **CJEU** organises regular awareness-raising activities and training and events, notably on the International Women's Rights Day on 8 March, the International Day of Women Judges on 10 March, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November. For instance, a conference on domestic violence was organised on International Women's Day 2024 and 2025.

The EESC Women's Forum (launched in April 2024) provides a safe, inclusive space where trust, equality, and collective action are not only promoted but actively practised. As part of its awareness-raising efforts, on 26 November 2024 the Women's Forum co-organised a high-level conference on the elimination of violence against women together with UN Women and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), within the framework of the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. This event, along with other initiatives such as film screenings and symbolic actions like illuminating the EESC bridge in orange, highlights the EESC's strong commitment to a future free from gender-based violence.

The CoR strives to create an inclusive and respectful place for all. It has been organising yearly 'Orange the World' campaigns where the bridge on the Rue Belliard has been illuminated in orange and training courses on related topics were organised, such as 'How to Prevent Sexism at Work' in 2024. In 2024 it also launched an internal campaign with posters and news in the internal communication channels to display remarks that were often interpreted as harmless but that could be considered sexist.

In 2025, **the ECB** focused its International Women's Day activities on 'Closing the gender gap in financial literacy'. Panellists discussed the topic at a high-level event on 27 March 2025[149]. On that occasion, the ECB also launched a financial literacy page[150] on its website, providing a link to information about financial literacy initiatives at national level across the euro area. The ECB also lit up its building in orange, raised the orange flag in front of its building, distributed orange pins and raised awareness through speaking events or articles to all staff. This was also flagged on the ECB's social media channels such as LinkedIn[151]. The ECB emphasizes improving financial literacy across the EU to enhance retail investor participation, promote financial inclusion, and support vulnerable groups like low-income individuals. Efforts include initiatives such as the Espresso Economics YouTube channel and educational outreach. Additionally, ECB organizes events like the IT Bootcamp for girls, aimed at bridging the gender gap in technology. Moreover, financial inclusion remains central to the ECB's Digital Euro project, with a focus on universal accessibility for citizens including all vulnerable demographics.

The EIB runs yearly campaigns for all staff around the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, joining global campaigns such as Orange the World and communicating to staff on its zero tolerance for the topics, both inhouse as well as in our operations. In 2024 the EIB organised an event with Stand Speak Rise Up! about rape as a weapon of war and in 2023 raised awareness of the 'violence meter', a self-assessment tool to

[148] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/publications/2024/0001/P9_PUB(2024)0001_EN.pdf
[149] ECB International Women's Day 2025
[150] Financial literacy in Europe
[151] Did you know that over 80% of women and girls live in countries without legal protection against gender-based violence? | European Central Bank

help measure violence in a couple. The EIB organises yearly all-staff campaigns about working together, which addresses inclusion, collaboration and respect in the workplace as well as annual diversity days.

The EUAN organises **annual awareness-raising campaigns** throughout the year. These campaigns provide the opportunity to highlight key D&I issues and to promote increased awareness among EUAN members on equality, gender considerations, promotes diversity and inclusion throughout the EUAN HR community and beyond. The **EUAN** also organised series of online talks on relevant topics attended by a high number of participants.

Ever since it was created, **the EEAS** has applied a **zero-tolerance policy against harassment**, based on the EU Staff Regulations and Commission Decision C(2006)1624/3. The EEAS **regularly organises awareness-raising campaigns** to prevent and address psychological and sexual harassment, as for example, in June 2024, to mark the adoption of the new Decision on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment for local staff in the EU Delegations (ADMIN(2024) 9), or in October 2023 for the release of the new mandatory e-learning for all EEAS staff entitled 'Recognising and Addressing Harassment at Work'. Following the recommendations from the **Istanbul Task Force**, to raise awareness, the EEAS proposes to produce posters to present at each Delegation and revamp the intranet landing site on the topic.

Diversity and inclusion, including gender equality, are core organisational values at the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (**Europol)**[152]. Europol has established a dedicated Working Group on Domestic Violence. The network provides individualised support through colleagues trained to engage in conversations with (potential) victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. It helps colleagues navigate the national and/or EU support system and identify the most appropriate course of action. In addition, the network focuses on prevention and awareness raising. For example, the 2024 "16 Days of Activism" campaign centred on work with perpetrators and the importance of engaging men in the fight against domestic violence.

2. *Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to* ***place obligations on EU Member States to conduct campaigns*** *and programmes in accordance with Article 13, paragraph 1.*

Article 34 of the VAW Directive requires **Member States** to conduct or support targeted **awareness-raising campaigns or programmes** aimed at young people to increase awareness and understanding among the general public, from an early age, of the different manifestations and root causes of all forms of domestic violence and violence against women, the need for prevention and, where appropriate, the consequences of violence, in particular on children. These campaigns may be developed in cooperation with relevant civil society organisations, specialist services, social partners, impacted communities and other stakeholders.

B. Article 14 – Teaching materials

What action has been taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to encourage the inclusion of ***teaching material*** *on issues such as equality between women and men, non-*

[152] https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/our-thinking/diversity-and-inclusion-europol.

stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in inter-personal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity in ***formal and informal education settings*** *in EU Member States, as required by Article 14, paragraph 1 and 2?*

Article 35 of the **VAW Directive** requires **Member States** to make available **education material on consent** that promotes the understanding that consent in sexual relationships must be given voluntarily as a result of a person's free will, mutual respect, and the right to sexual integrity and bodily autonomy. They must adapt this material to the stage of development of the target audience. Article 34 also addresses prevention measures in the area of education.

The **EU's action in the field of education and training is** limited by the competences conferred on it by the Treaties (Articles 165 and 166 TFEU). In 2021, the Commission and Member States put in place the strategic framework for European cooperation towards building the **European Education Area (EEA),** which aims to make the right to quality and inclusive education a reality for all learners by 2030. Gender equality is an essential part of the first strategic priority of the EEA – *improving quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training.* To this end, the EEA strategic framework Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training published in 2023 an issue paper on gender equality in and through education[153]. Part of the analysis focused on tackling gender-based violence in education and confronting gender biases in textbooks and learning materials.

In 2024, a Commission Expert Group issued **guidelines for policymakers to address well-being and mental health at schoo**l[154]. The guidelines emphasise that creating safe and supportive learning environments is an important way to tackle issues such as discrimination, sexism, bullying, violence and stereotypes, which have a negative impact on the well-being of learners and educators. The action points for national/regional/local policymakers highlight the importance of curricula and programmes on comprehensive sexuality education in line with UNESCO Guidelines and international standards and identifies the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education as a success indicator for preventing gender-based violence and for improving the health and well-being of young people.

Erasmus+ – the EU's main programme in education and training and a key enabler of the EEA – funds cross-border partnerships for organisations to cooperate on topics such as eradicating gender-based violence in and through education. One such example is the Erasmus+ project Sex Education as the Best Weapon against Gender Violence (2021-2023)[155].

C. Article 15 – Training of professionals

1. Please indicate any action taken to provide or strengthen appropriate ***initial and in-service training*** *of relevant professionals working for the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, as*

[153] European Education Area Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training Issue paper: Gender Equality in and through Education..
[154] Guidelines for policymakers to address wellbeing and mental health at school, available online: Wellbeing and mental health at school - Publications Office of the EU.
[155]SEDUCA project: Sex Education as the Best Weapon against Gender Violence.

required by Article 15[156]*. Please indicate the categories and the number of professionals who received such training.*

As regards **the EU's public administration**, the **Commission** launched mandatory training for managers on anti-harassment starting with the Heads of Unit as the first managerial target group in 2024 with a half-day online session. Close to 200 managers attended the first session, which will be repeated five times in 2025 each with the same estimated capacity. In 2025, the Commission will hold dedicated training sessions for senior management, cabinet members and will extend the sessions for "de facto" managers (deputy heads of unit, heads of sectors and team leaders), stepping up its in-house measures on prevention to avoid violence against women. Dedicated training to Blue Book trainees takes place regularly as a part of the welcome session (1st day of the traineeship) where all administrative matters are explained, and targeted sessions to external service providers (such as catering, cleaning) are in the pipeline. In 2024, the Commission launched the course 'Security tips for women travelling' to empower women travellers by raising their security awareness. The newly appointed confidential counsellors have followed compulsory specialised training that included, for example, active listening, gender equality, inclusion, protection of personal data, and different dispute settlement mechanisms available in the Commission. The Commission's staff in charge of conducting internal investigations are trained on methodologies and investigative techniques to deal with cases of harassment and violence. The Commission also provides training for statutory and non-statutory staff (e.g. on non-violent communication, ethics, and unconscious bias, bystander interventions and microaggressions).

In **the GSC**, there has been a mandatory training on anti-harassment for managers and persons with people management responsibilities since 2020. In 2023 and 2024, 70 managers undertook this training. All Directors-General, Directors and Heads of Unit have now completed this training, as well as most other staff with people management roles. The Staff Development Unit provides targeted training for confidential counsellors, psychologists and legal advisors. In addition, the Safety and Security Directorate and the Human Resources Directorate organise training sessions for managers on post-trauma support to staff as part of their duty of care. Targeted courses and information on anti-harassment policy have been provided to newcomers and trainees. In 2023 and 2024, 45 newcomers and 200 trainees attended this training The GSC also offers training on conflict prevention strategies, assertive communication and techniques for managing difficult relationships, as well as self-defence for women and security tips for women travelling. The new Diversity and Inclusion strategy for 2030 makes training on inclusive communication and unconscious bias mandatory for managers, while anti-harassment training will become mandatory for all staff.

In April 2024, **the EP** adopted an amendment to Parliament's Rules of Procedure to make it mandatory for all MEPs to do a training course on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace and on good office management. Since this term, it has been mandatory for Accredited Parliamentary Assistants to do an online training course on harassment in the workplace. The compulsory course for managers 'Fostering a positive workplace: managing staff ethically and preventing harassment situations' emphasises the managers' duty of care, their role in preventing harassment and foster psychological safety. DG Personnel raises awareness among all staff members about gender equality, unconscious bias and anti-

[156] This comprises training on the prevention and detection of violence against women, standards of intervention, equality between women and men, the needs and rights of victims, prevention of secondary victimisation, multi-agency cooperation.

harassment measures, using various types of training (conferences, presentations, classes etc.). In May 2025, all staff in the Brussels medical service were offered a specific internal training course on violence against women.

The CJEU offers a large variety of training courses and informative sessions. The training on ethical aspects, rights and obligations, focusing on dignity, discretion, prevention of harassment, and the training on unconscious bias are mandatory for newcomers, and highly recommended for all staff. Training for all staff on diversity and inclusion with a special focus on the prevention of micro-aggressions, management of bias and stereotypes and on ethical and agile collaboration was launched in 2024. Moreover, since 2025, in the context of the recommendations of the working group on the Istanbul Convention, two new training sessions are offered to all staff on 'How to set healthy boundaries to improve performance' and how to 'Become an actor of a harassment-free working environment'. In 2023, CJEU senior and middle managers attended a training program on Adaptive Leadership that included a module on psychological safety. In the framework of the Talent Management program, high-potential administrators participate in training courses regarding Ethical Leadership and Communication. A series of lectures is regularly given to all staff by representatives of the Medical and Social Service. In September 2025, workshops with additional, more detailed training on bias and working/managerial practices will be organised for managers and staff.

The **ECA** organises awareness-raising activities and training around International Women's Day on 8 March and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November. On the latter occasion, the ECA raises orange flags and lights up its building in orange. It promotes these initiatives through ECA's social media channels and have also created and published a dedicated awareness video on the ECA website. In addition, one of the ECA Members has taken on the role of Equality Ambassador, sponsoring and supporting all related activities.

The EO adheres to the Commission's policy of zero tolerance of discrimination and violence in the workplace and organises annual awareness-raising training for staff and managers on matters such as prevention of harassment, non-violent communication, unconscious bias, etc. In 2023 and 2024, around 80% of the Ombudsman's staff (including managers and trainees) attended such training courses (for 2025, courses are scheduled for the second half of the year). Sessions on ethics and anti-harassment policy are also part of the standard induction programme for all new staff. In parallel, throughout the year, the confidential counsellors and HR remind staff of the Office's standards via relevant info about trainings and awareness-raising material. The EO's newly appointed confidential counsellors and the conciliation committee follow a compulsory intensive specialised training course, given by an external expert over several days. This covers relevant topics to give them the skills to accomplish their tasks, at both a professional and personal level (non-directive counselling, active listening, empathy, communication dynamics, gender equality, inclusion, protection of personal data, mediating techniques, conflict resolution). HR team members also participate.

All **EESC** staff undergo mandatory training on ethics and integrity and managers have had to undergo a series of mandatory training courses since 2024.

The CoR provides mandatory training on ethics and integrity for all staff, and recommended training on dignity at work for all levels of management and personalised trainings for confidential counsellors to perform their duties with confidentiality and professionalism. The lists of mandatory and recommended courses for staff are published on the intranet. These

courses are also open for all staff, including the Medical Service, the Social Service, the Confidential Counsellors and the Contact Persons. Topics covered include sexism and anti-harassment.

The EIB is conducting unconscious bias training for staff and managers, with 95% of managers having already been trained on the topic. Follow-up learning has included inclusive leadership and allyship, managing psychological safety for managers and micro-aggressions for managers and staff. In addition, the EIB has put in place dedicated learning on psychological and sexual harassment. This training became mandatory in 2025. A dedicated session for top management on tackling harassment was held. In addition, the EIB offers safety training for women travellers, e-learning on gender-based violence and training for frontline staff on how to deal with gender-based violence and sexual harassment in projects and operations. The EIB provides guidance on policy framework, learning resources and information on support organisations and services to survivors in Luxembourg (where the EIB is headquartered) via its all-staff portal.

At **the ECB,** newcomers complete an e-learning series on D&I that comprises one course on dignity at work. The ECB's internal training platform EUREKA offers a broad spectrum of training and awareness sessions on ethics, non-violent communication and inclusive behaviour. In 2023 DG/HR arranged three types of **workshops** designed to strengthen psychological safety, improve the speaking-up culture, and raise awareness of how to identify and address inappropriate behaviours in the workplace. From October 2023 through January 2024, 65 sessions were offered[157]. Furthermore, the Social Counsellors offer individual training and counselling sessions to help staff members deal with sensitive issues that may develop into conflictual situations. The ECB Mediator offers conflict coaching sessions for staff and various training programs on workplace conflict and the development of conflict management skills. Internal Audit investigators attend regular trainings sessions on sexual harassment. A training curriculum is being rolled out which would include all aspects from identification of breaches in behaviour and professional duties (such as psychological and sexual harassment, violence and discrimination), to interview techniques, driving processes and providing empathic support.

In October 2023, **the EEAS** brought in a new mandatory **e-learning course for all EEAS staff** entitled 'Recognising and Addressing Harassment at Work'. Close to 2 300 staff members from Headquarters and Delegations (both from the EEAS and the Commission), have completed this e-learning course so far (as of September 2025). In parallel, the EEAS continues to provide a mandatory half-day management course to support managers in creating harassment-free work environment (61% of EEAS managers had completed this mandatory training in January 2025), as well as dedicated sessions during newcomer' inductions, pre-posting seminars for both EEAS and Commission staff joining EU Delegations and for trainees and their supervisors. The EEAS has a comprehensive training programme to prevent unconscious bias, including specific training for managers and recruitment panel members. Managers are offered broad training on how to be a gender-responsive leader, recognising the important role managers have in understanding gender structures at the workplace. At the moment, 80% of senior managers at EEAS headquarters have taken the programme. The EEAS Mediation Service is the first-level contact for any alleged cases of harassment in the EEAS (headquarters and staff posted

[157] Approximately 50 sessions on 'Identify & Act' (active bystander training) to give understanding and tools for identifying and calling out inappropriate behaviours (approximately 600 participants in total), 6 sessions on 'Psychological Safety' and 13 sessions on 'Speaking-up Culture'.

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in Delegations). Eight full–time members of the Mediation Service are trained to listen actively and empathically and to provide information and guidance on the available options and support services. So too are the eight EEAS confidential counsellors who are supervised by the EEAS Mediator. All receive regular training and supervision by external experts. In addition, following the recommendations from the Istanbul Task Force, it is proposed to step up the training available for people in contact with victims, for confidential councillors, and specifically for managers (including in recruitment processes).

The Missions and Operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy (**CSDP)** and the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) also provide training on anti-harassment, including in its mandatory pre-deployment training. Most missions also have in-mission training, with separate anti-harassment, unconscious bias and active by-stander trainings. The civilian Missions have confidential counsellors and have access to training packages on unconscious bias and anti-harassment). Moreover, following the EEAS action plan on women's participation in civilian CSDP Missions, work is currently ongoing on a comprehensive strategy on safe and inclusive working environment in civilian CSDP, which will include a part on anti-harassment.

FRA and EIGE, like many other EU agencies and institutions, have appointed and trained selected staff members to act as confidential counsellors, in line with the agencies' anti-harassment policy.

The European Institute of Innovation & technology (EIT) is fully committed to preventing and combating gender-based violence. The EIT Gender Equality Action Plan 2025-2027 encourages all EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) to ensure regular awareness raising and capacity building, including annual diversity & inclusion/unconscious bias/anti-harassment/anti-discrimination/gender mainstreaming training for staff & decision-makers. The EIT requires all EIT KICs to ensure inclusive program design and gender mainstreaming in their innovation, education, and business creation & acceleration programs.

*2. Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **initial and in-service training** of relevant professionals is provided or strengthened in EU Member States.*

Article 36 of **the VAW Directive** provides extensive training obligations for various categories of professionals. It states that **officials** likely to come into contact with victims must receive both general and specialist training and targeted information to a level appropriate to their contact with victims to enable them to identify, prevent and address instances of violence against women or domestic violence and to treat victims in a trauma-, gender- and child-sensitive manner. The article specifically covers healthcare professionals, social services and educational staff likely to come into contact with victims; judges and prosecutors; lawyers; relevant health professionals; people with supervisory functions in the workplace (where sexual harassment constitutes a criminal offence under national law), authorities responsible for receiving reports of offences; and media training activities. These trainings shall be complemented by follow-up and include training on coordinated multidisciplinary cooperation.

Since 2018, **the Council** has called on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) to develop training modules on combating domestic violence and violence against women, including ones to address situations in migrant centres. CEPOL has developed

several modules which are accessible for law enforcement authorities of the European Union' Member States.

Training for practitioners coming into contact with victims is also included in **the VRD** (Article 25) and is one of the main actions under the EU strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025)[158].

The Commission is updating its operational guidance on taking account of **fundamental rights in European Commission impact assessments**. The guidance assists Commission staff in assessing the impacts of its legislation and policies on fundamental rights, supplementing Better Regulation Tool No 29 on fundamental rights and equality. The updated guidance (adoption planned for Q3 2025) will make explicit reference to the Istanbul Convention and invite staff members to ensure that new legislation is in line with the Convention. The Commission also provides regular training to its staff on **the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** in impact assessments.

D. & E. Article 16 – Preventive intervention and treatment programmes (domestic violence and sexual violence)

*Please provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that: **programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence** are set up or supported in EU Member States in accordance with the principles set out in Article 16, and notably that the measures taken within the framework of these programmes have the safety of, support for and the human rights of women victims as a primary concern; and that such programmes are implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for women victims and incorporate a gendered understanding of violence against women.*

Article 37 of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that targeted **intervention programmes** are established to prevent and minimise the risk of committing violence against women or domestic violence or of reoffending. These programmes must be made available to people who have committed an offence of violence against women or domestic violence and may be made available to other people who are assessed as being at risk of committing such offences, including people who feel the need to participate. Member States must ensure that rape offenders are encouraged to participate in such programmes to mitigate the risk of recidivism. Member States' implementation of this Article is guided by recital 80, which indicates that intervention programmes should be delivered by trained and skilled professionals and aim to ensure safe relations. Recital 81 indicates that information on available intervention programmes should be given to an offender or suspect of violence against women or domestic violence who is subject to an emergency barring order, restraining order or protection order.

E. & G. Article 17 – Participation of the private sector and the media and self-regulatory standards

***F**. Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to encourage **the private sector,** the information and communication technology*

[158] Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions Eu, Strategy On Victims' Rights (2020-2025), COM/2020/258 Final, EUR-Lex - 52020DC0258 - EN - EUR-Lex.

(ICT) sector and the media, including social media, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies as set out in Article 17, paragraph 1?

*2. Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to place obligations on EU Member States to encourage **the private sector**, the information and communication technology (ICT) sector and the media, including social media, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies as set out in Article 17, paragraph* 1.

