

Violence against women: our concern, our response

A Side Event at the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations

MONDAY 4 MARCH 2013, 1.15 - 2.30 PM
ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, NEW YORK

Violence against women is one of the most flagrant violations of human rights; an issue which concerns all countries in the world. It touches women from all walks of life, irrespective of cultural, religious, economic, social or geographical backgrounds. It happens everywhere: in the "safety" of their own homes, at work, in the streets and in the media among others. Every day, women are stalked, harassed, raped, mutilated, forced by their family to enter into a marriage, sterilised against their will or psychologically and physically abused. The examples of violence against women are endless, its victims countless. Many women are too afraid or ashamed to seek help, often paying for their silence with their lives. Those that do speak out are not always heard. With the adoption of the Istanbul Convention in 2011, the 47 member states of the Council of Europe made an important step towards the recognition of their responsibilities in addressing this concern.

The Side Event will present the added value of the **Istanbul Convention** in the framework of international and regional legally binding treaties. It will also highlight its significance as an efficient and practical tool for governments to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence in Europe and beyond.

Keynote speakers:

- **Mr Gilbert Saboya Sunyé**, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Andorra) and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe
- **Ms Najat Vallaud-Belkacem**, Minister for Women's Rights and Government Spokesperson (France)
- **Ms Lakshmi Puri**, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Deputy Executive Director, UN Women
- **Mr Jean-Claude Mignon**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe

Conclusions:

- **Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe

Moderator:

- **Ms Margaret Besheer**, Voice of America, UN Correspondent



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Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

Opened for signature in May 2011, the Istanbul Convention is the first legally binding instrument in Europe to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. In terms of scope, it is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

Preventing violence, protecting its victims and prosecuting the perpetrators are the cornerstones of the Convention, as is the requirement to co-ordinate any such measures through comprehensive and integrated policies. The Convention covers victims from any background, regardless of their age, race, religion, social origin, migrant status or sexual orientation.

The Istanbul Convention was drafted in Europe, but is not meant for Europe only. Any state can accede to it or use it as a model for national and regional legislation and policies.

The Istanbul Convention will enter into force following its ratification by 10 countries. An independent group of experts (GREVIO) will monitor the implementation of the Convention.

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Violence against women and domestic violence

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