

Press Release
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Victim Support Europe welcomes the European Commission's proposal on combating violence against women and domestic violence

On the occasion of the International Women's Day (8 March), the European Commission presented a strong proposal for a Directive to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and protect and support its victims.

Victim Support Europe welcomes this new comprehensive legislative proposal that sets standards for prevention, protection, support, access to justice and compensation for victims of different forms of violence, in particular women victims of gender-based violence.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and [reports](#) have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, have intensified. This proposal therefore comes at an important moment, signalling the European Union's continuing commitment to victims of crime by proposing wide ranging measures that will help protect them from crime and support them in the aftermath.

In addition to defining a range of crimes including rape and non-consensual image sharing, the proposal aims to improve mechanisms for reporting crime, the provision of support to victims and the coordination and cooperation between stakeholders that might be in contact with victims of violence against women and domestic violence (including law enforcement, victim support services, judicial authorities, social services and healthcare services).

Geraldine Hanna, the president of Victim Support Europe, described the proposed directive as “*a historic moment in the fight against gender-based violence in the EU*”. She reaffirmed the importance of this EU instrument, highlighting the need to ensure complementarity and coordination of its implementation with the Victims' Rights Directive.

- Access to free and confidential support services and to the European helpline 116 006 should be guaranteed to all victims of violence against women (VAW) and/or domestic violence (DV) across the EU.
- A clear, coordinated and comprehensive national support framework should be established to provide support to victims of VAW and/or DV across the EU.
- Victims of VAW and/or DV should have safe access to and participation in criminal justice proceedings, to minimise the risks of secondary victimisation.

The legislative proposal will be debated in the next months in the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union before final adoption and transposition by Member States.