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Council of Europe
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DECLARATION OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE MINISTERS ON THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

On the occasion of the Conference “No safe haven”: integrated prevention measures to end domestic, sexual and gender-based violence
(29 and 30 September, Dublin, Ireland)

Dublin Declaration on the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

We, Council of Europe Ministers responsible for the fight against Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based violence, within the scope of our competence and having regard to the distribution of powers between the different levels of governance, especially in federal states, and without prejudice to our constitutional obligations,¹

- Underline our commitment at the highest level to actively promote an institutional and political culture which rejects gender-based discrimination and violence, sexism, gender stereotypes and gendered power dynamics in the public and private sector, including by ensuring the adoption of pledges or concrete targets by leaders related to promoting gender balance and to combating gender-based discrimination.
- Commit to ensuring that strategies aimed at preventing and combating violence against women also address the specific role of men and boys in preventing violence against women and develop specific measures aimed to involve them. These measures should be complementary to initiatives that seek to empower women and girls and that support them with the reporting of experiences of violence.
- Stress the importance of ensuring a systematic, long-term approach to awareness raising on the various forms of violence against women, including those perpetrated in the digital sphere, in particular by systematically including awareness raising campaigns as an integral and fully funded part of long-term action plans on violence against women, thereby ensuring continuity and, at the same time, partnering with key stakeholders such as women’s rights organisations. Such campaigns should target both women as potential victims but also men and boys, as potential perpetrators, victims and/or agents for change. In so doing, part of the

¹ [List of CoE Member States aligning with Declaration]

focus should be placed on challenging patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes, challenging and addressing rigid notions of masculinity and femininity which contribute to the acceptance of violence. Awareness raising should be based on an understanding of the gendered nature of violence against women, which targets women because they are women.

- Will take measures, to include in the official curriculum of all levels of education teaching material on issues such as the principle of equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity, including in relation to their digital dimension. This should include the possibility of establishing legal obligations for the competent authorities and/or for educational establishments to include systematically in their planning such subjects and teaching material.
- Stress the importance of providing guidelines for educational material in this area and the training of educational professionals, as well as the creation of knowledge platforms to share best practices.
- Will encourage initial and in-service training of all relevant professionals, including within the criminal justice system. Such training should be based on clear protocols and guidelines that set out the standards staff are expected to follow and that reflect a gendered understanding of violence against women and domestic violence; address possible prejudices and stereotypes that stand in the way of providing effective protection to victims; and address multi-agency co-operation with all relevant professionals. Training of law enforcement officials should, in particular, underscore the need to record all incident of domestic violence and patterns of abuse and provide detailed guidance on effective case-building, whereas training of judges should raise their awareness of the existence of perpetrator programmes as a tool to stem recidivism and the importance of ordering the attendance of such programmes.
- Call on our States to break the cycle of violence and intimidation towards victims and affected children by taking all possible measures to ensure that episodes of violence are taken into consideration by courts when deciding about custody and visitation rights. To this end, recognise that safe custody and visitation arrangements are a major contribution to the prevention of the continuation of domestic violence as well as of its replication by future generations. Call also on our States to ensure that the voice of the child is heard in handling cases of domestic violence and other abuses that affect them.
- Commit to increasing the provision of perpetrator programmes for domestic violence and for sexual violence operating on the standards and principles set out in the Istanbul Convention. In so doing, States should move away from an approach focusing exclusively on medical treatment for substance abuse/mental health issues/sexual drive or on anger management and adopt programmes that are grounded on the need for the perpetrator to question attitudes and beliefs towards women, recognise their past action and put in the necessary work to change the behaviour. The safety of victims must be at their centre and closely co-operate with women's support services. States should take measures to increase the levels of attendance, whether court-ordered or voluntary. Where such attendance is court-ordered, it is imperative that this measure is not used as an alternative to a sanction or to prosecution and achieves the aim of assuming responsibility for the violence committed.
- Ask the Council of Europe to carry out a comparative study in Council of Europe member states on the existing models and approaches taken to perpetrator programmes and their results;

such study would also identify promising practices and develop guidelines for the operation of perpetrator programmes to ensure baseline quality standards in line with the principles of the Istanbul Convention, notably a victim-centred approach that focusses on ensuring victims' safety and support and full respect for their human rights.

- Invite States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and reinforce efforts to implement existing international legal standards in the area of gender equality and violence against women.