

Brussels / November 25 2021

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**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2021:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE PRESIDUM OF CESI**

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*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.*

**On the occasion of the 2021 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, the Presidium of CESI reiterates its deep concern about the continued prevalence of harassment and violence against women, both in domestic and occupational life, and calls for decisive measures by the EU and the Member States.**

For almost two years, 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

This situation was 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.

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.

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

In this context, the recent Opinion of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) on the accession modalities of the EU to the Istanbul Convention was highly encouraging to the extent that it clearly specified that qualified majority voting and not unanimity voting can be applied in the Council: In the accession process, Member States can now no longer shy away behind individual blocking states.

**The Presidium of CESI calls:**

1. on the EU Member States acting in the Council to make a new and swift effort **to finalise the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention by means of qualified majority voting.**
2. on the European Commission, **to translate the essence of the Istanbul Convention into an accompanying proposal for an EU directive on gender-based violence to be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure also with qualified majority voting in the Council.**
3. on the European Commission **to fully implement the current EU Gender Equality strategy**, in particular via capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns in relation to the fourth priority field on combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims.