

**NON.
NO.
NEIN.**

Say No!
Stop
violence
against
women

Violence against women is rooted in women's unequal status in society, and that status reflects the unbalanced distribution of social, political, and economic power among women and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women (1). Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harms on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15 (2).

The full extent of violence against women is difficult to estimate. Violence against women continues to be under-reported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In Italy, 65 % of the population tend to trust the police (3).

In EIGE's Gender Equality Index 2015 it was found that where people tend to have more trust in justice institutions, levels of disclosed violence are higher (4). It is estimated that in Italy, 27 % of women have experienced violence, which is 6 % lower than in the EU overall (5).

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Italy could amount just under EUR 13 billion each year. This figure was calculated according to the methodology used in EIGE's 2014 study (6), which Member States can replicate, as done by Estonia in 2016 (7).



What are the facts?

- According to the 2015 Italian National Institute of Statistics report, almost 1 in 3 women in Italy have disclosed physical and/or sexual violence.
- The percentage of women aged 16—70 that are victims of some form of violence is 31 % (20 % physical violence and 21 % sexual) ⁽⁸⁾.
- In 2014, 39 % of people in Italy said they knew a woman within their area or neighbourhood who has been a victim of domestic violence ⁽⁹⁾.
- 5 % of women in Italy have been a victim of rape and/or attempted rape ⁽¹⁰⁾.
- In 2014, EIGE estimated that there are 35 000 women victims of FGM in Italy ⁽¹¹⁾.
- During the years 2011—2012, it is estimated that there were 4 191 victims of human trafficking in Italy, of whom 71 % were women and girls ⁽¹²⁾.

When trust in police is low, victims are less likely to report violence.



Is violence against women a crime in Italy?

Italian national legislation to prosecute violence against women is extensive, covering domestic violence, sexual violence, violence against minors, female genital mutilation, stalking and trafficking of human beings. The 2001 law on domestic violence (154/2001) covers all family members who are subjected to physical as well as psychological violence.

Law No 38/2009 introduced the crime of stalking in the Italian legal system. The offence is punishable with imprisonment ranging from 6 months to up to 4 years. Rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment are also all offences under the Italian Penal Code.

What is being done to eliminate violence against women in Italy?

A national plan against gender-based violence and stalking was officially enacted only in November 2010 as a first attempt to develop an organic response to address violence against women in Italy.

In 2015, the Italian government adopted the 'Special plan against sexual violence and gender-based violence', which oversees the expansion of women's support services including anti-violence centres and women's shelters. The creation of a national observatory on the phenomenon of violence is also expected.

Furthermore, Law No 119 of 15 October 2013 converting Decree Law No 93 of 14 August 2013 strengthened the 'warning' (*ammonimento*) and introduced new aggravating circumstances. In particular, the penalty is increased if children under 18 years of age witness violence, as well as if the victim is in a particularly vulnerable situation (if pregnant). Also, the particularly close relationship between the victim and the perpetrator was introduced as an aggravating circumstance (e.g. if the perpetrator is the victim's spouse or partner, or non-cohabiting partner).

The law ensures greater protection for victims in relation to hearings and that information is provided to victims about support services existing in the local area. Furthermore, the law also provided for the granting of legal aid for women victims of domestic violence whose income exceeds the income limits fixed by the national legislation.

Good practices show the way

The Provincial Observatory on Gender Violence collects data on complaints related to violence against women in the Autonomous Province of Trento. The initiative is implemented in collaboration with the prefecture, the police and the University of Trento. The observatory was created in 2012 and includes complaints collected by Trento and Rovereto prosecutor's offices and by the local police. Thanks to the collaboration of all these institutions, data on violence against women is now available and represents a solid base on which to formulate policies and measures to combat violence against women ⁽¹³⁾.

Protection is also extended to foreign victims, for whom the law introduced the possibility to obtain a humanitarian residence permit, established by Legislative Decree No 286/1998, consolidating the provisions regulating immigration and the rules relating to the status of foreign nationals.

Italy is also particularly committed to increasing public awareness against gender-based violence, by carrying out several communication campaigns. The most recent ones are 'Riconosci la violenza' ('Recognise violence')⁽¹⁴⁾ addressing women and '#COSEDAUOMINI' ('#THINGSMENDO')⁽¹⁵⁾ addressing men and boys.

In 2016, Italy adopted its national action plan against trafficking in, and serious exploitation of, human beings. The plan is aimed at identifying multi-annual intervention strategies to prevent and combat the phenomenon, including measures aimed at awareness-raising, prevention and social integration of victims.

With a view to increasing awareness of the phenomenon and creating an effective network for the exchange of good practices on the topic at the international level, in November 2013, Italy was the first non-American country to sign the Belém do Pará Convention on the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women.

How are women and girls protected?

Victims of violence against women in Italy have legal access to protection measures. Protection measures include removing the perpetrator from the family home and restraining the perpetrator from using or threatening to use violence or from contacting the victim. The police can also issue notices to violent persons as a warning in order to prevent a violent event from happening⁽¹⁶⁾.

Italy ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in September 2013. The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

What help is available in Italy?

The national 'Anti-violence and anti-stalking' helpline (1522) supports victims of gender-based violence and stalking. It is free of charge, accessible 24/7, with multi-lingual support available (in Italian, English, French, Russian and Arabic). It is run and funded by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

From December 2012 to August 2016 the helpline received 168 887 calls, 91 % of which were from women⁽¹⁷⁾.

The national anti-trafficking toll-free helpline (800 290 290) is free of charge and operates 24 hours a day.

There are 486 women's shelters in Italy with over 1 045 shelter places having hosted more than 19 456 women and children.



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Anti-violence and anti-stalking helpline: 1 522.



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Endnotes

- (¹) Council of Europe (2011). *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and its explanatory report*. Council of Europe Treaty Series No 10. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210>.
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- (³) European Commission (2016). *Eurobarometer*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/18/groupKy/88>.
- (⁴) European Institute for Gender Equality (2013). *Gender Equality Index — Report*. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf>.
- (⁵) Ibid. The level of disclosed violence in the EU overall is 33 %.
- (⁶) European Institute for Gender Equality (2014). *Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union — Report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0414745EN2.pdf>.
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- (¹³) <http://www.pariopportunita.provincia.tn.it/italy/SC/185/Violenza.html>
- (¹⁴) <http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/index.php/primopiano/2406-qriconosci-la-violenzaq>
- (¹⁵) <http://www.cosedauomini.eu>
- (¹⁶) <http://poems-project.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Italy.pdf>
- (¹⁷) <http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/images/relazione%20agosto%202016.pdf>

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

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