

# Our report on online violence against women



## Easy-to-read version

Easy-to-read is information that is written in a simple way so that all people can understand it. You can find more information at: [www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read).

## Who we are

We are the European Women's Lobby.  
We are an organisation that protects  
the rights of women and girls in Europe.

At the European Women's Lobby,  
we want a Europe where women and girls can:

- Fully enjoy their rights,
- Have the same chances in life as men,
- Be free and safe to decide about their lives and bodies.

This is the symbol of our organisation:



# What this booklet is about

This is the easy-to-read version of a report we made to talk about 'online violence' against women.

In the next few pages, we will explain:

1. What online violence is,
2. What the **European Union** and its countries do to protect women from online violence,
3. What should be done better.

# Part 1

## What is online violence?

Violence can have many forms.

It can be:

- When someone hits us,
- When someone keeps talking badly to us,
- When someone forces us to have sex or do other things against our will.

Violence can also happen online.

For example:

- When someone talks badly or spreads hate about us on social media.
- When someone shares our personal photos or videos without us knowing or agreeing with this.
- When someone online threatens us or tries to find where we live.

We call this 'online violence' or 'cyber violence'.

Online violence can be even more dangerous than other forms of violence.

Among other reasons, this can be because:

- People who spread hate and treat other people badly online often do not use your real names. This makes it hard to know who they really are and report them.
- Information online spreads really fast. This makes it hard to control or stop it.

Like in real life, online too, women are at higher risk of being treated badly than men.

Sadly, too many women have suffered violence online and it is mostly coming from men.

There are also cases in which a woman's ex-boyfriend shares personal photos or videos of her online against her will.

He may do this as revenge because she broke up with him.

Many women receive hate online for how they look or for what they believe in. Most women do not feel the internet is safe for them.

## Part 2

### What do the European Union and its countries do to protect women from online violence?

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe. These countries came together to make things better, easier and safer for people.

Online violence against women is a problem in every country in Europe. But different countries understand and deal with online violence differently.

Some countries are taking important steps to stop online violence.

For example:

- France has recognised that treating people badly online is a crime.
- Estonia has made a new office in the police that focuses on stopping online violence.
- Slovenia gives training to police officers and judges on online violence against women.

Many countries in the world have signed the 'Istanbul Convention'. The 'Istanbul Convention' is a law that aims to protect women from all forms of violence. Also online violence.

The European Union and most of its countries have signed the Istanbul Convention too. That means they have agreed to take action to protect women from all forms of violence.

Sadly, 5 countries of the European Union have not yet signed the Istanbul Convention.

In April 2024, the European Union agreed on a new law to protect women in Europe from violence.

These are great steps but there is more to be done if we want Europe to be a safe place for all women

## Part 3

### What should be done better?

At the European Women's Lobby, we believe that the European Union and its countries should do more to protect women from violence.

Amongst others, the European Union and its countries should:

- Listen to the views of women and their organisations when they make laws and decisions for Europe.
- Agree on what online violence is and work together to stop violence against women.
- Collect data and important information to understand the situation of online violence for women in Europe. without us knowing or agreeing with this.
- Make sure social media and online platforms take action to keep women safe from online hate and violence.
- Change their laws to make online violence against women a crime.



- Respect the rights in the Istanbul Convention aiming to stop violence against women.
- Have programmes at schools to help boys and girls understand from a young age what online violence is and how to be safe online.
- Make it easier for women who experience violence to report it and get the right help.
- Give good support to women who have survived violence online to help them recover from this horrible experience.

## More information

To learn more about the work we do at the European Women's Lobby, you can visit our website at [www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org).

If you have questions, you can send us an email at: [ewl@womenlobby.org](mailto:ewl@womenlobby.org).



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