



16.1.2024

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0725/2023 by M.V. (Spanish), on behalf of the “Plataforma Unitaria contra las Violencias de Género” association, on preventing violence against women and the concept of femicide in the EU legal framework

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner states that femicide is the worst form of gender violence and observes that there is some ambiguity regarding how it is defined, calculated and how to act to prevent it. In order to provide scientific knowledge to make progress on those issues, the Plataforma Unitaria contra las Violencias de Género and the University of Girona have carried out a study called ‘Civil society responses to violence against women: analysis of transformational action to prevent violence and protect the lives of women in Europe and Latin America’. The study identifies and analyses action taken by civil society that has had an impact on preventing violence and protecting women’s lives. The petitioner is calling for the proper implementation of existing EU and domestic law on protection of life and prevention of violence against women as well as of the proposed directives on combating violence against women and domestic violence (COM/2022/105). She also calls on the EU institutions to define and incorporate the concept of femicide and its implications into the EU legal framework. Given the inadequate recording of femicide by public institutions, the petitioner also asks the European Commission to standardise the recording process.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 8 November 2023. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 16 January 2024

The Commission’s observations

The Commission appreciates and takes note of the study on violence against women that the petitioners refer to. The Commission is deeply concerned about the reports of the increasing number of femicides, i.e. the killing of women and girls because of their gender, taking place across the EU. Preventing and combating gender-based violence is one of the key priorities of the Commission and it is unacceptable that these forms of violence are still an issue in modern times.

The Commission remains fully committed to promote women’s rights across the EU. The Gender Equality Strategy¹, available in 23 languages, presents the Commission policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 towards a Union of Equality free from all forms of violence against women and girls.

Last year, the Commission adopted a proposal for a directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence to ensure that victims of such violence receive adequate access to justice, protection and support. The proposal explicitly recognises femicide as a form of violence against women. Moreover, the proposal includes an obligation for Member States to take appropriate actions to prevent violence against women and domestic violence, including through awareness-raising campaigns, research and education programmes, and trainings for professionals who are likely to come into contact with victims. Furthermore, Article 44 of the proposal for a Directive includes ‘Data collection and research’, with measures to strengthen coordination and cooperation in Member States and the EU, providing a multi-institution approach to improve data collection on violence against women and domestic violence.

Interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament and Council of the European Union on the proposal started on 13 July. The co-legislators are committed to reach an agreement before the end of the current legislature of the European Parliament. Once the proposed directive is adopted by the Union co-legislators, it will have to be transposed into national law. The Commission will then assess whether the national laws of the EU Member States – including Spain – meet the standards set at the EU level.

Furthermore, the EU's accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), is a milestone in the EU's commitment to stepping up actions against gender-based violence across the Member States and in support of all victims of violence against women and domestic violence. The EU signed the Istanbul Convention in June 2017, and deposited the instruments of accession on 28 June 2023, triggering the entry into force of the Convention for the EU on 1 October 2023. The EU is now bound by ambitious and comprehensive standards to prevent and combat violence against women in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, asylum and non-refoulement and with regard to its public administration.

In addition, the Commission launched in November 2023 an EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence, bringing together Member States and stakeholders to exchange good practices. Violence prevention focusing on men, boys and masculinities will be of central importance in its work.

Harmful patterns of behaviour are often influenced by prejudices, stereotypes and gender-biased customs or traditions. The need to overcome such stereotypes is recognised in the Istanbul Convention, which calls for a gendered understanding of violence against women and

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, COM(2020) 152 final, 5 March 2020, [2023 report on gender equality in the EU \(europa.eu\)](#).

domestic violence as a basis for all measures to protect and support victims.

In this context, in March 2023, the European Commission launched an awareness-raising campaign to challenge gender stereotypes. While it concerns all EU Member States and is available in all EU languages, the campaign has a specific focus on young audiences. The campaign tackles gender stereotypes in different areas of life, such as career choices, sharing care responsibilities and decision-making. The campaign materials are available for download in all EU languages on the campaign website.²

Conclusion

The Commission is deeply concerned about the reports of the increasing number of femicides, i.e. the killing of women and girls because of their gender, taking place across the EU.

As part of the Gender Equality Strategy, the Commission is active on several fronts in the fight against gender-based violence. The Commission remains fully committed to promote women's rights across the EU.

² [End Gender Stereotypes \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infographic/Pages/End-Gender-Stereotypes-Infographic-2023-03-23.aspx)