



**WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE**

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## WAVE<sup>1</sup> Comments to the Call for Submission to All Stakeholders on Gaps in Incorporating & Implementing International & Regional Standards on Violence against Women Vienna, 01 October 2016

WAVE welcomes the initiative of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to publish a call for submissions on these issues. We see this as a sign of grave concern regarding the huge scale of various forms of violence women and girls still experience in all regions of the world. Our answers to the questions posed are the following:

### **1. Do you consider that there is a need for a separate legally binding treaty on violence against women with its separate monitoring body?**

Given the fact that violence against women, whether committed by State or non-state actors, has persisted in every country, all over the world and that there is no place or region on this earth where women and girls are safe from violence, inflicted on them due to their gender, every initiative to further enhance the international framework to eliminate violence against women is important and must be valued and considered.

WAVE is a network predominately active in Europe and since in Europe a regional instrument for preventing violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) has recently been enforced and implementation and monitoring have started, the prevailing opinion of WAVE members is, that we should now focus on making this regional instrument work as an effective tool to prevent violence against women and girls.

However, Europe is only one small part of the world and although the Istanbul Convention is open to ratification by all countries, WAVE wants to express its recognition, that other stakeholders and experts might see this differently and might be of the opinion that an international instrument would be important to accelerate the elimination of violence against women and girls.

We are absolutely of the opinion, that more CAN and HAS TO BE DONE worldwide to prevent violence against women and girls and protect survivors. In which form this might be most effective, should be further discussed.

To achieve progress on the global level, the establishment of a Protocol to CEDAW on violence against women and girls could be an effective step to amplify measures for the elimination of violence against women.

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<sup>1</sup> WAVE is a Network of women's NGOs working to eliminate violence against women and their children since 1994. WAVE has over 100 member organisations in 46 countries, most of which are national or regional networks.

**2. Do you consider that there is an incorporation gap of the international or regional human rights norms and standards?**

Yes. Unfortunately we have to face the fact, that, while in the past two decades many states have made progress in introducing laws and measures to prevent violence against women and girls and to protect victims, the prevalence of violence is still high and perpetrators of violence as well as state actors condoning it, face little or no consequences and impunity is high. This is very concerning and needs to lead to swift and enhanced actions by the UN and other inter-governmental and international bodies to step up efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls.

**3. Do you believe that there is a lack of implementation of the international and regional legislation into the domestic law?**

Yes, see answer to previous question.

**4. Do you think that there is a fragmentation of policies and legislation to address gender-based violence?**

Yes, there is a fragmentation. While it is important, that different departments and agencies are concerned with the prevention of violence against women and girls and the protection of victims, on the national, regional and international level, it would be of great importance that, at all levels, effective coordinating bodies and mechanisms exist to facilitate the integration of measures and policies. Such bodies need to have the competences as well as the resources to fulfill these functions. There also need to be independent bodies for monitoring and implementation of measures established at all levels and in all countries.

**5. Could you also provide your views on measures needed to address this normative and implementation gap and to accelerate prevention and elimination of violence against women?**

Impunity for violence must end and states must exercise due diligence to prevent violence and to actively protect women from any form of violence, following jurisprudence from CEDAW and other human rights bodies on cases of violence against women. A Femicide prevention watch to collect data on femicide and all forms of violence against women, and to develop and implement effective measures to prevent femicide and related acts such as child homicides, must be established in every country and region as a part of a comprehensive and coordinated policy to end violence against women and girls.

Intensive and comprehensive measures are needed to eliminate violence against women. Such commitments are unfortunately often missing. The costs of violence against women are high and peace for women and efforts to eradicate violence are severely underfunded. Resources are just not adequate and sufficient enough to address the problem comprehensively and to reach sustainable results. INVESTMENT in women's rights to live free from all forms of violence has to be considerably increased in order to reduce VAW, not in 100 years, but in 10 – 20 years from now.

Through international norms and their implementation, states have to be OBLIGED to increase investments and to provide SUFFICIENT funding for measures to eradicate violence against women and girls and develop and implement effective laws and policies.

The role of women's NGOs in ending violence against women needs to be considerably strengthened; there is evidence, that countries with many and active women's NGOs have made more progress in establishing laws and measures than countries with fewer women's NGOs.

Any tendency and act to marginalize, discriminate against, discredit or prosecute women's organisations defending women's rights must be addressed and prevented. The human rights of women working in the field also have to be protected and promoted, as stated in the CSW agreed conclusions 2013: Governments need to "Support and protect those who are committed to eliminate violence against women, including women human rights defenders in this regard, who face particular risks of violence" (57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women). The full participation of women's organizations, including survivors of violence, and their inclusion in decision making processes must be promoted, in order to enable them to take an active part in society as agents for change towards the realization of human rights, gender equality, freedom and peace.