***G.** Please specify any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to encourage the development of **self-regulatory standards**, such as codes of conduct for the ICT sector and the media, including social media, in the area of violence against women and/or gender equality (for example to refrain from harmful gender stereotyping and spreading degrading images of women or imagery which associates violence and sex).*

Several EU legislative acts and policies provide scope for the public sector to engage with the private sector, including the ICT and media sectors, and to jointly promote the development of self-regulatory cooperation and standards, to better prevent violence against women.

First, the VAW Directive encourages the **participation of online platforms** in preventive measures. Article 34(8) specifically obliges Member States to foster 'multidisciplinary and stakeholder cooperation' between intermediary service providers and competent authorities to fight the cybercrimes covered by the Directive. Moreover, Article 23 VAW Directive requires Member States to ensure the **removal of certain online content** criminalised under the Directive, including the possibility for competent authorities to issue legally binding orders to that effect to hosting service providers and to intermediary service providers (e.g. social media platforms and messaging services).

In the area of **training and information for professionals**, the VAW Directive also foresees a role for media self-regulatory bodies (Article 36(8)). The Directive obliges Member States to encourage and support setting up **media training activities**, including by self-regulatory bodies, to combat stereotypes and sexism and to reduce the risk of violence against women.

The VAW Directive contains a specific provision (Article 42) on self-regulatory cooperation in the ICT sector. In particular, it obliges Member States to encourage **self-regulatory cooperation** between intermediary service providers, such as through **codes of conduct.** Member States must also raise awareness of such self-regulatory measures, in particular as it concerns measures taken by online platforms to tackle content amounting to cyberviolence and the training provided to employees of these platforms.

Second, Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (**Digital Services Act**) (DSA)[159] imposes several obligations on providers of intermediary services, including online platforms, with the aim **to prevent illegal and harmful activities online** and the spread of disinformation, as well as to ensure user safety, protect fundamental rights of users in the EU, and create a fair and open digital environment. Very large online platforms and very large search engines (VLOPs and VLOSEs) which are intermediary

[159] Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj.

services that have a number of average monthly active recipients of the service in the Union equal to or higher than 45 million are subject to additional obligations. The providers of these services are **obliged to identify, assess** and mitigate the **systemic risks** stemming from the design and functioning of their service. The risk assessments must be specific to their services and proportionate to the systemic risks, taking into consideration their severity and probability. This includes **risks in relation to gender-based violence**. The assessments must also include other systemic risks referred to under Article 34 DSA that may be related to gender-based violence such as: the dissemination of illegal content; negative effects on the exercise of fundamental rights (especially the right to freedom of expression and information, and to non-discrimination); serious negative consequences to the person's physical and mental well-being and negative effects on civic discourse and electoral processes.

Article 35 of the DSA requires providers of VLOPs and VLOSEs to put in place reasonable, proportionate and effective **mitigation measures**, tailored to the specific systemic risks. These can for example include adapting content moderation processes. Some pornographic platforms are currently among the designated VLOPs under the DSA. The specific obligation for online platforms to assess and mitigate gender-based violence expresses the will of the co-legislator to pay particular attention to online risks linked to a person's gender, as online gender-based violence disproportionately impacts women and girls. The explicit reference to gender-based violence in the risk assessment framework of the DSA might also improve the assessment of specific risk scenarios and victim-survivor-centred mitigation measures across different risk categories, while making the nature, prevalence and impacts of gender-based violence visible. The designated VLOPs and VLOSEs have completed their first cycles of risk assessments, and some have identified potential risks related to gender-based violence on their platforms.

The DSA notes the possibility of drawing up voluntary **codes of conduct** to contribute to the proper application of that Regulation, taking into account the specific challenges of tackling different types of illegal content and systemic risks, such as gender-based violence. Codes of conduct may be integrated into the DSA framework after positive assessments by the Commission and the European Board for Digital Services. Under the VAW Directive, Member States shall encourage self-regulatory cooperation between relevant intermediary service providers, including through the establishment of codes of conduct. This allows the Commission to identify where further cooperation between online platforms could provide the most added value. This would also build upon the Commission's commitment in its 2020-2025 gender equality strategy, in which it proposes 'to protect women's safety online, by facilitating the development of a new framework for cooperation between internet platforms.'

Other codes of conduct are already demonstrating added value, such as the **Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online + (CoC+) and the Code of Conduct on Disinformation**, both of which have recently been updated and integrated into the Digital Services Act framework[160]. For example, the CoC+ aims to strengthen the way its signatories prevent and address the spread of illegal hate speech online by establishing clear commitments, on notice and action mechanisms, transparency of reporting actions, and intra-industry and multi-stakeholder cooperation. The CoC+ covers illegal hate speech online as defined by Union and national laws, and so its scope will include gender-based hate speech once Article 8 of the VAW Directive is transposed into national laws. The CoC+ counts on twelve signatories, among which seven are designated VLOPs (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat,

[160] See for an overview: Codes of conduct under the Digital Services Act | Shaping Europe's digital future.

TikTok, X, and YouTube) and five other signatories (Dailymotion, Jeuxvideo.com, Microsoft, Rakuten Viber, Twitch). Although it does not address gender issues explicitly, the Code of Conduct on Disinformation forms a solid framework for mobilising all stakeholders to fight disinformation, including gender-based disinformation. The signatories of the Code include major online platforms, the advertising industry, fact-checking and CSOs, research institutions, etc. The complex nature of gender-based disinformation, which may contribute to harmful gender stereotyping, means that combating it requires joint action from all stakeholders.

Third, the AI Act is the comprehensive EU Regulation that aims to ensure that AI in the EU is compatible with health safety and fundamental rights, including equality and non-discrimination[161]. It entered into force in August 2024 and its provisions are becoming applicable in a staggered approach. AI has great potential to help attain a fairer society, but certain AI systems pose significant risks in terms of equality and non-discrimination, particularly affecting gender equality. To address these concerns, the AI Act **bans** certain AI systems that are considered unacceptable and **categorises others as high-risk**, subjecting them to a risk management to identify and assess risks to health, safety, or fundamental rights. Prohibitions ban AI systems used to manipulate, deceive or to exploit persons' vulnerabilities in a manner that is likely to cause significant harm. More concretely, these bans allow for the prevention of harmful AI-enabled particularly harmful practices such as, the generation and dissemination of illegal content, such as child sexual abuse material or hate speech and sexually explicit deepfakes[162]. Psychological harms may also be covered; for instance, AI-driven harassment that may lead to significant psychological distress and physical manifestations of stress, that can specifically reach certain groups in a targeted manner[163]. Prohibitions also provide protection against AI driven physical harms, such as AI systems that may promote self-harm to users or incentivises them to commit suicide or harm other persons or groups of persons, such as by incentivising violence against certain persons or groups of persons (i.e. minorities, women)[164].

The Regulation also sets out the need for a **Fundamental Rights Impact Assessment,** mandatory for deployers of high-risk AI systems that are public bodies or private entities providing public services, which includes evaluating the impact on categories of people likely to be affected by the AI system. High-risk AI systems are those posing significant risks to the health, safety or fundamental rights (specified in Article 6 in conjunction with Annex I and III of the AI Act) and are subject to requirements that enable transparency, human oversight and data quality.

The AI Act provides **access to remedies**, such as the right to lodge a complaint with a market surveillance authority and the right to an explanation of individual decision-making. As part of

[161] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act) OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj.

[162] Communication from the Commission - Commission Guidelines on prohibited artificial intelligence practices established by Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (AI Act), (para. 145),https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/commission-publishes-guidelines-prohibited-artificial-intelligence-ai-practices-defined-ai-act.

[163]Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

its governance and enforcement system, the AI Act mandates that Member States designate authorities responsible for protecting fundamental rights, including non-discrimination. The AI Pact[165] allows for industry participation in early compliance with prohibitions and high-risk requirements, amongst other provisions.

In addition to the rules for AI systems, the AI Act includes also **obligations for the providers of general purpose AI** models that can be integrated into numerous downstream AI applications. The rules on General Purpose AI include documentation and copyright-related obligations for model providers. The most capable models posing systemic risks will be subject to risk assessment and management obligations to address those risks, which may also include risks to fundamental rights such as non-discrimination.

The AI Act provides a structure for **AI governance** through **three main pathways**, which balance regulatory oversight with stakeholder input and participation:

I. The AI Act puts forward the creation and adoption of **harmonised standards**, establishing a role for the Commission in issuing standardisation requests to facilitate compliance with the Act's high-risk requirements. Work has already started within the European standard-setting body JTC21/CEN CENELEC[166].
II. A **Code of Practice** was published on 10 July 2025, to provide providers with a tool to demonstrate compliance with the AI Act[167]. It is a voluntary tool, prepared by independent experts in a multi-stakeholder process, designed to help industry comply with the AI Act's obligations for providers of general-purpose AI models. The Commission had been facilitating the drafting of a Code of Practice led by independent chairs in an inclusive process involving more than 1000 stakeholders. The Code of Practice also includes the identification of risks, such as those related to the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.
III. **Codes of Conduct** of other non-high risk AI systems models are foreseen in the AI Act, encouraging stakeholders to voluntarily implement the Act's provisions on high-risk to systems that may not fall within that category. The codes may incorporate elements from Union ethical guidelines for trustworthy AI, such as facilitating inclusive design practices and protecting vulnerable groups and ensuring accessibility and gender equality.

Further to the AI Act, the Union has actively contributed to negotiations that have culminated in the signature of the EU of the **Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights and Rule of Law**[168]**.** This represents the first internationally legally binding treaty on AI. It mandates Parties to adopt measures to ensure that AI systems respect equality (including gender equality) and the prohibition of discrimination. The Commission signed the Convention on behalf of the EU in September 2024. In addition, the Commission is also engaging in discussions on a **Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Equality and AI**, to be formally adopted by the spring of 2026. This Recommendation aims to address various ethical and legal concerns, such as gender biases in

[165] See: AI Pact | Shaping Europe's digital future.
[166] INCLUSIVENESS as a common objective in AI standardization - CEN-CENELEC
[167] For more info: The General-Purpose AI Code of Practice | Shaping Europe's digital future
[168] The Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence - Artificial Intelligence

AI systems leading to discrimination in fields such as employment, as well as AI-generated gender-based violence in the form of a non-binding text.

Fourth, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive[169] **(AVMSD)** pursuant to its Article 6(1) obliges Member States to ensure by appropriate means that audiovisual media services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction **do not contain any incitement to violence or hatred** directed against a group of persons or a member of a group based on any of the grounds referred to in Article 21 of the Charter. This includes any such incitement based on the ground of sex and thus includes incitement to violence or hatred against women. Also, pursuant to Article 9(1), Member States must ensure that audiovisual commercial communications provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction do not include or promote any discrimination based on sex, among other grounds.

Similarly, the AVMSD in its Article 28b(1) obliges Member States to ensure that **video-sharing platform** providers (VSPs) under their jurisdiction **take appropriate measures** to **protect** the general public from programmes, user-generated videos and audiovisual commercial communications containing incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of a group based on any of the grounds referred to in Article 21 of the Charter , which as explained includes incitement to violence and hatred against women. Article 28(3) prescribes the appropriate measures that VSPs should adopt for this purpose, while Article 28(4) encourages the use of co-regulation for the implementation of the measures.

An EP resolution from 2021 contained calls for self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct for media outlets and companies[170]. In another resolution from 2021, the EP highlighted the need for a coordinated approach to improve timely and accessible reporting tools, effective content removal mechanisms, and effective cooperation between online platforms and Member States' law enforcement authorities[171]. The Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO Committee) and the LIBE Committee established a joint working group on the implementation and enforcement of the AI Act aimed at monitoring and scrutinising the implementation and enforcement of the AI Act. The joint working group generally meets once a month to address topics such as prohibited practices under the AI Act and the abovementioned Code of Practice for general-purpose AI models.

EIGE's policy brief on tackling cyber-violence against women and girls constitutes a solid base for addressing the impact of gender-related cyber violence, and consequently, can be seen as a form of awareness and recommendations for the online platforms to combat and prevent

[169] Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services, OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1-24,
ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2010/13/oj.
[170] Available here: Texts adopted - Combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence - Tuesday, 14 December 2021.
[171] Available here: Texts adopted - Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU - Thursday, 16 September 2021.

GBV online[172]. EIGE also published a Beijing Platform for Action +30 report 'Impact driver – Marking milestones and opportunities for gender equality in the EU'[173].

Based on the findings in the **FRA** report Online Content Moderation[174], that misogyny was the most prevalent form of online hate across platforms covered in the research, FRA advised that online platforms should have specific regard to protected characteristics of users, including addressing sexist online hate; that performance indicators should record the volume of misogyny online and that VLOPs should take misogyny into account as a systemic risk in their risk assessments under the DSA.

H. Article 17 – Establishment of protocols and guidelines

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to encourage the establishment of **protocols or guidelines in the private sector**, for example, on how to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace; and to raise awareness of **human resources professionals** on issues of violence against women, including domestic violence?*

On 6 May 2025 **European level social partners** in the sectors of central government administrations, local and regional governments, hospitals and healthcare, education, and in the hospitality sector signed the revised **multisectoral guidelines to prevent and tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work**. These guidelines (revising and updating guidelines initially adopted in 2010) set out practical steps that employers and workers can take together to tackle third party violence and harassment at work. They provide fundamental guidance on how to put in place policies and procedures to prevent and react to harassment and violent acts, in close consultation of workers and their trade union representatives. They also incorporate elements related to digitalisation, for example to tackle cyberviolence[175].

The **AI Act** plays an important role in how artificial intelligence is integrated into workplaces. By classifying many employment-related AI systems as high-risk (Annex III), the Act mandates companies to adopt stringent oversight and transparency measures to ensure these systems do not contribute to discriminatory practices. This regulatory pressure encourages organisations to draw up comprehensive protocols that not only tackle the technical aspects of AI deployment but also cover broader workplace issues such as discrimination.

Under **the DSA**, the Commission can also issue guidelines, such as for the protection of minors online published July 2025[176]. Moreover, under the DSA, voluntary Codes of Conduct can be established to contribute to the proper application of that Regulation , such has been the case on illegal hate speech online and on disinformation[177].

[172] European Institute for Gender Equality 'Tackling cyber violence against women and girls: The role of digital platforms', available at: https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/tackling-cyber-violence-against-women-and-girls-role-digital-platforms.
[173] Beijing Platform for Action +30: Impact driver - Marking milestones and opportunities for gender equality in the EU | European Institute for Gender Equality
[174] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 'Online Content Moderation – Current challenges in detecting hate speech', available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-online-content-moderation_en.pdf.
[175] For more information: EU sectoral social partners join forces to counter third-party violence and harassment related to work with updated Guidelines - European Commission.
[176] See: Commission publishes guidelines on the protection of minors | Shaping Europe's digital future and Communication from the Commission - Guidelines on measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security for minors online, pursuant to Article 28(4) of Regulation (EU) 2022/2065
[177] See: Codes of conduct under the Digital Services Act

In 2023 **the EP** adopted a resolution with recommendations concerning harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace[178].

EU-OSHA published an article in 2023 on domestic violence and the workplace. The article described the role of employers in preventing domestic violence and in providing support for survivors at the workplace[179]. A discussion paper was also published on the topic, further elaborating on the legal framework and good practices from employer-led policies and jointly negotiated agreements between employers and trade unions[180].

I. Other measures on prevention

*1. Please indicate any **other measures** taken or planned to strengthen EU legislation and policies as regards **the prevention of violence** against women within the EU institutions, bodies and agencies.*

The Commission supports the exchange of good practices between Member States through **the Mutual Learning Programme on Gender Equality**[181]. Several seminars tackled the topic of gender-based violence. In 2021, Finland hosted an online seminar on the costs of violence against women[182] and in 2023, Romania hosted a seminar on gender-based violence sharing good practices as part of the country's efforts to bring legislation and services into line with the Istanbul Convention[183]. In 2024, Latvia and Portugal co-hosted the seminar 'Challenging for change: working with perpetrators of gender-based violence and domestic violence' which was attended by 14 other Member States and by representatives of the Commission, the EIGE and the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence. The seminar tackled issues such as accessibility and design of services for perpetrators of gender-based violence and domestic violence, how to incorporate gender equality aspects into these services, and how to evaluate them. In 2025, Finland and Iceland co-hosted a seminar on combating digital forms of violence where representatives from 17 countries discussed challenges and innovative solutions for combating this type of violence. They examined policy and legal measures, awareness raising, prevention and victim support[184].

In 2023, the Commission created the **EU network on preventing gender-based violence and domestic violence,** as announced in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. The network facilitates the exchange of best practices among Member States through twice-yearly meetings, open to Member State representatives and NGOs, focusing on specific prevention-related topics. The network is designed as a platform to discuss unmet, new or emerging needs on violence prevention, such as new topics (e.g. obstetric violence) and/or new groups at risk (e.g.

[178] Available here: *Texts adopted - Sexual harassment in the EU and MeToo evaluation - Thursday, 1 June 2023*.
[179] Building safe spaces: domestic violence and the workplace | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA
[180] European Agency for Safety and Health at Work 'Domestic Violence in the Workplace' available at: https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Domestic-violence-in-the-workplace_en_0.pdf.
[181] For more info, see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/who-we-work-gender-equality/mutual-learning-programme-gender-equality_en.
[182] https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-mutual-learning-programme-gender-equality-methodologies-and-good-practices-assessing-costs_en
[183] https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-mutual-learning-programme-gender-equality-combating-domestic-violence-romania-26-27-april-2023_en
[184] https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-mutual-learning-programme-gender-equality-combating-digital-forms-violence-against-women-finland_en

older women in care institutions). The meetings explore ways to enhance prevention efforts, map effective strategies, and share knowledge, tools and best practices for risk assessment and identifying vulnerabilities. The network has held five meetings with around 60 participants per meeting (including acceding countries as of November 2025): on Early prevention mechanisms of law enforcement, health and social services, and inter-service coordination and data sharing (November 2023); on the role of education in preventing gender-based violence and domestic violence; on 'Gender-based NCII abuse and cyber hate speech: issues of prevention after the entry into force of the Violence against Women Directive' (November 2024), on 'Consent and education on consent in sexual relationships: the role of the Violence against Women Directive' (March 2025) and on 'Artificial intelligence to prevent gender-based violence and domestic violence' (November 2025)[185].

Through its work on human capital development, the European Training Foundation (**ETF)** is contributing to eradicating prejudices and stereotypes about women's participation in education, training and the labour market[186].

In June 2024, the **EEAS** Decision on Anti-harassment for Local staff in Union Delegations was adopted, completing the legal framework for all categories of staff. Local agents represent half of the staff working in EU Delegations (+/- 3 000 people). The new decision notably ensures that all EU staff in Delegations have access to EEAS informal procedures in case of work-related conflicts or harassment allegations. In addition, following the recommendations from the Istanbul Task Force, it is proposed to create a single-entry point for all harassment issues and to review the Decision on Anti-harassment for EEAS statutory staff. In this context, the EEAS developed **Guidance on Domestic Violence in Delegations** focusing on victims (dependents and staff members) in EU Delegations where diplomatic privileges and immunities prevent local authorities from intervening in cases of domestic violence. The EEAS expects to have this in place in 2025. Finally, there is a proposal with a list of administrative and accompanying measures that EEAS can take in Delegations in a case of ongoing procedure, with the aim of protecting the victims and preventing conflicts from escalating.

2. Please provide information on any other legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to place obligations on EU member states in relation to the ***prevention of violence*** *against women.*

The VAW Directive includes an extensive chapter on 'Prevention and early intervention', including an ad hoc article on 'Specific measures to prevent rape and promote the central role of consent in sexual relationships'. As clearly explained in recital 73, action to prevent violence against women and domestic violence in the Directive should be based on a comprehensive approach composed of primary, secondary and tertiary preventive measures. Against this background, **Article 34 – on preventive measures** – requires Member States to prevent violence against women and domestic violence by taking a comprehensive and multi-layered approach. It explains that the **objective** of preventive measures must be to challenge harmful gender stereotypes, promote gender equality, mutual respect and the right to personal integrity,

[185] Meetings of the Network on the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence

[186] For more info, see: Gender dimension of labour market transitions | ETF, Debunking 5 myths about Women in the Labour Market | ETF, Career Guidance for Gender Equality | ETF, Building a resilient generation in Central Asia and Europe | ETF, Career Guidance for Gender Equality | ETF, Innovative teaching and learning – CNL | ETF, Policy analysis and progress monitoring – Torino Process | ETF.

and encourage everyone, especially men and boys, to act as positive role models and to support corresponding behaviour change across society as a whole.

