



BEIJING+30 REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

“Reviewing 30 years of Beijing Commitments to Accelerate Gender Equality in the UNECE Region”

22 October 2024,
Building E, Room XVII, Palais de Nations, Geneva

Tuesday, 22 October 2024 (10:00 – 11:30, GMT+2)

Item 7. Thematic session: Ending violence against women and girls in the UNECE region

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Background and context

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) continues to be a critical issue across the region, occurring in homes, workplaces, public spaces and increasingly through digital platforms. VAWG has profound and long-lasting physical, psychological and economic consequences for survivors, discouraging them from seeking power, speaking out and participating in decision-making. It takes many different forms, all of which are rooted in inequalities between women and men and entrenched discriminatory gender norms. The rise of digital technologies has exacerbated the prevalence of technology-facilitated VAWG, a form of violence which disproportionately targets women in public life, human rights defenders and journalists.

While progress has been made in developing normative frameworks to address VAWG, it remains widespread due to persistent gender power imbalances,

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patriarchal norms and structural inequalities. Countries in the UNECE region have prioritized eliminating VAWG through legal and policy reforms, capacity building for VAWG response systems, improved support services and prevention activities. These efforts align with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), even among non-signatory countries. However, interventions often focus too narrowly on domestic violence, overlooking other forms of VAWG such as economic, political and technology-facilitated violence. Gender-neutral legal provisions have further failed to address the distinctly gendered nature of this violence.

Since Beijing+25, multiple crises—including the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts in the region and natural disasters—have not only slowed progress but also exacerbated the vulnerabilities faced by women. Authoritarian and populist tendencies have risen, alongside a gender backlash, shifting policy priorities and weakening support for civil society organizations. These organizations, especially women's and feminist groups, are critical in supporting victims, yet they are increasingly underfunded and marginalized.

2. Objectives

The thematic session will address progress and challenges over the last five years and concrete actions for effective prevention, protection, prosecution and coordinated policies on VAWG, including through legislative and policy measures, strong and consistent implementation mechanisms for existing legislation, provision of efficiently coordinated essential public services, access to justice, financial support and efforts to transform discriminatory behaviours and beliefs for accelerating implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BfPA\)](#) over the next five years.



3. Tentative Guiding Questions:

What key policy and legislative actions are required to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in the UNECE region as a critical catalyst for implementing the BPfA and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

- What are the most pressing challenges in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in the UNECE region, including technology-facilitated violence, conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking in women and girls, and how have these challenges evolved since the Beijing+25 review?
- How can member States ensure the adequate allocation of financial and human resources to effectively implement and monitor VAWG policies, with a specific focus on ensuring the availability of specialized services and legal support from an intersectional perspective?
- How can municipalities improve local service provision, particularly through multisectoral coordination, to ensure that survivors of VAWG, including those in vulnerable groups, have equitable access to comprehensive support services?
- How can governments, in collaboration with civil society, strengthen the role of women's rights and feminist organizations in preventing and responding to VAWG, particularly in terms of providing survivor-centred services and advocacy?

4. Agenda

10:00 – 10:45	<p>Moderated panel</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Pille Tsopp-Pagan, member of GREVIO, Council of Europe</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Katarzyna Kotula, Minister for Equality, Republic of Poland
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Ana Racu, Deputy Head of the Parliamentary Commission on National Security, Defense, and Public Order, Republic of Moldova • Ms. Colette Fry, Director of the Geneva Office for the Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Violence, Switzerland • Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe • Ms. Branislava Arađan, Project and Youth Ambassador Coordinator, WAVE Network • Ms. Xeniya Udod, Executive Director, FemAgora, and Member of the UN Women ECA Beijing+30 Civil Society Steering Committee
10:45 – 11:30	Open discussion with member States, civil society, experts.

5. Expected outcome

To set out at least three key policy actions to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in the UNECE region as a critical catalyst for implementing the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BfPA\)](#) and achieving the SDGs in the next five years.

6. Background documents

- [Parliamentary document “Breaking the Cycle: Ending Violence against Women and Girls in the Economic Commission for Europe Region”](#)
- [Key trends on gender equality across the Economic Commission for Europe region. Regional review of progress: regional synthesis](#)
- [Guidance Note for Comprehensive National-Level Reviews](#)
- [UN Women CSW69 / Beijing+30 Preparations Web Page](#)
- [UNECE Gender Portal](#)