

Brussels / June 25 2021

**RESOLUTION ON THE PREVENTION
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

RESOLUTION OF THE PRESIDUM OF CESI

The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI) is a confederation of more than 40 national and European trade union organisations from over 20 European countries, with a total of more than 5 million individual members. Founded in 1990, CESI advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU. CESI represents public and private sector workers.

The Presidium of CESI is deeply concerned about the continued prevalence of harassment and violence against women, both in domestic and occupational life.

The **Covid pandemic** has meant disproportional adverse consequences for women and further aggravated equality challenges which women had been facing long before already. In particular, latest figures seem to confirm that domestic violence against women have increased significantly. Lockdowns to prevent the spread of Covid-19 trapped many women at home, being particular vulnerable to violence and abuse. Several countries saw spikes in domestic violence reports.¹

Apart from violence being a blatant disrespect of fundamental human rights of women, it also impacts on their occupational life. Women who face violence, stress and anxiety at home are less likely to be able to properly focus on their jobs and career. Thereby domestic violence has a direct impact also on further deepened economic and financial inequalities.

In Europe, this situation may be further aggravated by the announcement of the Turkish government in March 2021 to withdraw from the **Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence**, because it could give further incentives to governments of EU Member States to step out as well.

According to the government of Turkey, the convention harms the unity of families and promotes divorces. In line with this logic, continued marriage is more important than the prevention of violence against women. It welcomes an understanding of marriages that is based on violence.

¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/gender-based-violence>

The fact that the government of Turkey, a country which according to NGOs has seen a dramatic surge in violence against women during the last years,² chose to withdraw from the entire convention altogether - rather than considering to withdraw, if at all, only from individual and specific articles after a balanced assessment of objective findings-, shows a disrespect for both women's rights altogether and for fact-based and differentiated debates.

The Turkish withdrawal from the convention must not set a precedence for other EU countries to follow suit, above all with the same logic, in particular also against the background of the rise of violence that has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

The Presidium of CESI calls:

1. on the EU institutions and the Member States acting in the Council to make a new effort **to finalise the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention.**
2. on the European Commission, in case the unanimity decision which is required for this in the Council is impossible to reach, **to translate the essence of the Istanbul Convention into a proposal for an EU directive to be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure with qualified majority voting in the Council.**
3. on the European Commission **to fully implement the current EU Gender Equality strategy**, in particular via the financing of topical research and data compilation by the European Gender Equality Institute (EIGE) as well as capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns in relation to the fourth priority field on combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims.

² <https://www.amnesty.de/informieren/amnesty-journal/tuerkei-von-wegen-einzelfaelle>