

Lighting the way: violence against women must stop

Tomorrow, on 25 November, the world marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. On the eve of this occasion Vilnius Town Hall and EU House, where the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is located, will be lit up in orange. This is how EIGE will place its host city on the map of the global awareness initiative "Orange the World" and calls for action to stop violence against women. Presidential Palace and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also join the campaign and light their buildings in orange.

"Violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of persisting gender inequalities in all aspects of life. Women's lower status in society can place them at risk of violence and the experience of violence can undermine their ability to access education, obtain or keep a job. This is a problem also in Lithuania", said Virginija Langbakk, EIGE's director.

As part of the Gender Equality Index 2017, EIGE developed a way to measure the extent of violence against women in the European Union. The research made by EIGE measures the prevalence but also the severity and disclosure of violence against women.

The research reveals that one in three women in Lithuania have experienced violence since the age of 15 and in most of the cases by more than one perpetrator. Evidence shows that violence is widespread not only in intimate relationship, but also in public spaces such as schools or workplaces. In more than half of the cases, violence caused long lasting physical and psychological harm to the victim.

The majority of women who disclosed their experience of violence, claimed to have told about the incident to the police or someone close to them. However, violence still takes very serious forms in Lithuania. The number of femicide by intimate partner is the highest among all the 13 EU Member States, which collect this data.

"These figures show how important it is to address the reported violence immediately. It is essential to build mechanisms to help women in need and gain their trust. The violence unfortunately tends to continue and an assault that might seem of lesser importance can lead to severe consequences", Langbakk stressed.

In Lithuania, attitudes towards violence against women is also a concern. Eurobarometer survey in 2016 revealed that almost half of Lithuanians consider that the victim often provokes violence. This number is almost three times higher than the EU average. In addition, 42 % of Lithuanians said they think women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape. This number is twice as big as the EU average.

The violence we know about is only a fraction of reality. In the EU as a whole, almost one in two victims do not disclose violence to anyone. Recent allegations of sexual harassment in Hollywood and European Parliament encouraged women to come forward with their own stories. The testimonies highlighted how common it is for women to experience harassment and stay silent about the incident. Most often, the perpetrators are men in a position of power.

Combating violence against women is a priority to the European Commission. Commission launched a campaign of focused actions to further its commitment to eradicating all forms of violence against women a year ago. In support of Commission's efforts, EIGE has prepared factsheets on gender-based violence in all the 28 member states. You can find the factsheet for Lithuania [here](#).

Vilnius Town Hall and the EU House will be lit up in orange from Friday, 24 November, 17:00 to Sunday, 26 November. The Presidential Palace will also be lit up in orange on 25 November and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania be lit up until 10 December.

Gender Equality Index is a unique tool that measures the complex concept of gender equality and assists in monitoring progress of gender equality across the EU over time. EIGE released third edition of the Index on 11 October. Explore here.

The measurement structure for the domain of violence measures three aspects: prevalence, severity and disclosure of violence against women. On a scale of 1 to 100, 1 represents a situation where violence is non-existent and 100 represents a situation where violence against women is extremely common, highly severe and not disclosed.

The score for Lithuania is 25 compared to 27.5 for the EU as a whole.

Scores of the satellite domain of Violence are not included in the final Index score due to the lack of comparable data.

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