



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE and CONSUMERS

Acting Director-General

Brussels  
JUST.D.2/HV

Ms Helena Valkova  
Government Commissioner  
for Human Rights  
Czechia

Dear Government Commissioner Ms Helena Valkova,

I am writing to you about Czechia's participation in the EU survey on gender-based violence and other forms of interpersonal violence (EU-GBV)<sup>1</sup>, coordinated by Eurostat. The final call for applications for grants for implementing the survey is open until 8 July 2020. We count on Czechia's participation in this crucial EU survey.

Achieving a union of equality is a key objective of this Commission, as highlighted in President von der Leyen's political guidelines and in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. Ending gender-based violence is a priority of the Strategy, and the importance of this topic has sadly become even clearer in the Covid-19 crisis context, with many women and children isolated in quarantine with their abusers.

According to Article 11 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which has been signed by the European Union, the parties to the Convention "shall endeavour to conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention". The EU-GBV survey will serve to deliver on these data collection requirements of the Istanbul Convention.

The EU-GBV survey will assess the prevalence of physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, sexual harassment at work and psychological partner violence against women aged 18-74, as well as violence experienced in childhood. Data will be collected to assess the frequency, intensity and severity of non-partner and partner violence, as well as its physical and mental consequences and the reporting of violent episodes. Respondents' knowledge about national support services for victims and their perception of the prevalence of violence will also be addressed.

The Commission expects this EU-GBV survey to be the first wave of a new era in comprehensive data collection on gender-based violence in the EU. For the data collected to be representative on an EU-scale, the Commission encourages as many Member States

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<sup>1</sup> Information and materials on the survey can be found online at CIRCABC:  
<https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/332d8b21-c73a-49b7-a6a1-ef971822795>

as possible to participate. Czechia's participation will be important for ensuring broad coverage of the EU's population.

High quality data on violence against women is a crucial basis for effective policy-making, and holds a lot of potential for making a difference on the ground. The only available, comparable data at the EU level are from the survey on violence against women carried out by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), published in 2014. This widely and frequently cited survey revealed the extent of abuse suffered by women at home, at work, in public and online: revealing in particular that one third of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from the age of 15.

As there has been no EU-wide data collection since the FRA survey, policy-makers and practitioners still have to grapple with a lack of comprehensive data on the scale and nature of violence against women. An estimated two thirds of women who are physically or sexually abused by their partners do not contact the authorities and therefore, administrative data vastly underestimates the reality of violence against women. Moreover, complaints are not systematically and similarly recorded in different countries and are therefore not fully comparable. Data from the EU-GBV survey will serve as a crucial complement to police statistics, and enable an EU-wide perspective.

The development of the EU-GBV survey started in 2016 and the draft methodology was tested at national level in 13 Member States from 2017 to 2019, with very encouraging results on the feasibility and added value of the survey. The final methodology and questionnaire were finalised based on the testing outcomes. The first call for proposals for grants for implementing the main survey was launched in 2019, and the last on 29 April with a deadline of 8 July 2020. The Commission will cover 80% of the costs of implementing this survey.

Several Member States, including Austria, France and Slovenia, have confirmed their participation in the EU-GBV survey through signing a grant agreement with Eurostat, and several others are in the process of doing so. We expect to achieve adequate coverage to be able to present representative EU data on violence against women as planned in 2023.

I would nevertheless like to take this opportunity to encourage you to participate in the survey. Czechia's participation in would significantly contribute to the goal of achieving comprehensive and truly meaningful results. It would also allow Czechia to signal to other Member States the importance of tackling violence against women and domestic violence, and of the significance of high quality data as the basis for effective policy-making.

If you have any questions about the survey and its implementation, the team in DG Justice and Eurostat would be happy to discuss these with you.

Yours sincerely,

Salla SAASTAMOINEN