

Recommendations of EU-Expert Meeting, Cologne

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Recommendations of the Expert Forums of the EU Conference on Violence Against Women

Expert Forum 1:

The extent, reasons behind and consequences of violence against women

1. The member nations of the European Union and their institutions are called on to provide support on a European level for a mixed group comprising researchers, experts and women's NGOs with extensive knowledge in the field of combating violence against women. This is to allow the accumulation of pertinent information on the basis of common criteria, the elaboration of common standards and the handling of multidisciplinary research programmes, taking the relationship between offender and victim into particular consideration.
2. The member nations of the European Union and the European institutions are called on to maintain contact with this mixed group for the purposes of exchanging information and experience and to guarantee influence on socio-economic decisions on the European level, so that the problem of violence against women is taken into consideration particularly in policy pertaining to equal opportunity, family, equality and home affairs, as well as legal, educational and media policy.

Expert Forum 2:

Legal possibilities for combating (domestic) violence against women

1. The member nations of the European Union, together with the applicant nations, are called on to establish explicit, effective and clearly defined legal regulations pertaining to domestic violence, oriented towards the immediate separation of the victim from the offender through the immediate removal of the violent man from the common household and environment of the woman and her children. The police forces are to be given concrete instructions on the implementations of such regulations, including further measures to protect the victim. The efficacy of the measures taken and the behaviour of the violent man must be monitored both during and after their implementation.
2. In order to improve the safety of women affected by domestic violence, the member nations of the European Union and the applicant nations must ensure that female immigrants do not lose their residence permit when separated from violent offenders.

Expert Forum 3:

Prevention

1. All state institutions must be obliged to deal with the subject of "male violence", to co-operate in dealing with this subject, to exchange information with one another, to analyse internal structures as regards tolerance and continuation of male violence and to design their training and further training measures accordingly. Furthermore, these institutions must engage in measures aimed at primary offender prevention.
2. The prevention work against male violence must be funded by the governments.

Expert Forum 4:

Help organisations and co-operation with institutions, European networks

1. All national governments are to be obliged to establish and to finance a comprehensive and cost-free offer of support for abused women and their children, regardless of their legal status, under the management of women's NGOs. To this end, such support is to involve women's shelters, women's advisory offices, emergency organisations, legal and social help organisations, offers of support for children and intervention projects, for which standards have been developed in Expert Forum 4 and are to be implemented.
2. All national governments are to be obliged to each elaborate a national plan of action on violence against women by the time of the next EU conference, in co-operation with women's NGOs, and to make available the requisite means for implementing said projects.

Expert Forum 5:

Work with perpetrators¹. Legal boundary conditions must be established in all member nations of the EU and the applicant nations that render it possible for instructions and restrictions to be issued in order to allow violent offenders to participate in training programmes.

2. Work with perpetrators and associated public awareness campaigns must be based on international experience and scientifically supported and evaluated as part of an extensive package of measures aimed at combating violence against women and their children. The opinions and experience of the women and children involved must be taken into account when working with the perpetrators.

Expert forum 4: Standards for Women's Support Services

free of charge

empowerment

laws to protect women and children, right to stay in the home, remove the perpetrator

1. Women's Refuges/ Shelters

24 hour service

safety of the women and children paramount

women helping women

confidentiality guaranteed

no time limit on stay, subject to finances

run by women NGOs with feminist perspectives

1 family refuge space per 10.000 of population

empowerment/ self help model

open to all women who are victims of violence (migrant women, black and ethnic minority women)

sufficient funding through governments

paid staff and training

2. Advocacy/ Support Services to include

helplines

drop-in centres

1 per 50.000 of population

women's groups, self help

aftercare

pro-active services

free legal aid

3. Services for Children of Battered Women

4. Inter-Agency Partnership

intervention projects

free legal aid

housing programme

social security

training and development

health services

employment opportunities

Standards for Intervention

all interventions must be co-ordinated by NGOs which are part of the women's support services

safety for women and children is the priority of the co-ordination

women's support services must be an integrated part of the co-ordination

the co-operation of the police and the judiciary with the intervention project must be mandatory and must inform the women's support services

sufficient funding has to be provided by the state

EU and National governments

adopt a National Action Plan (NAP) in every country in co-operation with women's NGOs by the next conference (Finland)

the NAP has to include a system of monitoring and evaluation – together with NGOs

provide sufficient financial means to implement the NAP