



Speaking Notes
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- Violence against women is one of the most flagrant violations of human rights; an issue which concerns all countries in the world. It touches women from all walks of life, irrespective of cultural, religious, economic, social or geographical backgrounds.
- Worldwide, intimate partner violence affects 30% of women¹;
- Approximately, 100-140 million girls and women in the world have experienced female genital mutilation²;
- The Council of Europe estimates that 20-25% of European women experience physical acts of violence at least once during their adult lives, 12-15% find themselves in a relationship of domestic abuse, and more than 10 % suffer sexual violence³;
- According to the FRA Survey⁴ on violence against women published last year, an estimated 13 million women in the EU have experienced physical violence; 3.7 million have experienced sexual violence, one in 20 women has been raped

¹ http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/violence_against_women_20130620/en/ Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. WHO in partnership with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the South African Medical Research Council

² <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/fgm/prevalence/en/>

³ Council of Europe, Stocktaking study on violence against women, 2006.

⁴ http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf

since the age of 15; and 18% of women have experienced stalking since the age of 15;

- Last but not least, the data and information from the 47 member states of the Council of Europe during the latest round of the [monitoring](#)⁵ of the implementation of the [Committee of Ministers Recommendation](#)⁶ on the protection of women against violence highlights gaps in policies and legislation: lack of **support services available** to respond to the different forms of violence, policy and legislative gaps to criminalise and address **all nine forms of violence against women; no national policy that addresses female genital mutilation** - less than half of the 46 reporting member States have done so - lack of **financial resources** to address the problem of violence against women, huge shortage of shelter beds - only nine of our member States provide the recommended **ratio of one shelter bed per ten thousand inhabitants**.
- Building on the work of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the work of its Committee as well as the Convention of Belém do Pará⁷ the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women – widely known as the [Istanbul Convention](#) – marks an important step forward in international efforts to prevent and combat VaW and DV and put an end to impunity. It is the first legally-binding instrument in Europe on VaW and DV and in terms of scope, it is the most far-reaching international treaty in this field. For the first time, it is made clear that violence against women and domestic violence can no longer be considered as a private matter but that states have an obligation to prevent violence, protect victims and punish the perpetrators.
- The Istanbul Convention builds on and codifies established standards, jurisprudence and developments at international level, as well as best practice emerged at the national level. Measures on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence contained in the Convention, provide States with the tools to break the cycle of gender inequality and women’s continuous exposure to gender-based violence.

⁵ <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/Docs/Analytical%20Study%20ENG.pdf>

⁶ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=280915&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

⁷ The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women adopted in 1994 by the Organisation of American States

- They are firmly based on the premise that violence against women cannot be eradicated without investing in greater equality between women and men and that in turn, only real equality and a change in power dynamics and attitudes can truly prevent violence against women.
- Our working session will discuss and share information about policy and legislative measures taken by the OSCE member States to prevent and combat gender based violence and the challenges they face, the mechanisms which the OSCE and participating States can use to track prevalence of gender based violence and its cost to be able to design and implement effective policies and programmes including through greater involvement of men and boys in initiatives to prevent and combat gender based violence.
- Better use of relevant standards and instruments of other international organizations, in particular, the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, as a mechanism to enhance implementation of commitments to prevent and combat gender-based violence in the OSCE region;
- And last but not least, what would be the most effective ways for participating States to review and measure progress in implementing the 2005 OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on Combating Violence Against Women and other relevant OSCE decisions?
- Your contribution and input during the discussions and information and expertise from the distinguished members of the panel will be key to achieving the objectives of this session.