

Synergy for change

Civil society raising awareness on violence against women in a context of global challenges

Budapest, 11-12 July 2024

European Youth Centre, Zivatar utca 1-3

CONCEPT NOTE

Background information:

- The conference will be held in Budapest on 11 and 12 July 2024 within the framework of the Council of Europe [Ending violence against women: multi-country programme](#). The conference will focus **on the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in raising awareness and advocating to end violence against women and domestic violence and promote gender equality, especially in new and persisting challenges, such as digital dimension of violence against women (VAW), AI, the gender backlash and other global challenges.** The agenda will include sharing methodologies, tools, and good practices. The event will comprise general plenaries, group work, and a World Café session.
- Gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, the functioning of democracy, respect for the rule of law, and social well-being. Gender equality is an important policy goal of the Council of Europe. Priority areas are defined by the [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#). The Strategy is structured around six objectives:
 - Preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism
 - Preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence
 - Ensuring women's equal access to justice

- Achieving a balanced participation of women and men in political, public, social, and economic life
 - Ensuring women's empowerment and gender equality in relation to global and geopolitical challenges
 - Achieving gender mainstreaming and including an intersectional approach in all policies and measures
- Violence against women, including domestic violence, is one of the most serious forms of gender-based violations of human rights. The advancement of women's right to be free from violence requires joint efforts and commitment at international, European and national levels. As the major European treaty aimed to reach this objective, the [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (Istanbul Convention) provides opportunities to bring all relevant actors together, including CSOs.
 - CSOs active in preventing and combating violence against women are major partners in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in practice. In addition, many CSOs are spearheading independent advocacy efforts around the Istanbul Convention, campaigning to increase understanding of its objectives, ensuring the Istanbul Convention's full implementation or lobbying for its ratification.
 - The Council of Europe's [Gender Equality Division](#), Women Against Violence Europe Network ([WAVE](#)) and [UN Women](#) have developed [Methodology and advocacy resources and tools](#) to support CSOs in promoting the Istanbul Convention. This methodology aims to assist CSOs in running national communication and advocacy campaigns on the Istanbul Convention, generate positive narratives and dispel myths and misinformation regarding the convention.
 - The methodology was piloted by selected CSOs with experience in combatting violence against women and domestic violence in three countries in 2021: Czech Republic, Latvia and Poland. From 2022 to 2024, the Council of Europe has supported awareness-raising initiatives by CSOs from Armenia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, and Serbia. These initiatives were selected under a call for projects in these countries.
 - The rapid development of information and communication technologies also facilitates new avenues for violence against women and girls, exposing them to more risks of being abused. In its First General Recommendation on the "[digital dimension](#)" of violence against women, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence ([GREVIO](#)) identified that the digital dimension of VAW is often being overlooked in domestic laws and policies and outlined the problem of gender-based violence against women both committed online and facilitated by technological devices.

Conference goals:

- Share best practices of the use of the CoE, UN Women and WAVE campaigning methodology and how it can be applied to other emerging issues/challenges.
- Build the capacity of civil society to advocate to end violence against women and promote gender equality including on new topics and challenges.
- Build the capacity of CSOs to promote the Istanbul Convention and combat myths and misconceptions around it.

- Foster exchanges among civil society, experts, international organisations and experts across Europe.
- Define the ways forward to join forces to advance gender equality in Europe and beyond: Call for action.

Key areas of discussion:

- Role of CSOs in raising awareness and advocating in the following areas:
 - Preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence including the digital dimension of such forms of violence
 - Preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism
 - Ensuring women's equal access to justice
 - Ensuring women's empowerment and gender equality in relation to global and geopolitical challenges

Targeted participants:

- 100 civil society representatives are expected in Budapest, to share experiences and build networking synergies. CSOs will come from different Council of Europe member states, particularly those where the Council of Europe has supported or is currently supporting awareness-raising initiatives or is implementing technical cooperation projects on gender equality and on combating violence against women.
- Representatives of the Council of Europe, Gender Equality Commission and GREVIO, WAVE Network, UN Women, international CSOs, and experts will also contribute to the event.

Format:

- Plenary session on Day 1 in the morning, working in groups in the afternoon (11 July 2024).
- World Café on Day 2 and final session (12 July 2024).
- A graphic facilitator will illustrate the discussions.

Side events and welcome package:

- CSOs will be invited to contribute publications, visibility materials, etc to share with participants. Tables will be provided for participants to showcase and promote their organisations' work and relevant materials.
- A networking reception will be organised in the evening of Day 1 (11 July).
- Welcome package for participants: CoE visibility materials and relevant CoE publications.

Duration: 1.5 days

Preliminary agenda:

DAY 1

Opening remarks

Keynote presentation

Exchanges on best awareness-raising initiatives of CSOs on promoting the Istanbul Convention with the support of Council of Europe grants.

General discussion

Workshop 1: Raising awareness on the digital dimension of VAW.

Workshop 2: Raising awareness on sexism.

Workshop 3: Raising awareness on women's access to justice.

Workshop 4: Raising awareness on women's empowerment in the context of global challenges: gender backlash.

Note: *the burning issues of all the discussions on Day 1 will be taken to the World café.*

DAY 2

World Café (*about 10 burning questions from Day 1 for discussions in small groups*)

World café is a methodology: a structured conversational process for knowledge sharing in which small groups of people discuss a topic at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and getting introduced to the previous discussion at their new table by a "table host". World cafe events are intended to create a safe, welcoming environment in which multiple ideas and perspectives on the topic can be shared by engaging participants in several rounds of small-group conversation. This method is particularly useful to explore topics from multiple perspectives, to ensure that everyone in a room contributes to a conversation, and/or when one wants to encourage participants to make new connections. Changing tables every 15-20 minutes will make people talk to more participants and create new informal connections.

Conclusions of the conference: Call for action.