Measures of prevention must include the following:

- conducting or supporting targeted **awareness-raising campaigns or programmes** aimed at the general public, starting from an early age where relevant, developed in cooperation with stakeholders;
- making **information** on preventive measures, the rights of victims, access to justice and to a lawyer, and the available protection and support measures, including medical treatment, available and easily accessible to the general public;
- **targeted measures of prevention focused on groups at heightened risk**, i.e. victims facing intersectional discrimination and groups at risk (recital 71).

Preventive measures must also target several **specific forms of violence against women and domestic violence**:

- **female genital mutilation** and **forced marriage;**
- the **cybercrimes** specified in the Directive (measures to develop digital literacy skills, including critical engagement with the digital world and critical thinking to enable users to identify and address cases of cyberviolence, seek support and prevent violence);
- **sexual harassment at work,** where this constitutes a criminal offence.

Article 36 on training and Article 37 on intervention programmes are described above under sections C, D, and E.

Article 35 on 'Specific measures to prevent rape and promote the central role of consent in sexual relationships' covers the prevention of sexual violence, defined by reference to lack of consent. The **objective** is to run measures to promote changes in behavioural patterns rooted in the historically unequal power relations between women and men or based on stereotyped roles for women and men, in particular in the context of sexual relationships, sex and consent. **Measures** must include:

- **awareness-raising campaigns or programmes** aiming, in particular, to increase knowledge of the fact that non-consensual sex is considered a criminal offence;
- the making available and distribution of **consent education material** which promote the understanding that consent must be given voluntarily as a result of a person's free will, mutual respect, and the right to sexual integrity and bodily autonomy;
- wide dissemination of **information** on rape prevention measures to inform the general public of the rape prevention measures, including intervention programmes available.

Article 36 – 'Training and information for professionals' – and Article 37 – 'Intervention programme' are described above under Sections C, D, and E.

EIGE provides information and research on the prevalence of female genital mutilation in the European Union and supports Member States in preventing and combating this harmful practice. It has estimated the number of women at girls **at risk of FGM** in several EU MS and developed country-specific recommendations to prevent it[187].

IV. Protection and support

[187] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/female-genital-mutilation.

*Please provide general information on **measures taken** to ensure, within the scope of EU competence, appropriate **protection and support** to **women** victims **and child witnesses** of any form of violence covered by the convention as required by Article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2. This includes measures to ensure **multi-agency co-operation** and **effective referrals** to general and specialist support services, bearing in mind the general principles set out in Article 18, paragraph 3 that must be applied to all measures taken in implementation of Chapter IV of the convention. These are the need for a gendered understanding of violence against women, a focus on the human rights and safety of victims, and an integrated approach to protection and support services. All protective and supportive measures must also aim at **avoiding secondary victimisation**, address the specific needs of **vulnerable persons**, including **child** victims, and aim at the empowerment and economic independence of women victims. In addition, general and specialist support services must be offered irrespective of the victim's willingness to press charges or testify against the perpetrator.*

A. Article 19 – Information

*1. Please provide details on any action taken to ensure that at the level of **the EU**, its institutions, bodies and agencies, women victims of all forms of violence covered by the convention **receive information** on support services and legal measures available to them**,** as required by Article 19. The information must be adequate*[188]*; timely*[189]*and in a language they understand*[190].

As regards **the EU's public administration**, the **Commission** held a series of awareness-raising sessions after the CCC's appointment on the Commission's Decision on anti-harassment and the applicable procedures. The sessions were attended by over 7 200 participants. In the Commission the CCC is the principal entry point for victims of harassment and manages the Confidential Counsellors network. Anyone can request a conversation with the CCC that can be followed by an interview by a confidential counsellor who will offer active listening, support and guidance on the redress mechanisms available. The confidential counsellors' network was renewed in February 2025 with an increase of confidential counsellors (25 + a short reserve list) and covers 17 EU languages. The CCC also provides support to victims undergoing a formal procedure.

In line with Article 24 of the Staff Regulations, **the Commission** assists statutory staff who are *'by reason of [their] position or duties'* subject to threats or attacks. This includes instances of violence and harassment against women at the workplace, be it perpetrated by colleagues or by other people. The assistance offered by the Commission may be in the form of legal support for the victims and holds the perpetrator accountable by conducting an internal inquiry and, possibly, opening disciplinary proceedings. The assistance can also include direct assistance, for example, by the Security Directorate or the Medical Service. Information on the assistance available is published on the intranet of the Commission in French and English. This is also true for other EU institutions and bodies, such as the **EP, EESC, CoR, the ECA, the CJEU**

[188] 'Adequate information' is understood as information that sufficiently fills the victim's need for information. This could include, for example, providing not just the name of a support service organisation, but issuing a leaflet that contains its contact details, opening hours and information on the exact services it offers (Explanatory Report, paragraph 124).
[189] 'Timely information' refers to information that comes 'at a time when it is useful for victims' (Explanatory Report, paragraph 124).
[190] This obligation is limited to languages that are most widely spoken by the Party (Explanatory Report, paragraph 124).

and the EO. Assistance under Article 24 of the Staff Regulations is not available for persons not falling under the Staff Regulations (such as non-statutory staff and visitors). Any protection by the Commission would therefore be under other instruments such as the Commission Decision on Security in the Commission (the Security Rules)[191]. In the **EP**, the Director-General for Personnel may, in addition to providing direct assistance to victims, adopt provisional protection measures such as temporary placement. The Code of Appropriate Behaviour for MEPs seeks to ensure that MEPs treat everyone working in the EP with dignity, courtesy and respect, without prejudice or discrimination. As a cornerstone of the 2024 anti-harassment campaign in the EP, a concise intranet page was created, bringing together all resources on harassment and conflict prevention in one place. Updated anti-harassment brochures provide recommendations on fostering a positive working environment, guidance on what to do when problems arise, and an overview of the support available. The EP internal newsletter also regularly features articles on anti-harassment policies and workplace safety.

At **the CJEU**, staff members that consider to be victims of inappropriate conduct can find information on the assistance and support services available, the legal measures and complaints procedures through several means: training sessions and awareness-raising events on ethics, anti-violence and anti-harassment policies; intranet pages; the counselling service, the medical service, the social worker and the psychological counsellors. The internal rules and procedures of the CJEU are published on the intranet to promote a respectful working environment and to prevent any form of violence.

The ECB's intranet lists the available support resources for staff, guidance and the framework for addressing dignity at work issues. Posters and sticky notes have been distributed across the ECB buildings to raise awareness about the Employee Assistance Programme and how to access it. The ECB Mediator has an intranet space, offers outreach, is introduced to new staff during welcome events, and publishes online articles and an annual report. As an informal contact, colleagues can reach out to the Employee Partner within DG-HR, they can approach one of the Social Counsellors, or the staff representatives. This is communicated to all staff as part of the onboarding process and the support is advertised on the intranet as well as via an AI-assisted internal knowledge base ('myHR'). For formal follow-up, colleagues can report to their line manager, approach the Director of Internal Audit, the Director General of HR or her deputy. Furthermore, a whistleblowing tool exists for anonymous and non-anonymous reporting. This information is included in the staff rules, published on the intranet, and shared during training courses. There are regular roadshows and articles published on the ECB's intranet to publicise the whistleblowing tool and the formal dignity at work procedures.

The **ECA**'s intranet has a dedicated page that explains its anti-harassment decision, presents the different actors and contains various attractive and easily comprehensible communication materials (including visual tools, guides and flyers). The HR department runs regular awareness-raising campaigns on topics related to respect, dignity, trust. Every year, HR organises an event with the various actors under this policy to increase awareness. Managers are encouraged to address topics relating to harassment prevention and a respectful workplace during their team meetings. Staff is also informed by the ECA confidential counsellors. All information, tools and training are available in accessible formats.

191 Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/443/oj.

When **the EESC** adopted its new anti-harassment policy, it informed staff via a targeted information campaign including videos presenting the main actors. It also informed staff when it implemented its new, strengthened ethical framework, broken down into an action plan based on three pillars, including communication. It also clearly explained all revisions of key decisions (such as those on whistleblowing procedures, and administrative inquiries) to staff through various channels of communication. Communication directed at EESC members also includes a dedicated brochure 'Respect and dignity at the EESC'.

The CoR follows the zero-tolerance policy towards harassment, as stated in several CoR decisions that are published on the dedicated page of the Intranet. A list of Confidential Counsellors is also displayed in key parts of the office buildings. Leaflets on sexual harassment and violence are also distributed in the medical and social service. The trainee guidebook also provides information on the internal Confidential Counsellors and help centres in case of sexual harassment or violence in the city of Brussels.

Information on **the EO's** ethics and anti-harassment policy is provided by the confidential counsellors to each staff member as part of the standard induction programme for newcomers, which is followed by follow-up sessions. The HR team also helps newcomers navigate the various policies, including the relevant intranet pages. Any staff member can ask for a meeting with the confidential counsellors and the conciliation committee, in the context of the informal procedure. Both the confidential counsellors and the conciliation committee can also provide assistance to a staff member with a view to initiating a formal procedure.

The EIB provides guidance on gender-based violence and harassment to colleagues via its all-staff portal with definitions, an overview of the EIB policy framework, learning resources and support organisations and services to survivors in Luxembourg, where EIB has its headquarters.

At the **EEAS**, victims of harassment or inappropriate conduct receive adequate and timely information on the support services available and on legal measures through several means: regular information campaigns on EEAS anti-harassment policy, e-learning explaining in detail the informal and formal procedures, intranet pages on the anti-harassment policy, mediation service and complaints procedures, information sessions for newcomers and for trainees and their supervisors, and pre-posting seminars for staff joining EU Delegations. In the framework of the rotation exercise, the EEAS offers pre-posting/information sessions to the spouses of staff to be posted to an EU Delegation. They receive targeted information during pre-posting sessions, throughout the year during webinars for spouses and through a network of actors at headquarters and in the Delegations.

*2. Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, **to ensure the provision** of such **information to women victims at level of EU Member** States.*

The **VAW Directive** contains several provisions to ensure that victims are provided with timely information on the support services and legal measures available to them, at any stage they find themselves and regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed:

- **Article 34(3)** requires Member States to make information on the **protection and support measures** available and easily accessible to the general public, taking into account the most widely spoken **languages** in their country.

- **Article 15(4)** of the VAW Directive provides that the **competent authorities must direct** victims, without undue delay, to relevant healthcare professionals or support services. Victims must also be informed of the importance of collecting such evidence at the earliest possible time.

- **Article 25** requires that **specialist support services** are available for victims, irrespective of whether they have filed a formal complaint, and that such services provide various forms of information in a timely manner.

- **Article 27** requires Member States to **provide information** at units in public hospitals that perform genital and clitoral reconstructive surgery for victims of **female genital mutilation**.

- **Article 28** includes an obligation to provide information on ways to adequately address cases of **sexual harassment**, including on available remedies to remove the offender from the workplace.

- **Article 30(1)** requires Member States to ensure that **shelters** and other appropriate interim accommodation assist victims in their recovery by **providing information on support services** and referrals, including for further medical care.

Under **the VRD** victims have the right to receive information from the first contact with the competent authorities on the type of support they can obtain and from whom (Article 4). Information given by the competent authorities on the type of support available must be directly linked to their obligation to facilitate referrals to victim support services under Article 8(2) of the Directive.

B. Article 20 – General support services

*1. Please provide a short description of any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure women victims' access to the following **general support services**[192] at the level of EU Member States (as referred to in Article 20, paragraph 1) and that these services take the situation of women victims systematically into account, employ measures and*

[192] 'General support services' are understood as 'help offered by public authorities such as social services, health services and employment services, which provide long-term help and are not exclusively designed for the benefit of victims only but that serve the public at large' (Explanatory Report, paragraph 125).

interventions to ensure their safety, and are equipped to meet their specific needs and to refer them to the appropriate specialist services:

a. financial support services;
b. housing services;
c. legal counselling services;
d. psychological support services;
e. education and training services;
f. employment services; and
g. any other relevant service.

*2. Please provide a short description of any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in relation to Article 20, paragraph 2, to ensure that women victims benefit from appropriate **health care and social services** at the level of EU Member States. Please also provide information on **protocols and guidelines** for staff assisting women victims and for their referral to additional appropriate services.*

The right to support to victims of crime in **Member States**, including to the most vulnerable victims, such as victims of sexual and gender-based violence, is one of the core rights in the **VRD**. The purpose of Article 8 (to be read together with Article 9) is to ensure that victims and their family members have access to confidential support services free of charge. The support services should provide information and advice, emotional and, where available, psychological support and practical assistance from the earliest possible moment after a crime has been committed, in line with their and their family member's needs.

Article 25(1) of **the VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that their specialist support services provide information and support on any relevant practical matters arising as a result of the crime. This must include:

- information and support on access to **housing, education**, childcare, **training, financial support** and assistance to remain in or find **employment**;
- information on access to **legal advice**, including legal aid, where available;
- information on and, where appropriate, referral to **psychosocial counselling**.

Article 25(4) requires Member States to ensure that **specialist support services**, aside from referring victims to services providing medical and forensic examinations, which may include comprehensive healthcare services, include at least first-hand **medical care** and referral to further medical care, as provided in the national healthcare system, as well as social services, **psychosocial support, legal services** and police services, or information on and direction to such services.

Article 25(5) sets detailed requirements for **guidelines and protocols for healthcare and social service professionals** on identifying and providing support to victims, including on referring victims to the relevant support services and avoiding secondary victimisation. They should address the specific needs of victims who are at an increased risk of such violence. Article 25(6) sets requirements for **guidelines and protocols for healthcare services performing first-hand medical care** on identifying and providing appropriate support to victims. These guidelines and protocols must cover the preservation and documentation of evidence and the further transmission of evidence to competent forensic centres in accordance with national law.

In its resolution of 6 October 2021, the **EP** called on Member States to ensure health care and social services and to establish protocols and guidelines for staff assisting victims[193].

The EIGE report 'Women fleeing the war: Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare in the EU' (2024) assesses the availability of specialised services for victims of conflict-related sexual violence available in the EU[194].

C. Article 21 – Assistance in individual/collective complaints

*What steps have been taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that women victims within EU Member States have information on access to and assistance with individual or **collective complaints mechanisms** (including legal advice) offered at international level (Article 21)*[195]*?*

It is for **Member States**, including their judicial authorities, to ensure that fundamental rights are effectively respected and protected in accordance with their national legislation and international human rights obligations. Victims of violence may seek redress at national level through the competent national authorities, such as law enforcement authorities and courts. They may also seek redress from Ombudspeople, equality bodies and National Human Rights Institutions, if these fundamental rights bodies are mandated to assist individuals in specific cases. The Commission has published information on how to obtain a remedy in each Member State on the fundamental rights section of the **European e-Justice Portal**.

In the course of conducting fieldwork for the EU gender-based-violence survey and the FRA survey on violence and related human rights abuses against women fleeing the war in Ukraine, FRA provided the women interviewed with information on the victim support services available and on how to report incidents.

As regards the **EU's public administration**, **the Commission** has both **informal and formal** procedures to address harassment. The CCC is the first entry point in the Commission for victims wishing to initiate an informal procedure in case of harassment. The informal procedure provides a framework for addressing situations where a person considers they have been the victim of harassment. It aims to provide a listening room, support and guidance to the victim to enable them to find a satisfactory solution. The victim is assigned a trained confidential counsellor, and the informal procedure usually takes two months. The formal procedure aims to establish whether harassment – as defined by the Staff Regulations – has taken place. If it has, the appointing authority will take appropriate action. This may include imposing a penalty on the harasser, after an administrative inquiry and disciplinary procedure. The administrative inquiry will not be opened for alleged breaches older than 10 years. This period starts running from the moment the alleged conduct ceases. During the formal procedure, victims can still at any time contact the CCC, or the psychosocial team in the Medical Service to seek

[193] Available here*: European Parliament resolution of 6 October 2021 on the impact of intimate partner violence and custody rights on women and children (2019/2166(INI)),OJ C 132, 24.3.2022, p. 27–44.*

[194] European Institute for Gender Equality 'Women fleeing the war: Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare in the EU under the Temporary Protection Directive', available at: Gender-based violence in armed conflicts | European Institute for Gender Equality.

[195] Individual complaints can be addressed, for example, to the ECtHR or the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), whereas collective complaints can be addressed to the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe.

psychological support. The first step in starting a formal procedure is to file a request for assistance under Article 24 of the Staff Regulations. The victim should describe the situation and provide all the factual elements of proof at their disposal which they deem necessary for an analysis of the case (*prima facie* evidence), for example, a list of colleagues who would be willing to provide a statement or written exchanges indicating the possible existence of a case of harassment. Persons not covered by the Staff Regulations or CEOS (non-statutory staff and visitors) have to turn directly to IDOC or to OLAF to make an allegation of harassment. For these persons any protection would fall under other instruments such as the Security rules. Furthermore, the information on the national prevention service against domestic violence is advertised on the Commission's Intranet and information on this service is also available in the waiting room of the psychosocial sector of the Medical Service.

The GSC also provides informal and formal procedures to deal with harassment. Staff members targeted of harassment may take the following informal steps: communicate directly with the alleged harasser; speak to their manager, including to request their intervention: consult one or more members or the group of confidential counsellors and request conciliation. These informal steps are not mandatory before formal proceedings are initiated. Then, a staff member who feels they are the target of harassment may request assistance from the Appointing Authority in relation to a case of harassment to initiate formal proceedings, or the Appointing Authority may also open an administrative investigation on its own initiative. After the Appointing Authority has made its decision, it may propose to the persons concerned that mediation take place in order to re-open the dialogue and re-establish a positive working relationship. Every two years, the group of confidential counsellors draws up a report on the implementation of the anti-harassment Decision.

The CJEU's policy related to preventing and addressing harassment provides for an informal procedure and a formal one. The informal procedure consists of contacting one of the confidential counsellors, whose task is to listen, to help identify actions to be taken and to assist in finding a solution. The procedure is confidential. Counsellors receive specific training. The formal procedure consists of submitting a request for assistance to the relevant authority, which may adopt interim measures, assuring a rapid intervention when needed, and/or open an administrative inquiry where necessary. The results of the investigation may lead the relevant authority to initiate disciplinary proceedings and adopt a sanction. . The internal guidelines, the legal framework for the information and protection of whistleblowers, and the Decision on the terms and conditions for internal investigations in relation to the prevention of fraud, corruption and any illegal activity detrimental to the interests of the European Union also implement the provisions of the Staff Regulations. These lay down the obligation to disclose facts known in the course of or in connection with the performance of duties which give rise to a presumption of illegal activity detrimental to the interests of the Union or a serious failure to comply with obligations. These provisions include the preservation in principle of the confidentiality of whistleblowers' identities and rules on their possible transfer for protection purposes.

The **ECA** informal and formal procedures are open to all, irrespective of the type of contract or working relationship the person has with the ECA. In the informal procedure any person affected may contact a confidential counsellor found on the ECA's intranet. The ECA also offers voluntary mediation to find an amicable solution to a situation. The formal procedure may be initiated either when an informal procedure has not resulted in an amicable solution to the problem, or immediately and directly. The formal procedure is initiated by the victim by means of a written request for assistance, submitted on the basis of Article 24 of the Staff

Regulations or, in the case of victims who are not covered by the provisions of the Staff Regulations or the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants, on the basis of ECA Decision No 50-2022. Both procedures are described in the dedicated Intranet page, also with the use of easy-to-understand infographics.

The EO has a comprehensive policy with informal and formal procedures. Under the informal procedure, the staff member can consult the confidential counsellors or ask the conciliation committee to intervene. The Office has also made available to the staff guidelines on handling complex phone calls. The guidelines provide advice and tips on how to deal with unacceptable, aggressive or unreasonable behaviour or behaviours linked to mental health issues.

The CoR also has both informal and formal procedures to address harassment[196]. The informal procedure included mediation, aims to prevent a conflict at work from escalating and to restore a respectful, functioning working relationship. All exchanges and discussion are confidential. Other persons at the CoR such as colleagues in the Staff Committee or the Human Resources Department or the Legal Service may also act as contact persons in informal procedure. In the formal procedure, the Appointing Authority will take an appropriate decision based on prima facie evidence of alleged wrongdoing or imminent risk of potential harm, including temporary protective measures. The alleged victim can also be advised on the estimated penal qualification of the facts and on how to lodge a formal complaint with the police. If need be, the CoR can arrange for the alleged victim to be accompanied to the police station by any trained official of their choice. The CoR has signed in July 2025 a service level agreement on IDOC Helpdesk for guidance for investigations and disciplinary procedures.

