



**WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE**

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**25th November 2014 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and onset of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign**

*The feminist Network Women against Violence Europe (WAVE) celebrates the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign across Europe, and calls for greater sustainability of specialized women's support services in Europe!*

From 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – to 10 December – International Human Rights Day – this year over, civil society organizations all over the world will join hands to raise awareness of the global issue of Gender-Based Violence, and call on governments to take strong actions and act with Due Diligence in preventing violence and protecting survivors. The 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** campaign is on the theme “From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence against Women!”

In frame of the 16 Days Campaign 2014, the women's organizations part of the European Network Women against Violence Europe (WAVE) will be carrying out numerous actions and events across Europe.

WAVE is the only European Network dealing exclusively with the issue of Violence against Women (VAW). Over its 20 years of experience, it has contributed its knowledge and expertise at the European level, and lobbied for changes in the field of preventing and combating violence against women and their children. With many of its members providing direct support to women survivors of violence, WAVE has worked hard at ensuring the development and sustainability of vital women specialized services in Europe.

Specialized support services, among which women's shelters, fulfil a vital role in combating VAW. Women's shelters provide women survivors and their children with a safe haven, where they can receive the kind of support that enables them to deal with

traumatic experiences, to end the violence, to regain self-esteem, and to lay the foundations for a self-determined and independent life. But these services also realize an important public role, through raising awareness of the issue and lobbying for greater women's rights. However, their sustainability is much too often at stake...

The **WAVE Country Report 2013** highlights the lack of relevant support services in Europe, with 67% of recommended shelter places (or 55,242) missing in 46 European countries, and only 17 national women's helplines operating 24/7 and free of charge.

Coming into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014, the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, and Domestic Violence** recognizes the importance of autonomous and specialized women's services, and enjoins governments to "provide or arrange for specialist women's support services to all women victims of violence and their children" (Article 22).

Following this recent landmark, the global 16 Days Campaign is yet another great event that serves to raise awareness of the issue of VAW, and aims to bring society on board of positive change!

Support from all individual women and men of the world's population is needed! The media, and the essential role it can play in amplifying the voices of women survivors, and the ones of the organizations working at supporting them, is needed. Very importantly, deep and long-term commitment by decision-makers, at all levels, is paramount to guarantee the sustainability of services that are essential to survivors and their children, and societies at large.

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, follow the activities of the WAVE members on the **WAVE Network** Facebook page (click [here](#)), and on Twitter (@WAVE\_europe).

Keep updated on the many actions, campaigns, events and more taking place all over the world from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014, by visiting the Rutgers Center for Women's Global Leadership website at <http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/campaign-calendar>

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To find out more about the work of the WAVE Network in Europe, visit our website at [www.wave-network.org](http://www.wave-network.org); and don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter!