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**TRADE UNION PRIORITIES ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S  
PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE ON COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OF MARCH 8 2022**

**RESOLUTION OF CESI'S STATUTORY  
COMMISSION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
AND GENDER EQUALITY**

*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 is a recognised European sectoral social partner. Most of CESI's affiliates are employed in the different fields of the European, national, regional and local public services, but CESI also represent private sector workers.*

**CESI's statutory Commission on Women's Rights and Gender Equality broadly welcomes the European Commission's legislative proposal for a binding new EU directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, published on March 8 2022 (COM(2022) 105 final).**

**It considers that the proposal is an important complement to the (still pending) accession of the EU to the Council's Istanbul Convention** on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence of 2011 – which has not been signed and ratified by all Member States, cannot be enforced by the EU in case of non-compliance at the national level, and moreover does not cover more recent violence-related phenomena such as cyber violence against women.

**The statutory Commission agrees with the broad and horizontal scope of the directive to cover all areas of private, societal and working life.** In a holistic manner, aims to criminalise rape (article 5), female genital mutilation (article 6), non-consensual sharing of intimate material (article 7), cyber stalking, harassment and incitement to violence or hatred (articles 8-11), stipulates minimum penalties (articles 12-13), clarify which jurisdiction is responsible in cross-border cases (article 14) and introduce minimum limitation periods to ensure that offences can be prosecuted longer times after they have been committed (article 15). Further, it aims to facilitate the reporting of offences (article 16), stipulate minimum standards of the investigation and prosecution of cases (article 17), provide for individual assessment procedures to assess risks posed by offenders that have been reported by victims (articles 18-19), and ensure effective support services for victims (article 21), protection orders for offenders (article 22) and adequate compensation payments by offenders for victims (article 26). It contains extensive provisions on better victim support (chapter 4), an improved prevention of violence (chapter 5) and an enhanced coordination and cooperation between involved authorities and support organisations (chapter 6).

**CESI's statutory Commission on Women's Rights and Gender Equality welcomes that the European Commission's proposal also spans to employment and the world of work, complementing existing EU equality directives in the areas of employment** – most notably those on equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (2004/113/EC),<sup>1</sup> in matters of employment and occupation (2006/54/EC)<sup>2</sup>, and engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity (86/613/EEC)<sup>3</sup> – and complements them by setting minimum standards on support and access to justice of victims of violence at work.

**It considers however that trade unions should be specifically referred to in article 40 on multi-agency coordination and cooperation.** In procedures relating to (1) individual risks assessments of offenders, (2) the provision of protection and support services for victims, as well as (3) the development of trainings for professionals, law enforcement personnel and staff in judicial authorities to handle cases under the directive, the proposed directive foresees coordination and cooperation with, amongst others, *“social partners ... and other relevant organisations and entities.”* Here, trade unions should be specifically referred to. Also apart from the role as social partners that many of them take on, they play important roles in the representation of the interests of the (women) workers that they represent. This role should be acknowledged and supported by the directive.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2004:373:TOC>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AL%3A2006%3A204%3ATOC>

<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2010:180:TOC>