The EIB encourages any victim of harassment to seek support and specialised advice and assistance either from the occupational psychologist or from the Confidential Counsellors. Mediation is also available to resolve a situation at an early stage and to ensure that normal working relationships may be resumed. A formal inquiry procedure aiming to establish whether harassment has taken place is also available to alleged victims of harassment.

T**he ECB** also provides both informal and formal ways to address inappropriate behaviour. During the informal Dignity at Work procedure staff may be supported by an Employee Partner, Social Counsellor or staff representative. Inappropriate behaviour reported formally via the ECB whistleblowing platform is notified directly to the unit responsible for follow-up in the Internal Audit directorate or to the Director of Internal Audit. If inappropriate behaviour is formally reported to a line manager or to DG HR, and/or the whistleblowing tool to the Director Internal Audit the opening of an internal inquiry will be considered in order to gather evidence and establish the facts with a view to a possible disciplinary follow-up. Throughout the formal Dignity at Work procedure, staff members may reach out for support to the ECB Medical Centre, the Employee Assistance Programme, the Social Counsellors, and staff representatives.

The EESC also has both formal and informal procedures in place for its staff, with reference to Article 24, Article 90(1) and Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations and various internal decisions and guidelines. It emphasises prevention at HR level, and the use of confidential counsellors and voluntary mediation, without prejudice to other forms of administrative and

[196] As prescribed in the Decision No 108/2021.

legal follow up. There are also specific rules in place in relation to EESC members. Furthermore, the EESC has a service level agreement in place with the Commission, allowing to outsource sensitive investigations to IDOC.

D. Articles 22, 23 and 25 – Specialist support services

*Please provide a description of any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in relation to Articles 22, 23 and 25 to ensure the provision of **specialist women's support services**[197] at the level of EU and its Member States for all women victims and their children in compliance with the convention standards.*

In terms of specialist support services, several articles of **the VAW Directive** require the provision of specialist support services to cater to the specific needs of victims of violence:

- Article 25 requires Member States to ensure that specialist support services are **available to all victims**, tailored to the needs of victims and easily accessible. Support services must provide referral to women's support services, rape crisis centres, shelters and sexual violence referral centres, where appropriate.

- Article 26 requires Member States to provide for properly equipped and easily accessible **rape crisis** or **sexual violence referral centres**, which may form part of the national healthcare system, to ensure effective support to victims of sexual violence and to ensure the clinical management of rape. They must provide trauma-sensitive support, referrals and counselling for victims; assisting in the safekeeping and documentation of evidence, including medical and forensic examinations; and provide for victims of sexual violence to have timely access to healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services, in accordance with national law, free of charge and accessible every day of the week.

- **Article 27** requires Member States to ensure effective, age-appropriate and easily accessible support to **victims of FGM,** including by providing timely gynaecological, sexological, psychological and trauma care and counselling.

- **Article 30** requires Member States to have a sufficient number of easily accessible **shelters**. The shelters should meet the needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual violence, assist victims in their recovery, offer women-only shelters with room for **children**, and cater for the rights and needs of children, including child victims. Shelters must be available to victims and dependants under the age of 18, regardless of their nationality, citizenship, place of residence or residence status.

Under the **VRD**, some victims require specialist support due to their personal vulnerability or particular circumstances or the nature of the crime, including victims of sexual violence or violence in close relationships. Under Article 8(3) of the Directive such victims, and their family members, have the right to access confidential specialist support services free of charge, in accordance with their specific needs. Specialist services can be provided by separate bodies, by

[197] Specialist support services refer to dedicated services for victims of the different forms of violence against women made up of 'specialised and experienced staff with in-depth knowledge of gender-based violence', including counselling centres, shelters, rape crisis centres and sexual violence referral centres.

general support services or through a referral mechanism whereby general support services can call on existing specialist services to support victims with specific needs. The types of support that such specialist support services should offer could include providing shelter and safe accommodation, immediate medical support, referral to medical and forensic examination for evidence in cases of rape or sexual assault, short and long-term psychological counselling, trauma care, legal advice, advocacy and specific services for children as direct or indirect victims (rec. 38).

As regards **the EU's public administration**, the psychosocial sector of the Medical Service in **the Commission** consists of a team of psychiatrists, psychologists and social assistants who offer assistance and psychosocial support including support in any cases of violence against women. **The EP** also has a team of specialists. Information on national prevention services against domestic violence is advertised on the Commission's and EP's intranet and information on this service is also available in the waiting room of the psychosocial sector of the Medical Service.

Article 20 of the **Commission** anti-harassment decision outlines interim protective measures. The measures may be provided on the victim's request, such as a transfer of the alleged harasser or of the victim to another team. The appointing authority must hear the person subject to it before taking that measure. The CCC makes recommendations to and assists the appointing authority in the assessment aiming to determine whether interim measures to protect the victim are needed and may facilitate the implementation of interim protective measures. The Commission is constantly raising awareness on the support and help available. The support can be provided in cooperation with national social services when necessary and in strict compliance with the European social work code of ethics and data protection rules.

The EP currently has two committees dealing with cases of harassment. Though both are responsible for dealing with formal harassment complaints, their procedures differ depending on whether the complaint is lodged against an MEP or a staff member. In addition to formal procedures, the EP also proposes informal solutions, in particular the network of confidential counsellors. Staff are informed of formal and informal procedures through various means of communication (intranet, brochures, posters, etc.) and various professionals (social workers, medical officers, HR officers, etc.).

The GSC also provides psychological support in-house from a clinical or organisational psychologist. Both psychologists can inform and guide colleagues, as appropriate, towards specialised external national services. The confidential counsellors may inform the Director of Human Resources if there is a need to take interim measures to protect the health and safety of a staff member who feels they are the target of harassment, and the Appointing Authority may at any time take such interim measures in the interest of the service and taking into consideration the interests of the persons concerned.

At **the CJEU**, the psychosocial service consists of medical doctor, social assistant and psychologists, who offer assistance and support to staff, including in any cases of violence against women. Specially-trained confidential counsellors are also available. Managers also receive trainings to help them cultivate psychological security in the working environment, characterised by inclusion and respect and dignity at work. Interim measures and sanctions may be taken by the relevant authority.

The **ECA** has two trained 'mental health first aiders' who provide immediate guidance in case of crisis and also offer individual psychotherapy. ECA staff are encouraged to seek support from,

inter alia, their management, a confidential counsellor, the medical officer and/or a mediator, even when there is no suggestion of harassment. By virtue of their position, managers have a key role in establishing and maintaining a satisfactory working environment. Any person affected by disrespectful behaviour or potential harassment may contact the confidential counsellor of their choice. The ECA also provide mediators, internal or externals, to support staff during the resolution of any informal procedure.

The EO has emergency measures which can be activated in response to a suggestion from the confidential counsellors or the conciliation committee or at the direct request of one of the parties involved in a harassment case. These measures include temporary reassignment of the alleged victim or the alleged harasser to another unit. The support offered by the Office includes also the possibility to use the EP's medical service, occupational-health doctors and nurses, social workers, and psychologists.

At **the CoR**, support can be accessed through its contact points (confidential counsellors, social worker, D&I coordinator, managers, medical service, etc.) and through lodging a request for assistance. Informal conflict resolution encompasses facilitation, mediation and conciliation by one of the contact points. Information on all this and on formal conflict resolution, formal exclusion procedures, and temporary protective measures is published on the CoR's intranet. Information on the Confidential Counsellors is displayed on posters around the buildings.

As stipulated in Article 4 of **the EESC** decision on preventing and combating harassment, staff who feel that they are victims of harassment will be protected against acts of retaliation.

At **the ECB** victims of violence can receive psychosocial support and avail of Social Counsellors, a team of occupational medical advisers who work in the ECB Medical Centre composed of doctors and psychiatrists, offsite personal, 24/7 remote counselling (the 24/7 helpline is also available for dependent family members), a team of Employee Partners, and a team of HR experts who focus on organisational health.

The EIB offers similar support services that cater to the needs of victims of violence, such as counselling and psychologists' service.

The EEAS has a psychosocial service within its Medical Service for victims of gender-based violence. The psychosocial team (one psychosocial counsellor and one psychiatrist) in the EEAS Medical Service is best placed to guide victims to specialist women's support services. The Mediation Service and the Family Officer coordinate as appropriate with the Medical Service when support is needed. Internally, the EEAS Mediation Service, Medical Service, the Crisis Centre and administration coordinate action when needed, while ensuring confidentiality. Regular contacts are organised with other EU institutions, bodies and agencies, especially with the European Commission for EU Delegations (over half of Delegation staff are employed by the Commission). This includes exchanges of experience between Mediation Services and the networks of confidential counsellors.

E. Article 24 – Telephone helplines

*1. Please provide information on any action taken to set up **telephone helplines** at the EU level to provide advice to callers in relation to all forms of violence covered by the convention, as referred to in Article 24.*

In this context, please specify:

1. *if they are free of charge;*
2. *if they operate round-the-clock (24/7);*
3. *how confidentiality and/or anonymity is ensured;*
4. *if those responding to calls have been trained on all forms of violence against women; and*
5. *the annual number of calls made to seek help for women victims.*

As regards the **EU's public administration**, persons who experience or witness harassment in the **Commission** can contact the CCC from 8.00-18.00 on working days via phone or email . Calls within Europe are free. The Data Protection Regulation's for EU institutions, bodies and agencies (EUDPR)[198] requirements governing the informal procedure have been implemented via a specific Commission Decision using data protection notification, privacy statement and consent forms[199]. The colleagues who respond to the questions on harassment use active listening skills, uphold respect for the victim and strictly follow the confidentiality rules outlined in the EUDPR concerning the informal procedure. For emergency assistance and security advice, everyone can call the Security Service, which is available every day 24h/7. In addition, the Commission also offers support and advice, including by phone, for problematic social situations, during working hours. The support is given by frontline service, social workers and psychologists. The Commission does not collect statistics on the reported cases of violence against women.

The Healthcare and Social Unit at the **GSC** allows all staff members to contact its professionals (doctors, psychologists, social assistants) by phone for free during working hours regarding any private or work-related issue, including violence. These professionals operate under strict confidentiality and professional secrecy. Statistics on the number of calls are not collected.

The 'Talk to me' helpline is available to **EP** staff members whatever the situation they might be dealing with (private or professional, including violence). At the other end of the line, a colleague with a background in psychology and counselling listens and provides emotional support.

The EIB provides guidance to colleagues directing them to the Official Helpline of the Government of Luxembourg and a list of anti-violence associations available throughout Luxembourg.

At **the ECB**, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an external, worldwide, confidential support service to help colleagues and their family deal with emotional distress and to also give advice or referrals on personal life, wellbeing including mental health, work, first tier support on legal or financial issues. The EAP also includes crisis intervention. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

[198] Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

[199] Commission Decision (EU) 2024/1043 of 9.04.2024 laying down internal rules concerning the restriction of certain data subjects' rights in the context of processing of personal data by the Chief Confidential Counsellor and the confidential counsellors in the performance of the tasks relating to the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment

The CoR does not provide a support harassment line itself, but the responsible social worker can inform any victims of the available centres in Belgium. Resources on regional helplines in Brussels for victims of sexual harassment have also been provided to the trainees through the trainee guidebook.

The **EEAS** Mediation Service phone number operates an anti-harassment hotline. This is available to EEAS staff in Brussels and all staff in EU delegations, offices and other entities, and operates during Brussels office hours. Staff answering the hotline are trained and ensure full confidentiality to the callers. Staff in EU Delegations and offices can also call a member of the local Security Management Team 24/7 or contact 24/7 the Delegations emergency number (crisis room) and the doctors on call (EEAS Medical Service, ensuring full confidentiality and anonymity). At present, there are no consolidated statistics for 2023 and 2024 for the helplines. The Mediation Services was contacted on 16 cases of reported sexual harassment in 2023 and 8 cases in 2024.

1. *Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that such **telephone helplines** are set up at the level of EU member states.*

The VAW Directive requires Member States to ensure that country-wide **telephone helplines** are available, free of charge, 24h/7, seven days a week, to provide information and advice to victims of violence, on a confidential basis or with due regard for the victim's anonymity. Member States must ensure that end users are adequately informed of the availability of and number for helplines, including by means of regular awareness-raising campaigns sufficient human and financial resources and that they remain fully operational in times of crisis.

Member States are encouraged to ensure that helpline services for victims are reachable through the harmonised number at EU level, namely '116 016', in addition to any existing national number (Article 29). In 2022, the European Commission created **an EU-wide helpline number** (116 016) for victims of violence against women. A helpline for victims for violence against women, as such, does not operate at EU level. Rather, the Commission has reserved the harmonised 116 016 number in all Member States for such a helpline for all victims to call the same number across the EU to access the right support and advice[200]. It is up to Member States to make the helpline service operational. They are obliged to make the number available for assignment to any eligible helpline entity that would like to operate this service. 15 Member States have committed to making the helpline operational[201].

The **Child Helpline International** is an EU-funded project run under the CERV programme, which provides mental health and emotional support, psychological and legal support for children who contact the helpline, including victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

[200] See Article 93(8) European Electronic Communications Code and Commission Decision 2007/116/EC (the 116 Decision) as amended by Commission Implementing Decision 2023/468/EC and Commission. Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/468 of 25 November 2022 amending Decision 2007/116/EC as regards the introduction of an additional reserved number beginning with 116.

[201] Violence Against Women: The European Union establishes an EU-wide helpline number and calls to end violence against women worldwide - European Commission (europa.eu)

F. Article 26 – Protection and support for child witnesses

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that, in the provision of the above-mentioned general and specialist support services to victims, due account is taken at the level of EU Member States of the rights and needs of **child witnesses** of all forms of violence against women as specified in Article 26, including age-appropriate counselling.*

Under Article 2(c) of the **VAW Directive**, children who have suffered harm because they have witnessed domestic violence within the family or domestic unit **are victims** themselves. This entails that they are entitled to benefit on their own account from all the rights of protection, access to justice and support provided for by the Directive. **Article 31 'Support for child victims'** requires Member States to ensure that children are provided specific adequate support**,** specialised and appropriate to the age, developmental needs and individual situation of the child, as soon as the competent authorities have reasonable grounds to believe that that child might have been subject to, or might have witnessed, violence against women or domestic violence. It also requires that child victims be provided with **age-appropriate** medical care and emotional, **psychologica**l and educational **suppor**t. It gives children in interim accommodation certain rights, specialised and appropriate to the age, developmental needs and individual situation of the child.

The justice programme funds national and transnational projects that tackle issues related to the protection of children either as witnesses, victims or offenders in non-judicial, judicial and administrative proceedings. This can involve strengthening the capacities of specialised staff so that they are able to use child-friendly and age-appropriate procedures[202].The Justice Programme also funded an EU-CoE Joint Project (2024-2026) on child friendly justice contributing to improved protection of children in contact with the law – as offenders, **victims or witnesses** in non-judicial, judicial and administrative proceedings – across Europe at national and local level ensuring the application of the relevant international legal frameworks and standards on child-friendly justice.

The **FRA report,** *Child-friendly justice – perspectives and experiences of children and professionals*, includes responses from 570 judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court staff psychologists, social workers and police officers; and 392 children who had been involved in proceedings as victims, witnesses or parties – with a focus on cases of sexual abuse, domestic violence, neglect and custody[203]. The report identifies the procedural safeguards needed for children to feel safe and comfortable when they are involved in criminal proceedings. The promising practices identified in *Towards Integrated Child Protection Systems - Challenges, promising practices and ways forward* can also be considered promising practices for EU in support of the Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems in combating all forms of violence. FRA has also collated data on the upper age limits for special procedural safeguards for children as witnesses involved in judicial proceedings[204].

[202] Current call: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/just/wp-call/2023-2024/call-fiche_just-2025-jcoo_en.pdf.
[203] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 'Child-friendly justice – perspectives and experiences of children and professionals – Summary', available at: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/child-friendly-justice-perspectives-and-experiences-children-and-professionals.
[204] https://fra.europa.eu/en/content/special-support-and-procedural-safeguards-witnesses

On 12 June 2025, the LIBE Committee at **the EP** held an exchange of views on 'Child-Friendly Justice in Criminal Matters (Children as Victims, Witnesses and Offenders)', aiming to identify barriers, gaps and weaknesses in judicial proceedings[205] as regards children.

G. Other measures on protection and support

*Please indicate **any other action** taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in order to provide **protection and support to victims** of violence against women at the EU level and to ensure this is provided at the level of EU Member States.*

The VAW Directive (Article 33) requires Member States to ensure specific support is provided to victims experiencing **intersectional discrimination** (see list in recital 71). It requires Member States to ensure that specialist support services have sufficient capacity to accommodate victims with disabilities and to ensure that support services are also available to non-EU nationals who are victims.

In the framework of **the Council's** cross-border police cooperation, a network of national contact points responsible for domestic violence and violence against women was established in 2018. This network is aimed at facilitating the exchange of information for the efficient protection of victims on the territory of other Member States. It also aims to prevent violence in cases in which a victim of domestic violence or violence against women from one Member State travels to another Member State and there is a risk or threat of a new violent act being committed on the territory of the second Member State. The General Secretariat of the Council keeps the list of the national contact points updated.

V. Substantive law

*Please provide information on the **EU legal framework** pertaining to violence against women, with particular emphasis on the criminalisation of acts of violence against women, unacceptable justifications for such acts (including crimes committed in the name of so-called honour), sanctions and measures, action taken to provide women victims with adequate **civil remedies** and to ensure their right to **claim** compensation as well as to prohibit mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes.*

A. EU legal framework

*1. Please provide information on the relevant **EU legal framework** in place which gives effect to **the provisions of the convention**, including any action taken to avoid legislative gaps.*

A list of secondary legal acts as regards matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement is annexed to the Union's Declaration of competence[206]. The main pieces of EU legislation giving effect to the Convention are the:

- VAW Directive;

[205] https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/libe-committee-meeting_20250612-0930-COMMITTEE-LIBE

[206] Declaration concerning the competence of the European Union with regard to matters governed by the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2023/C 194/02)of 2.6.2023, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32023C0602(01).

- Child Sexual Abuse Directive[207] (CSA Directive) (2011/93/EU) (recast currently under negotiations);
- Antitrafficking Directive (Directive 2011/36[208]) (as amended by Directive (EU) 2024/1712)[209])
- Victims' Rights Directive (revision currently under negotiations);
- Equality Bodies Directives (2024/1499 and 2024/1500)[210];
- Recast Equality Directive (2006/54/EC)[211], which clarify that for the purposes of those Directives, discrimination includes harassment and require Member States to ensure legal protection and remedies;
- Compensation Directive (2004/80/EC)[212];
- European Protection Order Directive (2011/99/EU)[213];
- Reception Conditions Directive (recast) Directive (2024/1346)[214];
- The Qualification Regulation (2024/1347)[215],
- Asylum Procedure Regulation (2024/1348)[216];
- Family Reunification Directive (2003/86/EC)[217].

[207] Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA, OJ L 335, 17.12.2011, p. 1-14, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/93/oj.
[208] Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1-11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/36/oj.
[209] Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, OJ L, 2024/1712, 24.6.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1712/oj. Member States will have to transpose this Directive by 15 July 2026.
[210] Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC, OJ L, 2024/1499, 29.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1499/oj, and Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU, OJ L, 2024/1500, 29.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1500/oj.
[211] Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23-36, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2006/54/oj.
[212] Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 relating to compensation to crime victims, OJ L 261, 6.8.2004, p. 15-18, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2004/80/oj.
[213] Directive 2011/99/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the European protection order, OJ L 338, 21.12.2011, p. 2-18, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/99/oj.
[214] Directive 2024/1346 EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (OJ L, 2024/1346, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1346/oj).
[215] Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L, 2024/1347, 22.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1347/oj.
[216] Regulation 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU (OJ L, 2024/1348, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1348/oj).
[217] Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification (OJ L 251, 3.10.2003, p. 12, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/86/oj).

For the **EU's public administration**, the Staff Regulations and CEOS[218] are of most relevance. For more information on the main legal instruments for the EU's public administration see Annex B.

2. *Does the **EU legal framework** contain any specific legislative acts addressing violence against women?*

The VAW Directive builds on the Istanbul Convention and aims to provide a comprehensive framework to effectively prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence throughout the Union (recital 1).

