



European Commission - Statement

Joint communiqué from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UN Women on Global Action to Combat Violence against Women

Brussels, 11 December 2017

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UN Women agreed on the global action to combat violence against women. These institutions reaffirmed today their full commitment to eliminate gender based violence and discussed the way forward for a coordinated action.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), represented by Ángel Gurría, Secretary General;

The Council of Europe, represented by Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General;

The European Commission, represented by Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality;

UN Women, represented by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director.

Violence against women and girls is a global epidemic. Violence affects every community worldwide, with at least one in three women around the world having experienced physical or sexual violence. Violence against women and girls is one of the most common and serious violation of human rights. The costs of this culture of violence on our communities - both for men and women - are huge.

The promotion of gender equality and the enjoyment of all women's and girls' human rights are core objectives in all our actions to combat violence against women and girls, strategically framed under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This strategic partnership calls on an intensified commitment to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment.

We all share this common goal: eradicate violence against women and girls. While all of us have a role to play in making violence against women and girls a thing of the past, we also need sustained political pressure at the highest level and at the global level to drive change. We welcome the G7 Leaders' commitment in Taormina in May by pledging in the Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment to promote and enforce appropriate measures to end violence against women and girls in public and private spheres.

As international and regional organisations, we have already been striving to end violence against women and girls worldwide for many years. Each of us operates with different tools to challenge violence, and these actions are complementary and we should strive to cooperate further – like the European Union and the United Nations recently showed through the launch of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls all over the world.

Ground-breaking and comprehensive legally binding standards exist, notably the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Although made in Europe, it is not meant for Europe only – any country in the world can become a party and take inspiration from it when drafting national legislation and policies.

We also need to develop our knowledge base about the prevalence and nature of violence. Building on the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), the OECD, the UN Women and the World Bank are collaborating in collecting data for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.1.1, for which the SIGI is now an official data source. These results will provide data on legal frameworks that will help countries identify the legal gaps and adapt their policy responses to effectively address domestic, sexual harassment and rape in line with SDG 5.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the International and Regional Monitoring bodies on violence against women to ensure their own co-operation and collaboration and will also collaborate with them, notably the Council of Europe (GREVIO), Belem do Para, CEDAW and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

We agree that prevention is an essential area to further invest in, particularly through formal and non-formal education about stereotypes, gender roles, healthy relations and non-violent conflict management, starting at the youngest age.

Today, we took stock of current actions and priorities, following the focused actions of the European Union to combating violence against women in 2017, and following the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence ending on world Human Rights Day yesterday. We discussed how we can take our co-operation up to a global level.

We agreed to:

- Enhance our collaboration so our actions and programmes complement one another and drive each other's work forward with renewed momentum;
- Regularly take stock and agree on further steps - the next meeting will take place in June 2018;
- Call on other world leaders from both the public and private sectors to join the intensified global effort and work together towards establishing, by the end of 2018, a global alliance to end violence against women and girls.

We – the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UN Women – are now coming together, even closer than before, to join forces in combatting this violation of human rights. Our goal is to see women and girls with fulfilled rights, strong voices, in safety and fully in control over their own bodies and their own destinies.

Violence against women and girls may be an epidemic but it is not incurable.

Together, our actions are stronger. Together, we can achieve our aim of eliminating violence against women and girls faster. Together, we make sure no-one is left behind.

STATEMENT/17/5243

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