



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS

Directorate D: Equality and Union citizenship  
**Unit D.2: Gender equality**

Brussels,  
JUST/D2/IBT/md

[lidia@lidialidia.com](mailto:lidia@lidialidia.com)

Dear Lidia,

Thank you for your email on 19 September 2017 regarding an official 'European Year' to end violence against women.

As you rightly say, the European Commission is committed to intensify its policy and legislative action to combat violence against women. This is why Commissioner Věra Jourová took the initiative to dedicate 2017 to ending violence against women. Together with the Member States, the European Parliament, the European Institute for Gender Equality, UN Women and other international organisations, civil society organisations, academia, businesses, trade unions, and media, as well as all European men and women willing to join, we have to make violence against women a thing of the past.

The Commission has run several activities over the year, including the NON.NO.NEIN. campaign - <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw>. Under the hashtag #SayNoStopVAW, a social media campaign opposing violence against women has been launched, a dedicated website created, testimonials from funded projects as well as GIFs and infographics developed, and target groups such as health, education and legal professionals as well as young people have been reached through social media promotion. A social media video is currently in development for launch on 8th March, International Women's Day, in 2018.

During the year, the EU also took the important step to sign the Istanbul Convention: following two Decisions by the Council, the Convention was signed by the European Union on 13 June 2017 and work on a Code of Conduct and the future conclusion of the convention commenced, which is expected to come to a conclusion in 2018. The Commission also continues to encourage Member States to consider ratification of the Convention at national level.

Furthermore, we have presented a Eurobarometer on gender-based violence showing the views of Europeans on this topic<sup>1</sup>, a study on gender-based violence in sports<sup>2</sup> and a new

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<http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2115> and [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/newsroom/image/document/2016-48/infographic\\_combat\\_violence\\_woman\\_40135.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2016-48/infographic_combat_violence_woman_40135.pdf) infographic:

EU survey on gender-based violence is being developed by Eurostat and the Commission. We have also funded projects that combat violence against women or support its victims, by civil society organisations and national projects aiming at developing and implementing practical and targeted information, awareness-raising and education activities aimed at preventing and combating violence against women. The project activities will be carried out in Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia.

Other activities include:

- Malta's EU Presidency held an EU-wide conference on violence against women in February 2017;
- Mutual Learning Seminars for Member States have taken place, in particular most recently in Denmark on sexual harassment, where countries share their most successful policies to tackle violence against women or help victims;
- A web tool has been developed designed to assist professionals such as nurses, teachers, police officers in preventing female genital mutilation;
- Trafficking of human beings as a form of violence against women is on the agenda at the relevant EU networks, both governmental and non-profit;
- Starting in 2017, all EU-led human rights dialogues with third countries have violence against women on the agenda;
- The European External Action Service will produce an Annual Report on EU action to End Sexual Violence in Conflict.

So you see that even if the year of 2017 was not a 'European Year' to end violence against women (the practice of "European Years" has also been discontinued in the Commission), the Commission has stepped up its actions to combat violence and these actions will continue next year.

Yours sincerely,

*(e-signed)*

Karen VANDEKERCKHOVE  
Head of Unit

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/gender-based-violence-sport-study-2016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/gender-based-violence-sport-study-2016_en.pdf)