*3. Please provide in **an appendix** a compilation of extracts from or summaries of the relevant legal texts, including specific legislative acts addressing violence against women. These texts should be provided in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French).*

B. Implementation of the EU's legal framework

*1. Please describe what action has been taken to ensure the provision of guidance to officials, and other persons working for and with EU institutions, bodies and agencies **on how to implement the above legal framework**?*

As regards the **EU's public administration**, the **Commission** has put in place clear and user-friendly tools and procedures to inform statutory staff of their rights and obligations and to assist them as necessary. The tools include:

- **an IT portal** on staff-related matters, including specific pages on ethics and staff conduct where staff can find the relevant legal documents, easy-to-understand descriptions, and specific contact points;
- **an HR Service desk** for staff (phone/email/in person);
- **a comprehensive overview** of the Staff Regulations and CEOS and relevant implementing rules (for example, anti-harassment decision[219], decision on administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings[220] and similar).

The Commission also provides **regular training and awareness-raising campaigns** for staff (e.g. training organised by the IDOC). The CCC and her office regularly give presentations to managers and staff, providing an overview of the legal framework for both informal and formal procedures.

The GSC has an intranet page with information on all contacts and resources available on prevention of harassment. This includes the applicable rules, and contact details for doctors, psychologists, social assistants and confidential counsellors. Staff can also call or email a HR helpdesk during working hours or request a meeting on any HR-related matter.

[218] Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68 OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p. 1. with subsequent amendments.
[219] Commission Decision C(2023) 8630 of 12 December 2023 on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment, and repealing Decision C(2006) 1624/3 and its Corrigendum (2024) 2878 of 25 April 2024, available online: MB Decision n° 350 - Annex - C_2023_8630_F1_COMMISSION_DECISION_EN_V6_P1_3034149.pdf.
[220] Commission Decision C(2019) 4231 of 12 June 2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings.

The **EP** services providing guidance and support in cases of harassment and conflict are listed on a dedicated intranet page. The EP's psychologists, medical doctors or social workers are available to offer emotional and psychological support and information, or direct staff members towards appropriate care or services, including in the case of violence against women. The EP also provides regular gender equality training courses and workshops for MEPs and staff, raising awareness on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias, and promoting inclusive behaviour in the workplace.

The **CJEU** has an informative intranet and organises sessions and training actions on micro-aggressions, equality and respect and dignity at work.

The **CoR** provides information on the intranet, in the trainee guidebook, in newsletters, and organises training courses on harassment and sexism-related topics. The CoR also talks about harassment during campaigns and talks.

As part of its ethical framework, the **EESC** has targeted and ongoing communication with staff on issues related to respect at work. It has a website specifically dedicated to these issues and has organised information campaigns on confidential counsellors, ethics advisors, and the Code of Conduct for members, accompanied by brochures.

The **ECA** has put in place several tools and procedures to assist staff in the event of harassment. These include a dedicated page on the intranet, a Q&A section with infographics, leaflets placed in ECA common spaces, training for newcomers from the confidential counsellors, and training and awareness-raising campaigns for staff. The ECA internal working group 'Dignity at work' monitors the implementation of the policy and suggests actions and improvements.

The **ECB**'s intranet provides guidance for staff who observe inappropriate behaviour and points them to the available formal and informal support resources and reporting mechanisms, including an AI-assisted internal knowledge base ('myHR').

The EO publishes relevant decisions and information on Office's intranet, offers sessions on ethics and anti-harassment policy as part of the induction programme and annual compulsory awareness-raising training for staff and managers on matters such as prevention of harassment, non-violent communication, unconscious bias, non-conflictual workplace relationships. Emails reminding staff of the EO's ethical standards are sent on various occasions throughout the year.

With the aim of creating a safe, equitable and inclusive working environment at the **EEAS,** and streamlining the internal work, **the Istanbul Task Force** was set up in January 2024. All applicable services and units involved are to coherently and holistically meet the obligations deriving from the Convention. The EEAS currently informs its staff of their obligations through Principles of Professional Behaviour, mandatory training and campaigns, as described above.

2. Please describe what action has been taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to ensure that EU member states provide guidance to ***relevant professionals on how to implement the above legal framework*** *(for example drawing-up of protocols for police and other law enforcement officials, guidelines for prosecutors, and setting up of special units).*

The **VAW Directive** includes a number of provisions to ensure that professionals working in this area receive appropriate guidance. **Article 21** provides that Member States may issue

gender-sensitive guidelines for cases concerning violence against women or domestic violence for the competent authorities acting in criminal proceedings, including prosecutorial guidelines. Without having to set up specialised services or units, Member States are required to ensure that all people, units or services investigating and prosecuting acts of violence against women and domestic violence **have adequate expertise** in those matters. They must also have effective investigative tools at their disposal to effectively investigate and prosecute such acts, especially for gathering, analysing and securing electronic evidence in cases of cybercrime as defined in the Directive (Article 15(1)). It provides further guidance to relevant professions by stipulating **training requirements** in Article 36 (see above, under Chapter III, Section 2).

Eurojust and EIGE released in February 2025 a *joint report raising awareness on the implementation of the Directive on the European Protection Order* aiming to provide guidance to relevant professionals on how to implement the directive[221]. Although the EPO Directive applies to any persons in need of protection and victims of all forms of crime, it is applied in practice to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, as indicated in the joint report. To complement the joint report, Eurojust released a *leaflet on the European Protection Order* in March 2025[222] to offer guidelines for judicial personnel. It provides clarification on the interplay **between EU instruments,** some of which are meant to comply with obligations stemming from the Istanbul Convention.

C. Article 29 – Civil lawsuits and remedies

*Please describe what legislative and other measures have been taken by the EU to ensure that women victims can avail themselves of **civil remedies against the perpetrators,** and, where applicable, **against state authorities** in EU member states.*

With regard to civil remedies, sanctions and measures, Regulation No 606/2013 on **mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters**[223] applies to protection measures ordered to protect a person where there are serious grounds for considering that that person's life, physical or psychological integrity, personal liberty, security or sexual integrity is at risk, for example so as to prevent any form of gender-based violence or violence in close relationships such as physical violence, harassment, sexual aggression, stalking, intimidation or other forms of indirect coercion. The Regulation applies to all victims, but ha a specific reference to victims of gender-based violence (recital 6).

The Directive 2024/1069 on **strategic lawsuits against public participation**[224] provides safeguards against manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings in civil matters with cross-border implications brought against natural and legal persons on account of their

[221] Eurojust, EIGE 'Joint Report on the European Protection Order', available at: https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/publication/joint-report-european-protection-order
[222] Eurojust, 'Leaflet on the European Protection Order', available at: https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/publication/european-protection-order-brief-overview.
[223] Regulation (EU) No 606/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters, OJ L 181, 29.6.2013, p. 4-12, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/606/oj.
[224] Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation'), OJ L, 2024/1069, 16.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1069/oj.

engagement in public participation. Recitals 23 and 26 refer specifically to victims of gender-based violence.

The EU adopted two new directives in 2024 (Directives 2024/1499 and 2024/1500) that aim to strengthen the role of **equality bodies** by enhancing the independence, mandate, resources and powers of these bodies. Those powers include powers to conduct inquiries, to litigate and to offer alternative dispute resolution in discrimination cases, at national level. EIGE collects data on the situation of equality bodies and FRA collects information on the situation of public bodies with a human rights or equality remit in the EU. In some countries, these bodies have been assigned the task of combating violence against women. The Commission, with the support of EIGE and FRA, Equinet (the European Network of Equality Bodies) and Member States' experts is preparing an implementing act on the functioning of equality bodies to be adopted by June 2026. It will put in place a monitoring framework for the abovementioned Directives.

D. Article 30 - Compensation

*1. Please provide information on any internal EU procedures available to women victims to claim **compensation from perpetrators** for any of the offences established in accordance with the convention perpetrated by an **EU official** or employee at the workplace (Article 30, paragraph 1).*

As regards the **EU's public administration**, Article 24 of the Staff Regulations provides the legal basis for most **Union institutions**, bodies and agencies to assist officials and other servants who are victims, including by providing them with financial assistance should they wish to bring legal proceedings against the perpetrators before the national courts.

The Commission has established an internal process to address any breach of the Staff Regulations. Under certain conditions, the Commission may also assist staff who wish to pursue justice under the national legal system of the Member States. Article 24(2) of the Staff Regulations states that the Commission must compensate for damages of the kind covered by Article 24(1) in so far as the staff member did not either intentionally or through grave negligence cause damage and has been unable to obtain compensation from the person who caused it.

The **ECA**'s policy for ensuring a respectful and harassment-free workplace (Decision No 50-2022, paragraph 81) provides for compensation of victims of harassment.

The CoR has established an internal process to address any breach of the Staff Regulations.

*2. Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that women victims can claim compensation from perpetrators for any of the offences established in accordance with the convention (Article 30, paragraph 1) at **the level of EU member states**.*

Article 24 of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that victims have the right to claim full compensation from offenders for damages resulting from offences of violence against women or domestic violence, in accordance with national law. To avoid secondary

victimisation, this provision also requires Member States to ensure, where appropriate, that victims are able to obtain compensation in the course of criminal proceedings (Recital 56).

Article 16 of **the VRD** provides minimum standards with regard to compensation from the offender, allowing victims to obtain a decision on compensation as part of criminal proceedings, except where national law provides for this decision to be taken in other legal proceedings.

2. *Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that women victims can claim state compensation from authorities in EU member states when any such offence involves sustained serious bodily injury or impairment of health (Article 30, paragraph 2).*

The Compensation Directive covers compensation from the state to victims of violent intentional crimes. The directive requires all Member States to ensure that their national rules provide for the existence of a scheme on compensation to victims of violent intentional crimes committed in their respective countries, which guarantees fair and appropriate compensation to victims. However, the rules relating to compensable injury, conditions of access to compensation, amount of compensation and procedural requirements remain the sole responsibility of the national authorities.

E. Article 31 - Custody, visitation rights and safety

Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that, in decisions taken at the level of EU Member States:

1. *incidents of violence against women are taken into account in the **determination of custody and visitation rights of children** (Article 31, paragraph 1) as a superseding concern;*

Substantive family law, such as custody and visitation rights, are matters decided under national law and thus come under the exclusive competence of the Member States. The EU can only legislate on family law if there are cross-border implications. The recently adopted **Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems**[225] recommends that Member States clearly set out rules on reporting cases of violence against children. If the violence involves the holder of parental responsibility, or if there could be any other conflict of interest between the child victim and the holder of parental responsibility, Member States should take account of the child's best interests and ensure that any act requiring consent is not conditional upon the consent of the holder of parental responsibility. Member States are also encouraged to take measures to ensure that children are heard in legal proceedings on all matters that affect them, in a child-friendly manner.

Article 32(1) of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that the competent authorities have access to information regarding violence against women or domestic violence

[225] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/1238 of 23 of April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child, OJ L, 2024/1238, 14.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2024/1238/oj.

involving children, in so far as necessary to ensure that the information can be taken into account when assessing the best interests of the child in civil proceedings concerning the child. Council Regulation 2019/1111[226] (**the Brussels IIb Regulation**) provides (in Article 80) the legal basis for central authorities to exercise competence on the collection and exchange of information relevant in procedures in matters of parental responsibility[227]. If the child is exposed to serious risk or danger, the court or competent authority contemplating or having taken child protection measures, if it is aware that the child's residence has changed to, or that the child is located in another Member State, must inform the courts or competent authorities of that other Member State about the danger involved and the measures taken or under consideration. The central authority may facilitate this communication by transmitting the information directly, or through the central authority of the other Member State.

2. *Women victims and their children remain safe from any further harm in the **exercise of any visitation or custody rights** (Article 31, paragraph 2).*

Article 32(2) of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to establish and maintain safe places which allow safe contact between a child and a holder of parental responsibility who is an offender or suspect of violence against women or domestic violence, to the extent that the holder of parental responsibility has rights of access. Member States must also ensure supervision, as appropriate, by trained professionals in the best interests of the child.

F. Articles 33-39 – Criminalisations

Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that the following forms of violence are criminalised at the level of EU Member States:

1. psychological violence, as defined in Article 33;
2. stalking, as defined in Article 34;
3. physical violence, as defined in Article 35;
4. sexual violence, including rape, as defined in Article 36, paragraph 1, having due regard to the definition of consent under Article 36, paragraph 2.
    i. Please also indicate whether and how acts of sexual violence, including rape, committed against former or current spouses or partners are criminalised (Article 36, paragraph 3).
    ii. Please specify the age, under EU law, at which a person is considered to be legally competent to consent to sexual acts;
5. forced marriage, as defined in Article 37;
6. female genital mutilation as defined in Article 38;
7. forced abortion, as defined in Article 39a;
8. forced sterilisation, as defined in Article 39b.

Article 83(1) TFEU empowers the Union to harmonise substantive criminal law by establishing minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the areas of

[226] Council Regulation (EU) 2019/1111 of 25 June 2019 on jurisdiction, the recognition and enforcement of decisions in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, and on international child abduction (recast), OJ L 178, 2.7.2019, p. 1-115, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1111/oj.
[227] Practice Guide on the application of the Brussels IIb Regulation, Section 7.2.3, available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ff34bda5-ea90-11ed-a05c-01aa75ed71a1.

'sexual exploitation of women and children' and 'computer crime' (Article 83(1) TFUE). On this basis, the **VAW Directive** defines at EU level the following criminal offences:

- female genital mutilation (Article 3);
- forced marriage (Article 4);
- non-consensual sharing of intimate images or manipulated material (Article 5);
- cyber stalking (Article 6);
- cyber harassment (Article 7); and
- cyber incitement to violence or hatred on ground of gender (Article 8).

Moreover, the **CSA Directive** requires Member States to criminalise the following intentional conducts of sexual abuse against children:

- causing, for sexual purposes, a child who has not reached the age of sexual consent to witness sexual activities or sexual abuse (Article 3(2) and (3));
- engaging in sexual activities with a child who has not reached the age of sexual consent (Article 3(4));
- engaging in sexual activities with a child who has reached the age of sexual consent, if abuse is made of (i) a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, (ii) a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, or (iii) coercion, force or threats (Article 3(5));
- coercing, forcing or threatening a child into sexual activities with a third party (Article 3(6)).

The Commission's proposal to **recast the CSA Directive** introduces **rape** as an aggravated offence. The offence covers the conduct of engaging with a child in any act of vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature, with any bodily part or object, as well as causing a child to engage in such sexual acts with another person. Where the child has reached the age of sexual consent, the proposal defines the lack of consent (see Article 3(9)). The Commission proposal builds on Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention as interpreted by GREVIO. Trilogues between the co-legislators started July 2025.

The **Antitrafficking Directive** is also of relevance as it states in Article 2 on offences concerning trafficking in human beings that 'exploitation shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, (…) or the exploitation of forced marriage' (paragraph 3).

EIGE has published several factsheets that aim to build a common understanding of specific forms of violence, such as economic and psychological violence, as well as rape[228]. EIGE has also examined the progress made by EU Member States to criminalise cyberviolence[229].

FRA's annual Fundamental Rights Report has examined the measures taken by EU Member States to criminalise various forms of violence against women[230]. The 2024 report makes several references to the Istanbul Convention.

[228] Understanding rape in the European Union: The essential need for administrative data collection | European Institute for Gender Equality; Understanding Economic Violence against Women: The need for harmonised definitions and data in the EU | European Institute for Gender Equality; Understanding Psychological Violence against Women: The need for harmonised definitions and data in the EU | European Institute for Gender Equality.
[229] Cyber violence against women | European Institute for Gender Equality
[230] See: Fundamental Rights Report — 2024 and Fundamental Rights Report 2023.

The **EU gender equality strategy for 2021-2025** states that 'female genital mutilation, forced abortion, and forced sterilisation, early and forced marriage, so-called 'honour-related violence' and other harmful practices against women and girls are forms of gender-based violence and serious violations of women's and children's rights.

G. Article 40 – Sexual harassment

*Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **sexual harassment**, as defined in Article 40, is criminalised or otherwise addressed at the level of EU Member States.*

There is no competence under Article 83 TFEU to establish sexual harassment as it is defined in Article 40 (i.e. all forms and outside work context) as criminal offence at EU level. However, harassment and sexual harassment at work are defined in the **Equal Treatment Directive** which prohibits discrimination in employment. Furthermore, Member States are encouraged, in accordance with national law, collective agreements or practice, to ensure employers and those responsible for access to vocational training to take effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, in particular harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, access to employment, vocational training and promotion (Article 26).

Violence and harassment at workplace are also covered by the **Framework Directive on health and safety at work** (89/391/EEC)[231], which lays down the employer obligation to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to the work (Article 5). In this regard, the employer shall evaluate any kind of safety and health risks for workers, including psychosocial risks, and to put in place the adequate preventive and protective measures. The **EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027** (COM(2021) 323) puts a particular focus on the prevention of psychosocial risks at work, including violence and harassment[232]. The Strategic Framework announces also that the Commission will support **awareness raising on workplace harassment**. This work is led by **EU-OSHA**. Projects on harassment and gender equality developed by a variety of social partners are supported by social policy funding, where many have included harassment as a priority in the current work programmes of their Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees.

On 25 March 2024, the Council agreed to invite Member States to ratify the **Violence and Harassment Convention**, 2019 **(**Convention **No 190**) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)[233]. The EU and its Member States played an active role in the adoption of Convention No 190 at the 108th International Labour Conference in 2019. So far, 12 EU Member States have ratified the Convention[234].

Where sexual harassment is criminalised under national law, the **VAW Directive** requires:

- specific measures of support for victims (Article 28);

[231] Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1-8, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1989/391/oj.
[232] Point 2.2: Promoting workplaces for all.
[233] Decision 2024/1018 of 25 March 2024 inviting Member States to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No 190) of the International Labour Organisation, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/1018/OJ.
[234] AT, BE, DK, FI, FR, DE, EL, IE, IT, PT, RO and ES.
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- Member States to take adequate and appropriate measures to address sexual harassment at work in relevant national policies (Article 34(9);
- training for people in supervisory positions in the workplace, in both the public and private sectors, on how to recognise, prevent and tackle sexual harassment at work (Article 36(6).

Under Article 45(3) of the VAW Directive, by 14 June 2032, the Commission must assess the need for further measures at EU level to effectively tackle sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Further measures must take account of applicable international conventions, the EU's legal framework governing equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation and the legal framework on occupational safety and health.

H. Article 41 – Aiding or abetting and attempt

1. *Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions and agencies, to ensure that **aiding or abetting** in relation to psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence (including rape), forced marriage, the performance of female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation (Article 41, paragraph 1) are addressed at the level of EU Member States.*

Article 9(1) and 9(2) of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that inciting, **aiding and abetting** criminal offences covered by the Directive are punishable as criminal offences.

Article 7(1) of the **CSA Directive** requires Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure that inciting or aiding and abetting to commit any of the offences under the Directive is punishable as criminal offence.

Article 3 of the **Antitrafficking Directive** also requires Member States to ensure that inciting and aiding and abetting to commit offences concerning trafficking in human beings is punishable.

2. *Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **attempts** of physical violence, sexual violence (including rape), forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation (Article 41, paragraph 2) are addressed at the level of EU Member States.*

Article 9(3) of **the VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that **attempting** to commit female genital mutilation or forced marriage is punishable as criminal offence.

Article 7(2) of the **CSA Directive** requires Member States to take the measures needed to ensure that an attempt to commit any of the offences listed in the Directive is punishable as criminal offence, including:

- engaging in sexual activities with a child who has not reached the age of sexual consent (Article 3(4));

- engaging in sexual activities with a child who has reached the age of sexual consent, if abuse is made of (i) a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, (ii) a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, or (iii) coercion, force or threats (Article 3(5));
- coercing, forcing or threatening a child into sexual activities with a third party (Article 3(6)).

Article 3 of the **Antitrafficking Directive** also requires Member States to ensure that attempting to commit offences concerning trafficking in human beings is punishable.

I. Article 42 – Unacceptable justifications for crimes, including crimes committed in the name of so-called 'honour'

*Please indicate any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions and agencies, to ensure that, in criminal proceedings initiated at the level of EU member states following the commission of any of the acts of violence covered by the convention, **culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called honour** cannot be regarded as justification for such acts nor as mitigating circumstances (Article 42).*

Under Article 11 of **the VAW Directive**, Member States must take the necessary measures to ensure that, in relation to the offence defined in the Directive one or more of the circumstances listed therein should be regarded as an aggravating circumstance, in accordance with national law. This includes the case where a crime 'is committed to preserve or restore the so-called 'honour' of a person, family, community or another similar group',

Moreover, when complying with the obligation under Article 34(5) of the VAW Directive to take **preventive measures** to challenge harmful stereotypes, Member States should include 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 (as indicated in recital 75).

J. Article 43 – Application of criminal offences

*Please indicate any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that the offences established in accordance with the convention at the level of EU member states apply notwithstanding the nature of the **relationship of the perpetrator to the victim** (Article 43*).

