

Press Release - [Women against Violence Europe \(WAVE\)](#)

WAVE Country Report 2013: WAVE urges European countries to do more to meet the Council of Europe Taskforce Recommendations for specialized service provision for women survivors of violence



Violence against women continues to be a significant problem throughout Europe. As a significant percent of women experience violence, there is still a shortage of available women's services, as well as lack of awareness among women survivors of violence of services and other options available to them. **Stories provided by women survivors in the WAVE Country Report 2013 show that survivors often find themselves in difficult and complex situations, when trying to leave violent relationships or seek justice.**

On 5 March 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights launched the results of the first EU-wide survey on Violence against Women. The survey is based on 42,000 face-to-face interviews with trained female interviewers with women aged 18-74 in the 28 EU member states. Key findings show that **one-in-three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual assault since the age of 15; one-in-10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 15, and one-in-20 women has been raped since the age of 15.** The survey also shows a significant percentage of intimate partner violence: 22% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner, and 43 % have experienced some form of psychological violence by a current or former partner. Some 5% of women have experienced economic violence in their current relationship, and 13% of women have experienced some form of economic violence in past relationships. The findings show disparities in prevalence of violence among the 28 EU member states, however, this may be due to different levels of gender equality and cultural acceptability towards disclosure of experiences of violence.

The survey also measured women's experience with reaching out for help to support organizations. The survey showed that on the EU level:

- **Only 6% of women contacted a women's shelter, only 4% contacted a victim support organization,** but on the other hand, one-third of women contacted a doctor, a health center or a hospital.
- 36% of women are not aware of specific laws or political initiatives for preventing domestic violence against women and 28% of women are not aware of laws or initiatives for protecting women in cases of domestic violence against women.
- **Almost one-in-five women in the EU (19%) was not aware of any of the support services for victims of violence against women** that were listed in the questionnaire.
- Reporting rates to the police and other services are low: 67% of women did not report the most serious incident of partner violence to the police or other organization.

On the basis of this survey, FRA expresses a series of opinions and recommendations including, for example, the need to enhance resources for specialist victim support services and awareness of violence against women.¹ The results of the survey show the high prevalence of violence against women that occurs throughout Europe. Women should be aware of the services available to them and therefore it is necessary for states to fund awareness campaigns and make helpline numbers and shelter information more visible to the public. In addition to making information more visible, states should increase the specialized services provided to women and meet established standards.

¹ http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results_en.pdf, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance_en_0.pdf, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/press-release-violence-against-women_en_1.pdf

The [WAVE Country Report 2013](#)² brings the experiences of women survivors of violence together with measuring the available services for women survivors of violence in 46 European countries. The report provides stories from women survivors, who have shared their information about their experiences of violence and seeking help. The mapping of women's services in Europe includes information on available women's helplines, shelters, centers and centers for survivors of sexual violence. The findings of the [WAVE Country Report 2013](#) show the following:

- A nationwide women's helpline is available in **31 out of 46** European countries
 - **Only 17, however, operate 24/7 and free of charge**
 - As a result, only 37% of the 46 countries meet the Council of Europe Taskforce Recommendation of providing a national women's helpline 24/7 and free of charge
- **19 of the 28** EU member states have a national women's helpline (68% of the EU)
 - **Only 9 countries operate 24/7 and free of charge** (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom)
 - As a result, only 32% of the 28 EU countries meet the Council of Europe Taskforce Recommendations of providing a national women's helpline 24/7 and free of charge
- **In the 46 European countries**, there are 1,731 women's shelters and/or shelter providers offering 28,124 shelter places to women and children survivors of violence. According to the minimum standard of one shelter place per 10,000 inhabitants, 82,892 shelter places are needed. An estimated **55,242 places are missing** (67% of recommended places).
 - Only three countries (Luxembourg, Norway, and Slovenia) meet the Council of Europe Taskforce Recommendations of one place per 10,000 inhabitants.
- **In the 28 EU countries**, there are 1,440 women's shelters with an estimated total of **23,506 shelter places available**. In order to meet the Council of Europe Taskforce Recommendations, an estimated number of 50,326 shelter places are needed. **26,820 places are still missing**.
 - Hungary, Latvia, and Lithuania have no women's shelters.

Based on findings from the [WAVE Country Report 2013](#), WAVE urgently calls upon the European countries to invest in more shelter places and ensure that national women's helplines operate both 24/7 and free of charge.

We kindly ask that for those who further disseminate this information, please include the list of national helplines and phone numbers in Europe (attached).



Womens Helplines
EU.pdf



Womens Helplines
outside EU.pdf

The full version of the WAVE Country Report 2013 is available online:

<http://www.wave-network.org/content/wave-country-report-2013-now-online>

The full version of the FRA survey's results can be downloaded from the FRA website:

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance_en_0.pdf

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² <http://www.wave-network.org/content/wave-country-report-2013-now-online>