

## ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

25 November 2023

*English only*

### **Statement of the Advisory Council on Youth on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

On this year's International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we members of Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe call on the member States to join forces to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, upon the initiative of the Gender Equality rapporteur of the Joint Council on Youth. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women marks the beginning of the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, which continues until December 10, Human Rights Day. The campaign theme for 2023 is "investing in the prevention of violence against women and girls", calling on citizens and governments worldwide to share their experiences in the prevention of gender-based violence.

Violence impacts society in a variety of levels and dimensions, often affecting women and girls particularly, and requires the development and implementation of comprehensive, evidence-based frameworks, including adapted prevention and response strategies. Experiences of violence at a young age can impact one's self-concept and integrated body image. While every 1 in 3 women in Europe report experiencing violence since the age of 15, specific groups with intersecting identities, such as LGBTQIA+ people and migrant women, are more likely to be subjected to violence. The last year has been [reported](#) as one of the most violent years for LGBTQIA+ people, as both hate speech and hate crimes grew in frequency, while the violence became increasingly severe. Young women in particular are at an increased risk of violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, as well as of becoming victims of growing cyber violence. Online abuse and cyberbullying lead to decreased participation of women in digital spaces: research shows that every 1 in 2 women in Europe hesitate to engage in social media debates out of fear of abuse, hate speech, and threats. Military conflicts around the world, including Ukraine, also have a strong negative impact on the life of women and girls, who are often the main civilian victims of violence during war. It is estimated that 90% of Ukrainian refugees are women and children, thus extremely vulnerable to gender-based violence and exploitation.

The Advisory Council on Youth calls on member States and Youth Organisations alike to reaffirm full support of actors committed to combatting gender-based violence through the core values of the Council of Europe. We further encourage the member States to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention to its full effect and without compromise, as it is the leading legally binding international agreement to prevent gender-based violence, protect victims of violence, and punish perpetrators. The Advisory Council on Youth will continue to promote active cooperation through the Council of Europe youth sector – highlighting the efforts made by local, national, and international youth organisations, both by advocating for comprehensive gender-based violence prevention and protection strategies as well as actively supporting and working together with civil society in the member States.

*The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.*