Under the **VAW Directive** and other relevant EU legislation, criminal offences generally apply regardless of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The relationship between the victim and the offender are in some situations viewed as an aggravating circumstance (see VAW Directive, Article 11(b), (k), (l) and (m)).

K. Article 45 – Sanctions and measures

For each form of violence covered by the convention, please specify:

a. *any legislative measures taken by the EU in relation to the applicable **sanctions** in EU member states, including sanctions other than criminal, and, where appropriate, any*

legislative measures governing sanctions that involve deprivation of liberty which can give rise to extradition (Article 45, paragraph 1);

The VAW Directive requires Member States to ensure that the criminal offences defined in it are punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties (see penalties in Article 10). The VAW Directive also sets out minimum maximum penalties ranging from 1 to 5 years for the different offences covered by the Directive.

The CSA Directive also sets out minimum maximum penalties. Member States are required to ensure that child sexual abuse offences are punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment ranging from at least 1-10 years depending on the seriousness of the offence (Article 3). It states that serious forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children should be subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties (recital 12). In addition, Article 13 obliges Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure that legal persons held liable under the Directive are punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions. Moreover, in line with Article 10, Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that a person who has been convicted may be temporarily or permanently prevented from exercising at least professional activities involving direct and regular contacts with children.

b. any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that, at the level of the EU member states, ***the following issues in relation to perpetrators are addressed:***

i. the monitoring or supervision of convicted persons;

To monitor the behaviour of perpetrators and to ensure the effective protection of victims and their dependants, Article 19 of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure the availability of **emergency barring orders, restraining orders and protection orders**. Article 19(5) requires Member States to ensure that breaches are made subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal penalties (e.g. fines). Recital 46 also mentions electronic monitoring.

In addition, the EU has developed **a mutual recognition system** for prison sentences and prisoner transfers in criminal matters. Under this system, Member States agree to recognise one another's criminal laws and decisions, including judgments imposing prison sentences and alternatives to such sentences[235]. Moreover, **Framework Decision** (FD) 2008/947/JHA[236] on **probation measures and alternative sanctions**, permits a criminal sentence issued in a Member State imposing deprivation of liberty but not amounting to detention to be enforced and supervised abroad, by the authority of another Member State. See also Framework Decision 2009/829/JHA on the application, between Member States of the European Union, of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions on **supervision measures as an alternative to**

[235] Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_framw/2008/909/oj.

[236] Council Framework Decision 2008/947/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments and probation decisions with a view to the supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions**,** OJ L 337, 16.12.2008, p. 102 -122,
ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_framw/2008/947/oj.

provisional detention[237]. Lastly, Framework Decision 2008/675/JHA[238] ensures that in the course of criminal proceedings in a Member State against a person, **previous convictions** handed down against the same person for different facts in other Member States, are taken into account. This is also facilitated through the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), which connects national criminal record databases to ensure that national courts take into account previous convictions of the defendant[239].

ii. *the withdrawal of parental rights, if the best interests of the child, which may include the safety of the woman victim, cannot be guaranteed in any other way (Article 45, paragraph 2).*

While the EU has no competence in the area of parental rights, **Article 32(1) of the VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that the relevant competent authorities have access to information on violence against women or domestic violence involving children, in so far as necessary to allow that that information can be taken into account when assessing the best interests of the child in the framework of civil proceedings concerning such children.

L. Article 46 – Aggravating circumstances

Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that at the level of EU member states the circumstances referred to in Article 46, insofar as they do not already form part of the constituent elements of the offences, may be taken into consideration as ***aggravating circumstances****?*

Article 11 of the VAW Directive includes all the aggravating circumstances set in the Istanbul Convention and adds the following, in accordance with national law,: '(h) the offence was committed with **the use of force or threats to use force**, or by means of **coercion;** (i) the conduct caused the **death of the victim** or severe physical or psychological harm to the victim; (n) the offence was committed against a person because that person was a **public representative, a journalist or a human rights defender;** (o) the intention of the offence was to preserve or restore the so-called **'honour'** of a person, a family, a community or another similar group; (p) the intention of the offence was to **punish the victim** for the victim's sexual orientation, gender, colour, religion, social origin or political beliefs.'

M. Article 48 – Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing

1. *Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that – in criminal and civil law –* ***mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes*** *are prohibited at the level of EU member states, including mediation and conciliation, in relation to all forms of violence covered by the convention (Article 48).*

[237] ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_framw/2009/829/oj
[238] Framework Decision 2008/675/JHA of 24 July 2008 on taking account of convictions in the Member States of the European Union in the course of new criminal proceedings**,** OJ L 220, 15.8.2008, p. 32-34, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_framw/2008/675/oj.

2. *Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that such processes are not otherwise imposed on women victims of domestic violence, for example within the framework of legal separation and divorce proceedings in EU member states.*

Under Article 12 of **the VRD**, in Member States where restorative justice services are provided, safeguards must be in place to ensure the victim is not further victimised as a result of the process. Such services should therefore have as a primary consideration the interests and needs of the victim, repairing harm to the victim and avoiding further harm. Participation of the victim should be voluntary, and factors such as power imbalances should be taken into consideration when referring a case and conducting a restorative process (recital 46). Ultimately, any agreement between the parties should be reached voluntarily.

N. Collection of administrative and judicial data

*Please provide information on any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its EU institutions, bodies and agencies to ensure that **administrative and judicial data** is collected at the level of EU member states, on a yearly basis, on the following matters:*

1. *in relation to cases resulting in **the death** of a woman:*

   i. *the number of such cases;*
   ii. *the number of cases in which the authorities had prior knowledge of the woman's exposure to violence;*
   iii. *the number of perpetrators convicted in relation to these cases;*
   iv. *the number and type of sanctions and further measures imposed as a result of criminal proceedings (including deprivation of liberty), with an indication, where appropriate, of their suspended execution and average length;*

2. *in relation to acts **of violence** against women amounting to attempted murder:*

   i. *the number of such cases;*
   ii. *the number of cases in which the authorities had prior knowledge of the woman's exposure to violence;*
   iii. *the number of perpetrators convicted in relation to these cases;*
   iv. *the number and type of sanctions and further measures imposed as a result of criminal proceedings (including deprivation of liberty), with an indication, where appropriate, of their suspended execution and average length.*

3. *in relation to **all other cases** of violence against women:*

   i. *the number of complaints made by victims and the number of reports by third parties, to law enforcement agencies/criminal justice authorities;*
   ii. *the number of criminal proceedings and/or any other legal action initiated as a result;*
   iii. *the number of perpetrators convicted;*
   iv. *the number of criminal and other sanctions imposed with an indication of the type of sanctions imposed (for example fine, court-ordered participation in perpetrator programmes, restriction of liberty,*

deprivation of liberty) and, where appropriate, of their suspended execution and average length;

v. *the number of further measures imposed, with an indication of the type of measures adopted (for example monitoring or supervision of the perpetrator, withdrawal of parental rights);*

vi. *the number of perpetrators subjected to further measures referred to in Article 45, paragraph 2.*

Please describe the measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure the above-requested data is disaggregated following the criteria described earlier (see section I. Introduction).

4. *the number of cases which resulted in the death of the children of the women victims.*

The annual crime data collection coordinated by **Eurostat** is voluntary for Member States. However, the data quality is ensured by methodology guidelines, metadata and data validation by Eurostat. Regular expert group meetings (working groups and task forces) take place to discuss methodological questions and further developments. This data collection focuses on selected police-recorded crime offences and limited information on victims as explained above, and data is not collected for all indicators listed below. For further information on the requirements under the VAW Directive, see reply about Article 11 above.

EIGE has developed 13 intimate partner violence indicators, including 9 indicators for the police on reported violence, following the Istanbul Convention definitions and 4 indicators for the justice sector:

- indicator 10: annual number of protection orders [applied for and granted] in cases of [intimate partner / domestic / any] violence against [female and total] victims;
- indicator 11: annual number of male perpetrators prosecuted for [intimate partner / domestic / any] violence against [female and total] victims;
- indicator 12: annual number of male perpetrators sentenced for [intimate partner / domestic / any] violence against [female and total] victims;
- indicator 13: number of male perpetrators held in prison or with a sanction involving a form of deprivation of liberty for [intimate partner / domestic / any] violence against [female and total] victims.

The results across Member States presented on EIGE's Gender Statistics Database comes from EIGE's 2023-2024 administrative data collection exercise on intimate partner violence and domestic violence[240].

O. Other measures related to substantive law

*Please provide information on any **other measures** taken or planned by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in relation to substantive law, together with any available data on the recourse to such measures.*

Article 45(2) of the **VAW Directive** provides that, based on information provided by Member States by 14 June 2032, the Commission must carry out **an evaluation** of the Directive's

[240] Intimate partner violence indicators | Gender Statistics Database | European Institute for Gender Equality

impact and of whether the objective of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence across the EU has been achieved. The Commission must submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council. The report must assess, in particular, whether an extension of the Directive's scope and the introduction of **new offences** is necessary. That report must be accompanied by a legislative proposal, if necessary.

P. Action to ensure implementation of the relevant EU legal framework

*1. Please indicate concrete **action** taken to **ensure the implementation** of the relevant EU legal framework by officials and other persons working for and with EU institutions, bodies and agencies.*

The EU's **public administration** institutions, agencies and bodies provide the means to enable staff to familiarise themselves with the relevant rights and obligations. They provide staff with the necessary channels of assistance when needed, and take appropriate formal (e.g. disciplinary procedure) or informal (e.g. training) action when they become aware of non-compliance or lack of compliance with their respective staff rules.

In the **Commission** and **other EU institutions** that apply the Staff Regulations and CEOS, breaches of the Staff Regulations and CEOS are liable to disciplinary penalties under Article 86 and Annex IX of the Staff Regulations[241], and the General implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings[242]. If there is a parallel criminal prosecution, a disciplinary penalty can only be imposed after a final judgment has been handed down by the court hearing the case. The action plan based on Article 17 of the 2023 Anti-harassment Decision sets out various preventive measures linked to psychological and sexual harassment, such as promoting an organisational culture that supports a work environment that is respectful, inclusive and free form harassment. These measures essentially involve communication, training and awareness-raising, which are the most effective way to reduce the risk of psychological and sexual harassment occurring. The CCC must coordinate and implement those measures within two years of her appointment. A dedicated steering group, chaired by the CCC, will meet regularly and monitor implementation of the action plan once a year.

The GSC provides training and information for staff; awareness raising and mandatory training for staff members with management responsibilities; conciliation and mediation.

T**he EESC** places a strong emphasis on awareness raising, communication and training. This is supplemented by a network of confidential counsellors, a dedicated ethics coordinator at HR level, and external mediation. There is also a Code of Conduct for members of the EESC and an Ethical Committee providing guidance on ethical matters, which is communicated.

The EO adheres to the Commission's preventive and reactive practices, including those based on the Staff Regulations. The Office's anti-harassment policy also provides for measures similar to those of the Commission, including disciplinary measures.

[241] Applicable by analogy to temporary and contract agents pursuant to the CEOS.
242 Commission decision of 12.6.2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings (C(2019)4231 final).

The **ECA** provides staff with the necessary channels of assistance when needed, and takes appropriate formal (e.g. disciplinary procedure) or informal (e.g. training) action when it becomes aware of non-compliance or lack of compliance with the Staff Regulations.

The CoR publishes statutory rights and obligations on the intranet, in the trainee guidebook, in HR newsletters. It shares them with newcomers on their first day and by organising regular training for all staff on gender, harassment, or sexism related topics, and through HR campaigns.

The **ECB** has a dedicated section on its intranet. Where appropriate, formal measures such as disciplinary sanctions are imposed following disciplinary procedures.

On top of continuing to deploy regular awareness-raising and training programmes, the **EEAS** is proposing to review recruitment procedures for managers and leadership assessment systems and implement gender-responsive leadership across the organisation. This follows the recommendations from the Istanbul Task Force in the EEAS and aims to increase accountability.

*2. Please indicate concrete action taken to ensure the **implementation of the relevant EU legal framework by EU member states (including infringement proceedings).***

Checks on the transposition of the **VAW Directive** will not begin before 14 June 2027, following the expiry of the transposition period. To support timely and complete transposition, the Commission is holding a series of implementation workshops with Member States throughout this period. The first workshop was held in May 2025, with further sessions planned until the end of the transposition period

The EU ensures Member States implement EU law through several mechanisms, including infringement proceedings. For more information, see Implementing EU law - European Commission.

VI. Investigation, prosecution and procedural law and protective measures

(Chapter VI of the Convention, Articles 49 to 58)

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in accordance with the principles set out in Article 49 of the convention, in order to ensure that at the level of EU member states: i) **investigations and judicial proceedings** are carried out **without undue delay** while taking into consideration the rights of women victims during all stages of the criminal proceedings; and ii) acts of violence against women are investigated and prosecuted in an **effective manner.***

*To this end, the competent authorities must be able to respond promptly and appropriately to all forms of violence covered by the convention, issue emergency barring **orders** or restraining or protection orders and take measures of protection during the investigations and criminal proceedings. **Non-governmental/civil society organisations** must be able to assist and/or support women victims in legal proceedings (for example as third parties) and appropriate **arrangements** must be made to facilitate women victims' **access to justice.***

A. Article 50 – Immediate response, prevention and protection

*1. Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure a **prompt and appropriate response** from law enforcement agencies in EU member states to all forms of violence covered by the convention by offering adequate and immediate **protection** to women victims (Article 50).*

Chapter 3 of the **VAW Directive**, entitled 'Protection of victims and access to justice', puts in place a set of obligations to ensure prompt and appropriate prevention, investigation and prosecution of instances of violence against women and domestic violence. The need to ensure a prompt response from law enforcement is highlighted in recitals 36, 28, 44 and 64.

Article 18(2) of the **CSA Directive** requires Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure that a child is provided with assistance and support as soon as the competent authorities have a reasonable-grounds indication for believing that a child might have been subject to any of the offences under the Directive. Article 19(3) obliges Member States to ensure that the specific actions to assist and support child victims in enjoying their rights under the Directive are taken following an individual assessment of each child victim's special circumstances, taking due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.

*2. Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **administrative data** on the number of interventions carried out annually by law enforcement agencies in relation to violence against women is collected at the level of EU member states (see section I. Introduction).*

Data on the number of interventions carried out annually by law enforcement agencies in relation to violence against women is not collected at EU level.

B. Article 51 – Risk assessment and risk management

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that procedures regarding the **assessment** of the lethality of the risk, the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence are carried out by all relevant authorities of EU member states, and duly taken into account at all stages of the investigation and the application of protective measures (Article 51).*

The **VAW Directive** requires Member States to carry out, at the earliest possible stage, an individual assessment of the victim's specific protection needs that focuses on the risk emanating from the offender or suspect (Article 16). The article lists several potential risks that may be of particular relevance. The article also requires the assessment to take into account the victim's individual circumstances, including whether the victim experiences discrimination and therefore faces a heightened risk of violence, and the victim's own assessment of the situation. The assessment must also be conducted in the best interest of the victim, paying special attention to the need to avoid secondary or repeat victimisation.

An individual assessment is also required under Article 22 of the **VRD** to determine whether a victim is particularly vulnerable to secondary and repeat victimisation, to intimidation and to retaliation during criminal proceedings. The assessment involves a two-step process: (1) to determine whether a victim has specific protection needs against the criteria listed in Article 22, paragraph 2; and, if so, (2) to determine if special protection measures should be applied and

what these should be (as listed in Article 23 for all victims with specific protection needs and in Article 24 for child victims). Children are always presumed to have specific protection needs and are therefore only subject to the second part of the assessment. Victims of gender-based violence shall be duly considered since they typically have particular vulnerabilities.

EIGE's Guide to risk assessment and risk management of intimate partner violence for police provides practical recommendations for police forces in Member States (2019).

C. Article 52 – Emergency barring orders

*1 Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that the relevant authorities in EU member states are granted the power to issue an **emergency barring order** when a woman victim (or at risk) of domestic violence is in a situation of immediate danger, as referred to in Article 52 (that is, ordering the perpetrator to immediately vacate the residence of the woman victim and/or prohibiting the perpetrator from entering the residence of or contacting the woman concerned).*

Article 19(1) of the VAW Directive requires Member States to 'ensure that, in situations of **immediate danger** for the victim's or dependants' health or safety, the competent authorities are granted the power to issue, without undue delay, orders addressed to an offender or suspect of an act of violence covered by the Directive ordering the offender or suspect to **vacate the residence** of the victim or dependants for a sufficient period of time and prohibiting the offender or suspect from entering, or coming closer than a prescribed distance from, that residence, from entering the victim's workplace or from contacting the victim or dependants in any way.' Such orders must have immediate effect and not be dependent on a victim reporting the criminal offence or on the initiation of an individual assessment of the risk emanating from the offender or suspect.

In addition, the proposal for the **revision of the VRD** aims to strengthen the use of measures for victims' physical protection, such as a protection order, by adding it to the list of specialised protection measures (Article 23(4)).

The **EU victims' rights strategy** calls on EU agencies to cooperate to strengthen justice for victims and to report on how to improve cooperation and the exchange of information and good practices between competent authorities in cross-border cases.

The **Directive on the European protection order (EPO)**[243] sets out rules **allowing a judicial or equivalent authority** in a Member State, in which a protection measure has been adopted with a view to protecting a person against a criminal act by another person which may endanger his life, physical or psychological integrity, dignity, personal liberty or sexual integrity, to issue a European protection order enabling a competent authority in another Member State to continue the protection of the person in the territory of that other Member State. These rules have particular relevance in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

EIGE and **Eurojust** has published the *Joint Report on the European Protection Order: Perspectives from the judiciary and support services | European Institute for Gender Equality*

[243] Directive 2011/99/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the European protection order OJ L 338, 21.12.2011, p. 2-18, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/99/oj.

(see pp. 26-32). Eurojust and the EIGE have also drafted leaflets targeted at legal practitioners and support services to raise awareness of the use of the EPO.

See in this regard also the answer above under Article 29 on the Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters.

2. Please specify whether the measures taken address:

a. the time required to issue an emergency barring order;

Article 19(1) of the VAW Directive requires the order to be issued '**without undue delay**' and to have immediate effect.

b. the maximum duration of an emergency barring order;

c. if the duration can be extended until a protection order can be issued;

The VAW Directive does not set a maximum duration of an emergency barring order, nor does it specifically indicate whether the duration can be extended until a protection order can be issued. However, by highlighting the objective of emergency barring orders, restraining orders or protection orders – to ensure the effective protection of victims and dependants – recital 43 implies that Member States should ensure that such orders remain in force **as long as necessary** to attain the stated objective. Moreover, recital 45 indicates that emergency barring orders, restraining orders or protection orders should be issued either for a specified period or until they are modified or discharged.

d. if emergency barring orders can apply to all women victims of domestic violence; if not, please specify any exceptions;

Under the **VAW Directive** (Article 19(1)), emergency barring orders apply for the benefit of all victims of domestic violence (regardless of their gender) and their dependants. Emergency barring orders must also be available for any other form of violence against women.

e. the type of measures used to enforce emergency barring orders and ensure the safety of the woman victim;
f. what sanctions can be imposed in case of a breach of such an emergency barring order;

Article 19(5) of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that breaches of emergency barring orders are made subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal **penalties** (e.g. fines). Moreover, as a measure to supervise perpetrators, recital 46 makes a reference to electronic monitoring to ensure compliance with orders, to record evidence of breaches of such orders and to enhance the supervision of offenders.

To ensure the safety of the victim, where **a breach occurs**, Member States must ensure that a revision of the individual assessment of the victim's protection is considered (Article 19(5)) and that victims are given the opportunity to be notified, without undue delay (Article 19(6)). More generally, recital 44 specifies that where, under national law, emergency barring orders are subject to an application from the victim, victims should be informed of the possibility to do so.

g. the support and advice made available to women seeking such protection.

Member States must ensure that support services, such as specialist support services, in cooperation with the competent authorities, **contact victims to offer support**, with due regard for their safety, where the assessments identify specific support or protection needs, or where victims request support (Article 18(1) of the VAW Directive). Member States may make such contact subject to the consent of the victim. Specialist support services will provide victims with the wide range of support referred to in Articles 25-33 of the VAW Directive.

Moreover**, Article 19(4) of the Directive** provides that, where relevant for the safety of the victim, Member States must ensure that the competent authorities **inform victims of the possibility to apply** for emergency barring orders, restraining orders or protection orders and of the possibility to seek cross-border recognition of protection orders pursuant to Directive 2011/99/EU or Regulation (EU) No 606/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

3. *Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **administrative and judicial data** is collected on a yearly basis at the level of EU member states (see section I. Introduction) on:*

a. the number of emergency barring orders issued by the competent authorities;
b. the number of breaches of such orders;
c. the number of sanctions imposed as a result of these breaches.

Member States are not required to collect administrative and judicial data on emergency barring orders, restraining order and protection orders under EU legislation.

FRA's Fundamental Rights Reports from 2022[244] and 2023[245] examine the use of emergency barring orders and new developments in this regard.

D. Article 53 – Restraining or protection orders

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies or agencies, to ensure that **restraining or protection orders** are made available to women victims of all forms of violence covered by the convention (Article 53, paragraph 1) at the level of EU member states.*

Please specify whether the measures address:

1. the procedures that must be in place to apply for a restraining or protection order;

The **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that competent authorities are granted the power to issue emergency barring, restraining or protection orders. Although it allows Member States to require adult victims to request these orders themselves (Article 19), it does

[244] Fundamental Rights Report 2022, (Section 9.2.3 and 9.2.4).
[245] Fundamental Rights Report 2023, p. 231-237 on the Istanbul Convention, and (Section 9.2.3.2),from p. 236 on emergency barring orders, Available online: Fundamental Rights Report 2023 | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

not lay down the procedures to be followed to apply for them. This is because EU law respects the **principle of procedural autonomy** of Member States, leaving them free to lay down their own national procedural rules to govern the exercise of an individual right granted by EU law. However, those rules must respect the effectiveness of EU law. Effectiveness seeks to prevent a situation in which the national procedural rules would make exercising EU law-based rights impossible or excessively difficult.

2. *the need for restraining or protection orders to apply to all victims of violence covered by the convention; if not, please specify any exceptions*;

Under the **VAW Directive**, restraining or protection orders apply **to all victims** of violence against women and domestic violence with no exception (Article 19).

3. *the levying of fees against the applicant/woman victim;*

As explained in point 1, the procedures for issuing restraining and protection orders are left to Member States (including possible fees), with the condition that the exercise of EU law-based rights cannot be made impossible or excessively difficult.

4. *the delay between issuing such an order and when it takes effect;*

Under Article 19(1), first subparagraph, of the VAW Directive, orders must have **immediate effect.**

5. *the maximum duration of restraining or protection orders;*

Article 19(2) of the VAW Directive requires Member States to ensure that the competent authorities are granted the power to issue restraining orders or protection orders to provide protection **for as long as necessary** to victims against any acts of violence covered by the Directive.

6. *whether such orders are available irrespective of, or in addition to, other legal proceedings*;

Under Article 19(1), first subparagraph, of the VAW Directive, orders **must not** be dependent on a **victim reporting** the criminal offence (and therefore the subsequent initiation of legal proceedings).

7. *whether restraining or protection orders can be introduced in subsequent legal proceedings*;

Restraining and protection orders can be introduced in **subsequent legal proceedings** as long as the need to ensure the effective protection of the victim is present (see Article 19 requiring Member States to ensure that competent authorities have the power to issue such orders, read in combination with recital 43 that states the reasons for such an obligation).

8. *the criminal and other legal sanctions which can be imposed (including deprivation of liberty, fines, etc.) in case of breach; and*

Article 19(5) of the VAW Directive requires Member States to ensure that breaches of orders are made subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal **penalties** (e.g. fines).

9. *the support and advice made available to women seeking such protection*.

This point is answered above under VI.C.2.g.

E. Collection of administrative and judicial data

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **administrative and judicial data** is collected on a yearly basis at the level of EU member states (see section I. Introduction) on:*

1. *the number of restraining or protection orders issued by the competent authorities;*
2. *the number of breaches of such orders; and*
3. *the number of sanctions imposed as a result of these breaches.*

This point is answered above under VI.C.3.

F. Article 55(1) – Ex officio proceedings

*Please provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that legal proceedings are initiated **ex officio** in EU member states (namely, in order not to place the onus of initiating such proceedings and securing convictions on the women victims) in relation to each of the forms of violence covered by the convention (Article 55, paragraph 1)?*

Article 15(5) of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that investigations into or the prosecution of acts of rape are not dependent on a victim or the victim's representative reporting the act, or on a complaint by a victim or the victim's representative, and that criminal proceedings are not discontinued solely because the report or complaint has been withdrawn.

There are similar provisions in Article 15(1) of the CSA Directive and Article 9(1) of the Antitrafficking Directive.

G. Article 55(1) –- Ex parte proceedings

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that legal proceedings can continue **ex parte** in EU member states (even if, for instance, the woman victim withdraws her statement or complaint) as referred to in Article 55, paragraph 1?*

See above under VI.F.

H. Article 55(2) – Assistance to victims by civil society

*Please provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **NGOs or other civil society actors and domestic violence counsellors** may assist or support victims in legal proceedings initiated in EU member states (Article 55, paragraph 2), including the conditions required for such participation and any requirements pertaining to the legal status to be afforded during these proceedings.*

Article 22 and recital 50 of the **VAW Directive** states that Member States must designate one or more bodies to publish reports and make recommendations on any issue relating to violence against women and domestic violence. This includes gathering existing good practices and exchanging available information with relevant European bodies, which may form part of the equality bodies set up under Directives 2004/113/EC, 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU.

I. Article 56 – Measures of protection

*1.Please provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **measures of protection** are available during investigations and judicial proceedings (Article 56, paragraph 1) at the level of EU member states.*

Article 16(5) of the **VAW Directive** requires Member States to ensure that the competent authorities take **adequate protection measures** with due regard to the individual assessment of the victim's protection needs. These measures may include all the measures under Articles 23 and 24 of the VRD, granting emergency barring orders, restraining orders or protection orders and other relevant measures.

2.Please provide details on all measures referred to in Article 56 paragraph 1, in particular to:

- *inform women victims, at least where they and their family might be in danger, when the perpetrator escapes or is released temporarily or definitively*;

Chapter 2 of the **VRD** covers victims' rights to information and support during proceedings. This includes the right to **information** about their rights (Article 4-6) and the right to receive **interpretation and translation** (Article 7). The victim's right to protection of privacy is protected under Article 21. Article 6(5) requires Member States to ensure that all victims are offered the **opportunity to be notified**, without unnecessary delay, when the person remanded in custody, prosecuted or sentenced for criminal offences concerning them is released from or has escaped detention. Furthermore, Member States must ensure that victims are informed of any relevant measures issued for their protection if the offender is released or escapes.

- *enable women victims to be heard, to supply evidence and have their views, needs and concerns presented (directly or through an intermediary), and considered;*

Under Article 10 of the **VRD**, Member States shall ensure that victims may be heard during criminal proceedings and may provide evidence. The applicable procedural rules (how and when victims may be heard) is left to national law. In line with Article 20 of the **VAW Directive**, Member States must ensure that, during criminal proceedings, evidence concerning the past sexual conduct of the victim or other aspects of the victim's private life related thereto is permitted only when it is both relevant and necessary. This is to prevent repeated or secondary victimisation (see also recital 48).

- *provide women victims with appropriate support services so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account;*

The protection of women victims and their access to justice, including access to **support services**, is ensured in Chapter 3 of the **VAW Directive**. For example, Member States must ensure that victims can report acts of violence against women and domestic violence to the competent authorities through accessible, easy-to-use, safe and readily available channels. This includes, at least for the cybercrimes set out in the Directive, the possibility of reporting online or through other accessible and secure information and communication technologies, without prejudice to national procedural rules for formalising online reporting. Member States are also required to ensure the possibility to submit evidence via the same means, without prejudice to national procedural rules for formalising the submission of evidence (Article 14 VAW Directive).

In addition, Article 23 of the **VRD** includes a set of measures that shall be available to victims with specific protection needs during criminal proceedings. In this context, victims of gender-based violence, violence in a close relationship and victims of sexual violence shall be duly considered (Article 23(2)(d)).

- *ensure that contact between women victims and perpetrators in law enforcement agency and court premises is avoided whenever possible.*

Member States shall establish the necessary conditions to enable **avoidance of contact** between victims and their family members, where necessary, and the offender within the premises where criminal proceedings are conducted, unless the criminal proceedings require such contact (Article 19 **VRD**).

3. *Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that special measures are available to offer **protection** to child victims and child witnesses of violence covered by the convention (Article 56, paragraph 2) at the level of EU member states.*

Member States are required to ensure that professionals subject to confidentiality obligations under national law are **able to report** to the competent authorities where they have reasonable grounds to believe that serious physical harm has been inflicted on a **child** as a result of violence against women or domestic violence, without prejudice to rules on legal professional privilege or, where provided for under national law, clergy-penitent privilege or equivalent principles (Article 14(5) **VAW Directive**).

Where children report acts of violence against women or domestic violence, Member States also need to ensure that the **reporting procedures** are safe, confidential and designed and accessible in a child-friendly manner and use child-friendly language based on the child's age and maturity; moreover, **professionals trained** to work with children must be present in order to assist them with reporting procedures to ensure that they are in the best interests of the child. Where the holder of parental responsibility is involved in the act of violence, Member States must ensure that the ability of a child to report the act is **not conditional upon the consent** of the holder of parental responsibility and that the measures necessary to protect the safety of the child are taken by the competent authorities before that person is informed about the reporting (Article 14(6) **VAW Directive**).

The **VRD** also recognises the special needs to support and protect child victims. The child's best interests must be a primary consideration (Article 1(2)), and child victims are presumed to have specific protection needs due to their vulnerability to secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation (Article 22). Therefore, the Directive provides for specific rights for child victims, including the right to protection during criminal proceedings and individual approach to children before, during and after criminal proceedings (Article 24). This approach for children as victims of crime should take into account, in particular, children's maturity, views, needs and concerns. The individual assessment for children consists of determining which of the protection measures listed in the Directive would need to be put in place for each individual child. Measures to protect child victims must be adopted in their best interests. If a child victim has to take part in criminal proceedings, this should, as far as possible, not cause further trauma as a result of interviews or visual contact between them and offenders. Member States shall ensure that competent authorities take all lawful measures to prevent public dissemination or any sharing of any personal data that could lead to the identification of a child victim (Article 21).

The specific protection of child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation is provided under Articles 19 and 20 of **the CSA Directive**. The Commission proposal for a recast of the CSA Directive aims to further strengthen the existing rules, in particular Articles 21 and 22.

J. Article 57 – Legal aid

*Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **free legal aid** is provided **for women victims**, as required by Article 57, including eligibility criteria, at the level of EU member states.*

The right to access legal aid for victims with status of being a party to criminal proceedings is set out in Article 13 of the **VRD**. The conditions or procedural rules under which victims have access to legal aid shall be determined by national law. In addition, Article 14 of the **VAW Directive** provides that Member States may extend legal aid to victims reporting criminal offences, where provided for under national law. In this regard, recital 32 explains that 'When assessing the victim's resources for the purpose of deciding whether to grant legal aid, Member States should consider the victim's effective access to his or her financial resources. Domestic violence can translate into economic control by the offender, and victims might not have effective access to their own financial resources.'

K. Other measures on investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures

*Please provide information on any other action or measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, pertaining to **any other existing investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures** in relation to violence against women, together with any available data on the recourse to such measures, at the level of EU member states.*

VII. Migration and asylum

*Please provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in relation **to migrant women** victims of violence as covered by the convention, whose status makes them particularly vulnerable.*

*Please also provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, in relation to women asylum seekers who **are fleeing** gender-based violence.*

A. Article 59 – Residence status

1. *Please provide information on action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that asylum case managers and decision-makers in EU member states may grant a migrant woman victim **an autonomous residence permit** in the following cases:*

a. in the event of the dissolution of the marriage or relationship due to particularly difficult circumstances such as violence, irrespective of the duration of the marriage or relationship (Article 59, paragraph 1);

b. in the event of the expulsion of the (abusive) spouse or partner on whom her residence status depends (Article 59, paragraph 2);

c. where her stay in the country is necessary owing to her personal situation (Article 59, paragraph 3a);

d. where her stay in the country is necessary for the purpose of her co-operation in investigation or criminal proceedings (Article 59, paragraph 3b);

e. where she lost her residence status as a result of a forced marriage for which purpose she was removed from her country of residence (Article 59, paragraph 4).

The Pact on Migration and Asylum (the Pact) was adopted in May 2024. In total, 10 new legislative texts were adopted. This set of legislation builds on and amends previous reform proposals in the area of migration and asylum, offering a comprehensive approach that aims to strengthen and integrate key EU policies on migration, asylum, border management and integration. The Pact entered into force in June 2024 and will apply as of June 2026.

Following the adoption of the Pact, the Commission adopted a **Common Implementation Plan** (CIP) for the Pact in June 2024, which outlines the administrative, operational and legal measures that EU Member States must implement to prepare for the Pact's enforcement. The CIP aims to ensure that all Member States are equipped to apply the new migration and asylum rules effectively by the time they come into force. The CIP serves as a basis for Member States to set out their respective national implementation plans.

According to **the Asylum Procedure Regulation** (Article 29), Member States have to ensure that an applicant for international protection is provided with a document that proves the right to remain in that Member State to have their application examined. Under the **Qualification Regulation,** Member States are obliged to issue a residence permit as soon as possible after international protection has been granted and no later than 90 days from the notification of the decision to grant protection (Article 24). Beneficiaries of international protection must have the right to the residence permit for as long as they hold international protection status.

The **Family Reunification Directive** also lays down, in its Article 15(3), rules for the granting of autonomous residence permit to family members of third-country nationals legally residing in the EU: *'in the event of widowhood, divorce, separation, or death of first-degree relatives in the direct ascending or descending line, an autonomous residence permit may be issued,*

upon application, if required, to persons who have entered by virtue of family reunification. Member States shall lay down provisions ensuring the granting of an autonomous residence permit in the event of particularly difficult circumstances.'

While the Directive does not define what a particularly difficult circumstance may be, the CJEU clarified in its recent **judgement in case C-63/23 Sagrario**[246] that particularly difficult circumstances stem from the family situation of the third-country national concerned, in a broad sense, irrespective of whether or not that situation is linked to the breakdown of the marital relationship. These circumstances are by nature particularly serious or arduous or expose him or her to significant insecurity or vulnerability. Some examples of particularly difficult circumstances include gender-based violence, domestic violence, forced marriage, risk of genital mutilation and cases where the person would be in a particularly difficult situation if they were to be returned to their home country.

2. *Please provide information on any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that **data is collected** at the level of EU member states on the number of women who have been granted the right to remain for any of the reasons set out in categories A.1.a to A.1.e and separate the data per type of residence status granted (permanent residence status, renewable residence status, other).*

Data on **residence permits** are collected **by Eurostat** under Article 6 of Regulation 862/2007, which provides for collecting data by sex (and age). This includes data for first permits (also known as flows data), change of immigration status permits (flows), the stock of permits and the stock of long-term permits (both flows and stocks; permits with validity of more than five years). This data is further disaggregated by citizenship, and for first permits, also by the main reason for issuing a permit (education, family, work, other). Data on sex is collected mandatorily since reference year 2021, but a voluntary collection of this breakdown started already in 2010 (but with limited completeness). The following data is disseminated in Eurostat's database by sex:

- first permits by reason, age, sex and citizenship (migr_resfas);
- all valid permits by age, sex and citizenship on 31 December of each year (migr_resvas);
- long-term residents by age, sex and citizenship on 31 December of each year (migr_reslas);
- long-term residence permits issued during the year by age, sex and citizenship (migr_resltra);
- change of immigration status permits by age, sex and citizenship (migr_reschst).

B. Article 60 – Gender-based asylum claims

*1. Please indicate what legislative or other measures have been taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure that legal frameworks of EU member states recognise **gender-based violence against women as a form of persecution for asylum claims** as referred to in Article 60, paragraph 1*[247]*?*

[246] ECLI:EU:C:2024:739, CURIA - Documents.

[247] Article 60, paragraph 1 of the Istanbul Convention refers to Article 1, A (2) of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which defines the term 'refugee' as 'any person who […] owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country

2. Please indicate any legislative or other measures taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure a gender-sensitive interpretation of the forms of persecution set out in Article 1, A (2) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[248]*?*

The **Qualification Regulation** acknowledges that, depending on the circumstances, acts of persecution may be of a gender-specific nature (Article 9). When determining membership of a particular social group, issues arising from an applicant's sexual orientation or gender, including gender identity and gender expression, should be given due consideration in so far as they are related to applicant's well-founded fear of being persecuted (Article 10).

In the judgment of joined **cases C-608/22 and C-609/22**, the Court of Justice of the European Union addressed the criteria for granting refugee status under EU law, particularly concerning membership of a particular social group as a reason for persecution, for women from Afghanistan following the Taliban's return to power in 2021[249]. The case builds on the principle set in its previous ruling, **C-646/21**[250], where the Court reaffirmed that **the Qualification Directive**[251] **must be interpreted consistently with the Istanbul Convention**. The ruling sets an important precedent by recognising that discriminatory measures against women, when accumulated, can constitute persecution under EU asylum law. The Court also ruled that, while the individual assessment of an application for international protection is required, factors such as gender and nationality, which inherently lead to persecution in certain contexts, need not be supplemented by other personal circumstances, particularly when they reflect systematic gender-based discrimination and violence**.**

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has developed Practical guidance on membership of a particular social group (2020), which includes specific references and guidance on considering gender-based violence against women as a form of persecution for asylum claims[252]. Similarly, it has published (2024) a Practical Guide on applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristic, which, among other elements, supports EU+ countries in considering and addressing the needs of women LGBTIQ applicants in asylum and reception, as well as on the prevention and response to gender-based violence against this group of applicants[253]. The EUAA's Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation training module provides a practical approach on how to best conduct an interview that supports the disclosure of issues relating to gender identity and sexual orientation (2024). The EUAA is developing two training modules that recognise gender-based

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of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.'

[248]. See, for example, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Guidelines on International Protection: Gender-Related Persecution within the context of Article 1, A (2) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

[249] Judgment of 4 October 2024, *AH and FN* v *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl, joined cases* C-608/22 and C-609/22, EU:C:2024:828.

[250] Judgment of 16 January 2024, Case C-621/21, para. 46-48, Intervyuirasht organ na DAB pri MS (Women victims of domestic violence).

[251] Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast), OJ L 337, 20.12.2011, p. 9-26, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/95/oj.

[252] Available here: Guidance on Membership of a Particular Social Group | European Union Agency for Asylum, EUAA, 2020.

[253] Available here: Practical guide on applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics - cross-cutting elements, EUAA, November 2024.

violence against women as a form of persecution for asylum claims as referred to in Article 60, paragraph 1 of the Istanbul Convention. The **Managing gender-based violence cases** module, to be launched at the end of 2025, aims to give the knowledge and skills required to conduct asylum interviews, assess evidence in cases of gender-based violence, determine if the applicant qualifies for refugee status in line with the Qualification Regulation and justify the decision in fact and in law. The second module focus on **trafficking in human beings.**

As part of its operational support to Member States, the **EUAA** began a quality assurance activity called **Quality Assurance Service Desk** (QASD). Through the QASD, anonymised cases of international protection claims (finalised interviews and decisions) are reviewed based on the indicators of the EUAA Quality Assurance Tool. In 2024 more than 50 cases of women whose interviews had indicators of sexual and gender-based violence were reviewed, which included trafficking in human beings, domestic violence, sexual violence and other forms of psychological violence. The findings of the review and evaluation, including recommendations for improvement, are presented to staff of the asylum authority in various ways, including workshops, podcasts and shadowing activities to promote staff capacity, building on the basis of challenges and needs identified through the QASD.

C. Article 60(3) – Gender-sensitive procedures and guidelines

*Please indicate any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to develop or to ensure the **development of the following** in EU member states:*

*a. gender-sensitive **reception procedures** and support services for asylum seekers;*

The **Reception Conditions Directive** require Member States to identify and address the special needs of vulnerable persons in reception as early as possible and no later than 30 days (Article 24). People who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence (for example victims of gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, child or forced marriage, or violence committed with a sexual, gender, racist or religious motive) are listed as a vulnerable category of persons (Articles 25). Member States are obliged to provide medical and psychological treatment and care, including rehabilitation services and counselling, for these victims of torture and violence (Article 28).

Furthermore, the **Reception Conditions Directive** requires Member States to ensure, as far as possible, the prevention of assault and violence, including violence committed with a sexual, gender, racist or religious motive, when providing housing. It requires consideration of gender and age-specific concerns and the situation of applicants with special reception needs when providing material reception conditions, including housing (Article 20). Additionally, the Directive ensures that applicants for international protection have access to healthcare, which includes at least, emergency care, essential treatment of illnesses (including serious mental disorders), and sexual and reproductive healthcare that is essential in treating a serious physical condition (Article 22).

The VAW Directive requires Member States to ensure that **support services** are available for non-EU nationals who are victims. Member States must also ensure that victims can request to: (i) be kept separate from people of the opposite sex in detention facilities for non-EU nationals subject to return procedures; or (ii) be accommodated separately in reception centres for applicants for international protection. Moreover, Member States must ensure that people

can report occurrences of violence against women or domestic violence in institutions and reception and detention centres to the relevant staff and that procedures are in place to ensure that those staff or the competent authorities adequately and swiftly address these reports in line with the requirements set out in Articles 16, 17 and 18 VAW Directive (Article 33(4) and (5) VAW Directive).

b. gender guidelines;

Gender is considered across all **EUAA** guidance[254]. The EUAA has also developed a series of online interactive tools to support Member States in identifying, assessing and responding to the special needs of applicants in vulnerable situations. All the tools include specific indicators for and considerations of all female victims of violence, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Those tools are: i) Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN Tool), ii) Special Needs and Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SNVA) and iii) the Referral Toolkit (forthcoming).

Through its operational support to Member States whose asylum and/or reception systems are under disproportionate pressure, **the EUAA** provides: (i) support to national authorities to develop and implement relevant procedures, workflows and toolkits for the prevention of/response to the needs of victims of gender-based violence; (ii) hands-on support to reception authorities in case management of vulnerable cases; (iii) support to national authorities to carry out information provision and awareness-raising activities, including on the topics of gender-based violence and human trafficking; (iv) support to national authorities in programme development and monitoring activities in relation to providing accommodation for vulnerable single women and mothers, referrals to shelters and counselling centres for victims of gender-based violence; (v) support to national authorities in developing and implementing national referral mechanisms for identifying, referring and supporting victims of human trafficking; and (vi) support to the management of safe zones for vulnerable applicants, including victims of human trafficking.

c. gender-sensitive asylum procedures, including refugee status determination and application for international protection, as required by Article 60, paragraph 3.

The **Asylum Procedure Regulation** obliges Member States to assess whether any individual applicant is in need of special procedural guarantees, including due to gender-based violence (Article 20). These applicants should be provided with adequate support in order to create the conditions necessary for genuine and effective access to such procedures (Article 21). Moreover, **examination procedures** should be gender sensitive. In particular, personal interviews must take due account of the personal and general circumstances surrounding the application, including the situation prevailing in the applicant's country of origin, including the applicant's gender, vulnerability and special procedural needs. For this purpose, applicants should be given an effective opportunity to be interviewed separately from their spouse, partner or other family members. Where requested by the applicant and possible, the interviewers and

[254] https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-05/2024-Guidance-reception-Operational-standards-and-indicators.pdf; https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-vulnerability-operational-standards-and-indicators; https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2023-08/practical-tools-first-contact-officials-practical-guide.pdf; https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-registration; https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-02/2024-Practical-Guide-Interpretation-Asylum-Procedure-EN_0.pdf; https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-01/2024_Practical_Guide_Information_Provision_Asylum_Procedure_EN.pdf.

interpreters should be of the sex that the applicant prefers (Article 13). The complexity of gender-related claims should be properly taken into account throughout the asylum procedure.

The **Qualification Regulation** acknowledges that, depending on the circumstances, acts of persecution may be of gender-specific nature (Article 9). Where determining membership of a particular social group, issues arising from an applicant's sexual orientation or gender, including gender identity and gender expression should be given due consideration in so far as they are related to the applicant's well-founded fear of being persecuted (Article 10).

In addition, all legal instruments of the Pact have a cross-cutting requirement for Member States to provide **training** for officials for them to carry out their duties.

In December 2023, the **FRA** collected information on measures to address and prevent gender-based violence in six initial reception centres. The findings were part of the FRA Fundamental Rights Report 2024[255], which provided an overview of measures on: (i) training; (ii) information provision; (iii) vulnerability assessments; (iv) the availability of women-only spaces; (v) referral systems; and (vi) the separation of single women from unrelated single men and of unaccompanied boys from unaccompanied girls. At the time of the data collection, the situation was diverse and presented several challenges.

D. Article 61 – Non-refoulement

*1. Please indicate any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies, to ensure **the principle of non-refoulement** is upheld by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies in relation to women and girls, who are victims of gender-based violence and are crossing the EU external borders, as provided for in Article 61.*

*2. Please indicate any action taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies to place **obligations on member states** on the respect of the principle of non-refoulement in relation to women and girls, who are victims of gender-based violence.*

Under EU and international law, the Qualification Regulation and the Asylum Procedure Regulation respect **the principle of non-refoulement**, which prohibits the return of individuals to countries where they would face persecution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. The Asylum Procedure Regulation ensures that the non-refoulement principle is respected by setting out procedures that safeguard applicants from being returned to situations where they might face torture or inhuman or degrading treatment, or punishment (Articles 10, 37, 56, 59, 68).

All migration-related legislation adopted by the Union legislator has firm safeguards in place against refoulement. This is also the case for the new proposal for a Common European System for Returns[256], as well as the relevant instruments of the Pact. The importance of ensuring the respect for human rights, including the principle of non-refoulement, and to identify, refer and support people in vulnerable situations, including women and victims of trafficking and

[255] Fundamental Rights Report 2024 | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, (pp. 104-108).
[256] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and Of The Council establishing a common system for the return of third-country nationals staying illegally in the Union, and repealing Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, Council Directive 2001/40/EC and Council Decision 2004/191/EC, COM/2025/101 final.

gender-based violence, is also regularly communicated in the Commission's regular exchanges with national authorities and non-EU partners.

The **new Screening Regulation**[257] (adopted in May 2024 and applicable from June 2026) sets up a new innovative and solid fundamental rights monitoring mechanism. This mechanism will monitor the upholding of fundamental rights in relation to screening of third-country nationals at the external borders or within the territory[258] as well as the respect for the applicable national rules on detention and compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. This broad coverage implies that allegations of push-back, to the extent that they are related to screening, will be monitored and followed up. The independent monitoring mechanism that Member States will have to set up under Article 10 of the Regulation will also apply to screening within the country, and it will serve as an important instrument to ensure a uniform protection of the fundamental rights of irregular migrants all over the Schengen area. Moreover, the obligatory vulnerability checks prescribed by Article 12 of the Screening Regulation will help to identify and provide timely and adequate support to all vulnerable migrants, including victims of gender-based violence. The **EUAA** together with **Frontex** and **Europol** are developing a Screening Toolbox to support Member States in the implementation of the Screening Regulation. In particular, the toolbox also includes a set of practical tools intended to support the officers responsible for the conduct of the preliminary vulnerability check during screening

With regard **to Frontex**, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the Agency's Fundamental Rights Office (FRO) enjoys functional independence and access to all the Agency's operational areas and activities and possesses a broad mandate to monitor all of the Agency's activities and deployments. This enables the Office and its fundamental rights monitors, who are fundamental rights professionals with a deep understanding of migration and border management processes, to prevent and report on perceived fundamental rights issues and act as a source of information on rights-compliant practices. The monitors also advise and work closely with national authorities and deployed Frontex officers to prevent and remedy any perceived issues with compliance with fundamental rights, including the principle of non-refoulement and the rights of migrants. These migrants include women, victims of trafficking and gender-based violence and vulnerable people. In 2024 alone, the 46 Frontex monitors were deployed for almost 2 000 days at all Agency areas of operations, provided 500 days' worth of training to the Frontex Standing Corps, and monitored 45 return flights[259].

In operational areas, the regular presence of the monitors, enables them to complement the work of deployed staff with an additional perspective on the rights and needs of persons crossing the Schengen borders and the compatibility of the EU processes. The FRO has provided several recommendations on **potential victims of sexual and gender-based violence** to the Frontex officers and the host Member State counterparts, also monitoring the eastern Schengen border, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These recommendations include:

- deploying **female officers** to identify, process and help at border-crossing points as the victims of rape and sexual and gender-based violence can be deeply traumatised and unwilling to engage with male officers;

[257] Available online: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1356/oj.
[258] The screening Regulation also applies to third-country nationals illegally staying within the territory of the Member States where there is no indication that those third-country nationals have been subject to controls at external borders, before they are referred to the appropriate procedure.
[259] Data provided by the Fundamental Rights Office of Frontex.

- **raising awareness** during the pre-deployment briefing of how to interact with victims of gender-based violence to prevent traumatising them again and ensure their referral to psychological support cells, legal services and medical assistance;
- **adapting reception centres** to the needs of women and victims of sexual and gender-based violence, including providing separate/secured zones, appropriate medical/psychological aid and supplies adapted to their needs[260].

Moreover, ahead of any new **Frontex** activity or before an activity is renewed, the FRO is asked to assess the Agency's ability to carry out the activity without contributing to violations of fundamental rights. In addition, the FRO is asked for recommendations on how to mitigate any potential issues, including risks of refoulement, and to identify areas that Frontex should prioritise in its assistance, which often includes training or helping identify vulnerable people, including victims of trafficking and gender-based violence. The FRO also receives complaints through the Frontex Complaints Mechanism, available to any individual that feels their rights may have been violated in a Frontex activity, and is assigned as case handler.

The ability of the FRO to independently investigate these cases not only allows potential victims a form of redress but also helps identify potentially problematic incidents or dynamics, enabling the Agency and the host Member State or non-EU country to work together to remedy or eliminate them. The FRO has a designated speaking slot at every meeting of the Frontex Management Board, whose members include the Commission. The Office uses these meetings to present its work and highlight any concerns or flag any significant issues.

E. Other actions related to protection of asylum seekers

*1.Please indicate **any other action or measures** taken by the **EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies**, in relation to the protection of migrant women victims and women asylum seekers in the area of immigration and refugee law. Please provide information on **any other legislative or other measures** taken by the EU, its institutions, bodies and agencies **to place obligations on EU member states** in relation to the protection of migrant women victims and women asylum seekers in the area of immigration and refugee law.*

The new **Asylum and Migration Management Regulation** (AMMR), adopted as part of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in May 2024, introduces a permanent solidarity mechanism to support Member States in addressing situations of migratory pressure. Under this mandatory but flexible solidarity mechanism, Member States will be able to choose their solidarity measures between relocations, financial solidarity, or alternative measures (staff or in-kind support). According to the AMMR, when implementing relocations, Member States shall give primary consideration to the relocation of vulnerable persons (Article 69(4)), which includes women who have been victims of gender-based violence. As relocations are a voluntary solidarity contribution, the AMMR allows for a certain flexibility for contributing and benefiting Member States to express their preferences in terms of persons to be considered for relocation. Such preferences have to be reasonable in light of the needs identified and the profiles available in the benefiting Member State in order to ensure that the pledged relocations can be effectively implemented (AMMR, recital 34).

[260] Data provided by the Fundamental Rights Office of Frontex.

As part of its mandate, **the EUAA** encourages practical cooperation and information sharing among EU and associated countries and other relevant experts on issues relating to people with special needs. This work includes preventing gender-based violence of asylum seekers and responding to victims' needs. To do so, the EUAA organises thematic workshops and exchange activities for reception and asylum authorities. A thematic workshop was held in December 2023, titled '**Addressing GBV in Reception'** with the participation of 15 Member States' representatives from reception authorities as well as civil society organisations involved in providing reception conditions. During the workshop, the participants exchanged good practices and information on their policies and activities in relation to the prevention of gender-based violence and supporting victims in reception centres.

Within the European Asylum Curriculum, **EUAA** currently offers two relevant training modules: (i) Victims of gender-based violence; and (ii) Trafficking in human beings (see above). Through its permanent support to national asylum and reception authorities, the **EUAA** has also helped Member States to set up or improve their workflows and procedures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in reception centres. Finally, the EUAA is currently finalising **internal guidance on gender-based violence** (expected by the end of 2025/beginning of 2026), which aims to help EUAA staff support national authorities to develop tools or implement activities related to gender-based violence in reception centres.

The ETF policy briefing (2024) presents findings and recommendations to improve the development of skills and skills recognition for female migrants[261].

Every year, **the Commission** and **the EESC** organise the European Migration Forum. This forum enables dialogue between EU and MS policy makers; civil society; and local and regional authorities across the EU. The 2024 forum focused on the implementation of the pact on migration and asylum, with discussions dedicated to reception conditions, return and integration measures. A common thread was the protection of fundamental rights, particularly for women and children.

EIGE has published a policy brief on addressing combat gender-based violence in the context of migration by strengthening the national action plans on women, peace and security[262].

[261] Migrant women call for skills: What education and training systems can do | ETF.
[262] https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/addressing-gender-based-violence-migration-how-strengthen-national-action-plans-women-peace-and-security-across-eu.

Annex A: The EU institutions, agencies and bodies that contributed to the preparation of the report or were consulted on it

Institutions

- The European Parliament (EP)
- The European Council
- The Council of the European Union (the Council)
- The General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (GSC)
- The European Commission (EC)
- The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)
- The European Central Bank (ECB)
- The European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Agencies

- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- European Institute of Innovation & technology (EIT)
- European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- European Training Foundation (ETF)
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)
- European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex
- European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)
- European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
- Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)
- European Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency (EISME)
- Executive Agency for the European Research Council (ERCEA)
- European Research Executive Agency (REA)
- European Defence Agency (EDA)
- European Union Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS)
- European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen)
- European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust)
- European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)
- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)
- European Labour Authority (ELA)
- Decentralised Agencies (52 decentralised agencies[263] consulted via the EU Agencies Network (EUAN)

Bodies

- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- European Committee of the Regions (CoR)
- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- European Ombudsman (EO)
- European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)
- European Data Protection Board EDPB)
- European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)

[263] See the 52 agencies included in the network here: Homepage - EU Agencies Network.

Annex B: The main legal instruments for the EU's public administration

Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community with subsequent amendments[264].

The European Parliament:

- Rules of Procedure, 10th Parliamentary term, July 2024[265]
- Decision on the functioning of the advisory committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members of the European Parliament and its procedures for dealing with complaints, Bureau decision of 20 November 2023
- Mediation service in the European Parliament, Bureau decision of 20 November 2023
- Decision of the Secretary-General of 27 November 2000 on establishing an Advisory Committee on Harassment
- Internal rules for the advisory committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace, decision of the Secretary-General of 21 February 2006
- Decision of the Secretary-General of 14 September 2018 on confidential counsellors
- Decision of the Secretary-General of 8 March 2024 establishing a network of confidential counsellors

The Council of the European Union:

- Decision 23/21 of the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union concerning psychological and sexual harassment at work within the General Secretariat of the Council
- Decision 6/2021 of the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union adopting general implementing provisions on administrative investigations and disciplinary proceedings
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2030

The European Commission:

- Communication to the Commission - A new Human Resources Strategy for the Commission, Brussels, 5.4.2022 C(2022) 2229 final and its Annex Action Plan
- COMMUNICATION OF THE COMMISSION A better workplace for all: from equal opportunities towards diversity and inclusion, Brussels, 19.7.2017 C(2017) 5300 final
- Commission Decision C(2019) 4231 of 12 June 2019 laying down general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings
- Commission Decision on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment C(2023) 8630 final, 12.12.2023.
    - Guide for a respectful working environment
    - Action plan for the prevention of psychological and sexual harassment in the workplace
- Commission Decision (EU) 2024/1043 of 9.04.2024 laying down internal rules concerning the restriction of certain data subjects' rights in the context of processing of personal data by the Chief Confidential Counsellor and the confidential counsellors in the performance of the tasks relating to the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment
- Commission Decision (EU/Euratom) 2015/443 on Security in the Commission

[264] http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/1968/259(1)/ojCL1962R0031EN0280010.0001_cp 1..6
[265] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rules/rules20240716/Rules20240716_EN.pdf.

- Commission Decision (EU) 2024/3083 of 4 December 2024 establishing the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour for Staff of the European Commission in their relations with the public
- Regulation No 883/2013 of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

The Court of Justice:

- CJEU Code of Conduct of 1 March 2024
- CJEU Communication No 18/06 on respect for personal dignity
- Decision of the CJEU of 12 July 2011 on the terms and conditions for internal investigations in relation to the fight against fraud, corruption and any illegal activity detrimental to the interests of the European Union
- Decision of the Administrative Committee of 19 September 2011 on general implementing provisions for administrative investigations in CJEU
- CJEU Strategy on Diversity and Inclusion
- CJEU Action plan on Health and Well-being at work
- CJEU Internal measures for Health and Security at work

The European Central Bank:

- Conditions of Employment for Staff of the European Central Bank[266]
- ECB Staff Rules[267]
- ECB Conditions of Short-Term Employment[268]
- ECB Rules for Short-term Employment[269]

The European Court of Auditors:

- Decision No 50-2022 on the European Court of Auditors' policy for ensuring a respectful and harassment-free workplace
- ECA D&I policy
- ECA D&I action plan
- ECA report on the Spotlight initiative to end violence against women and girls – Ambitious but so far with limited impact 11/09/2023

The European Economic and Social Committee:

- Rules of Procedure and Code of Conduct for members of the EESC (eesc-2023-00265-01-01-regl-tra-en.docx)[270]

[266] Conditions of Employment
[267] Staff Rules
[268] Conditions of Short-Term Employment
[269] Rules for Short-Term Employment
[270] https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-05/eesc-2023-00265-01-01-regl-tra-en.docx

- EESC Members' Statute (eesc-2023-02090-00-07-admin-tra-en.docx)[271]
- EESC Decision 090/22A Amending decision 200-14A concerning the procedures for preventing and dealing with psychological and sexual harassment at work within the Secretariat of the EESC
- EESC Decision 297/21 A laying down rules on whistleblowing
- EESC Decision 124/23A Adopting the general implementing provisions on administrative investigations and implementing rules for disciplinary proceedings
- EESC Decision 211-21A - Identifying compulsory and recommended training related to the action plan on the ethical framework for staff.

The European Committee of the Regions:

- Decision No 108/2021 on protecting dignity at work, managing conflict and combatting harassment
- Decision No 157/2023 on ethical rules: Decision relating to the psychological and sexual harassment at work - DEC 362.2010
- Decision No 508/2015 laying down rules on whistleblowing: Décision concernant le harcèlement moral et sexuel au travail - DEC 362.2010
- Decision No 83/2019 on administrative investigations and disciplinary proceedings, Decision No 83-2019 adopting the general implementing provisions on administrative investigations and implementing rules for disciplinary proceedings

The European Investment Bank:

- EIB Staff Regulations
- EIB Group Staff Code of Conduct
- EIB Group Dignity at Work Policy
- European Investment Bank Group Whistleblowing Policy

The European Ombudsman:

- Decision of the European Ombudsman on a Policy for the prevention of and protection against harassment in the Ombudsman's Office
- Guidelines for implementing the European Ombudsman's office's anti-harassment policy
- Decision on Ethics and Good Conduct for the European Ombudsman's Staff

The European External Action Service

- Action Plan on Diversity and Inclusion 2023-2025
- Action Plan on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, adopted April 2025

[271] https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-01/eesc-2023-02090-00-07-admin-tra-en.docx

Annex C: List of abbreviations

ACT	Advocacy Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMMR	Asylum and Migration Management Regulation
AVMSD	Audiovisual Media Services Directive
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
CCC	Chief Confidential Counsellor
CENELEC	European Electrotechnical Committee for Standardization
CEOS	Conditions of Employment of Other Servants
CERV	Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme
CIP	Common Implementation Plan
COPEC	Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse Directive
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEVE	Committee on Development
DI/D&I	Diversity and Inclusion
DIO	Diversity and Inclusion Office
DPR	Data Protection Regulation
DSA	Digital Services Act
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
ECRIS	European Criminal Records Information System
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EFRIS	European Fundamental Rights Information System
EIDU	Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FD	Framework Decision
FEMM	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation

FRO	Fundamental Rights Office
GAP III	Joint Communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, titled EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEAR	Gender Equality in Academia and Research
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GSC	General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union
HIVE	Spotlight Initiative High-Impact Programme for Violence Elimination by 2030
HLG	High-level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDOC	Disciplinary Office of the Commission
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMCO	Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISPN	Identification of Persons with Special Needs
IT	Information Technology
IWD	International Women's Day
LIBE	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
MFF	Multi-Annual Financial framework
NCII	Non-Consensual Sharing of Intimate Images
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
QASD	Quality Assurance Service Desk
SG	Secretary-General
SNVA	Special Needs and Vulnerability Assessment
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VAW	Violence Against Women
VRD	Victim's Rights Directive
WSN	Women Support Network