

# DIGITAL RESPECT FOR HER

#DigitalRespect4Her



“ WOMEN SHOULD FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED ONLINE AND BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE CONFIDENTLY IN PUBLIC LIFE. ”

THE REALITY IS DIFFERENT: ONLINE VIOLENCE IS SPREAD THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, MESSAGING APPS, ONLINE FORUMS, VIDEO-SHARING SITES AND VIDEOGAMES. ABUSING SOMEONE ONLINE CREATES A PERMANENT DIGITAL RECORD THAT CAN BE FURTHER DISSEMINATED AND DIFFICULT TO ERASE.

## ONLINE VIOLENCE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Women are 27 times more likely than men to be **harassed online** across the globe. This includes online sexual harassment and stalking<sup>1</sup>.

One in ten women in the EU have experienced **unwanted sexually explicit messages** or inappropriate advances on social networking sites since the age of 15<sup>2</sup>.

After witnessing or experiencing online hate speech or abuse, 1 out of 2 **young women hesitate to engage** in social media debates<sup>3</sup>.

**28%** of women having experienced online violence **reduced their online presence.**

**46.9%** of female politicians from 45 European countries said they had received **threats of death, rape and beatings** during their parliamentary term.

1.1 million **abusive or problematic tweets** were sent to 778 women politicians and journalists in 2017 — one every 30 seconds on average.

Online violence can lead to psychological, physical, sexual and economic harm. It may silence women and reduce their presence online. Female Parliamentarians targeted with online violence often report becoming more cautious and limiting their online activities. Self-censorship is likely to restrict women's participation in societal debates, their influence in politics, as well as undermine representative democratic processes.

## HOW THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IS PLAYING ITS PART TO TACKLE ONLINE VIOLENCE

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, and Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, are now jointly stepping up to raise awareness on online violence against women through #DigitalRespect4Her.

### THEY SAID:

“ European values such as dignity, respect and solidarity also apply online. Women should feel free and comfortable to express their opinions online and to actively participate in public life. We call on everyone: EU citizens, industry, civil society and policy-makers to work together to ensure digital respect for women. ”



YOU CAN GET INVOLVED BY SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH **#DigitalRespect4Her**.

<sup>1</sup> UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development, [report](#) 2015.

<sup>2</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [report](#) 2014.

<sup>3</sup> EIGE, [publication](#) 2018.

## EU FRAMEWORK

Online violence is prohibited under the national laws of many EU Member States<sup>4</sup> and at the international level, but new forms emerge as technologies develop:

### THE REVISED AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICES DIRECTIVE:

Citizens are now better protected from audiovisual content, which incites hatred or violence on grounds of sex, both on traditional TV as online. Member States have to ensure that online platforms take measures to address such content including through flagging and reporting mechanisms.

### THE E-COMMERCE DIRECTIVE:

Online platforms can obtain knowledge of possibly illegal online content through, for example, notices submitted to them. Without such knowledge, they are not liable for illegal information uploaded on their service platforms.

### VICTIMS' RIGHTS DIRECTIVE:

Member States need to make support services available to victims and ensure that competent authorities are prepared to respond to the victims' needs. The Directive applies to online violence and hate crime, if these acts constitute a criminal offense under the national law of the Member State.

### OTHER MEASURES TO EFFECTIVELY TACKLE ILLEGAL CONTENT ONLINE:

The Commission Communication on Tackling Illegal Content Online calls on platforms to address illegal content by quickly and efficiently detecting, removing or disabling access to illegal content and to establish easily accessible notification mechanisms. The related Recommendation contains further advice on how Member States and service providers can act together to tackle illegal online content. The Commission also works with online platforms and civil society under the Code of Conduct to combat illegal racist and xenophobic hate speech online.

### THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S ISTANBUL CONVENTION:

An international legally binding treaty that criminalises several forms of violence against women, including online psychological violence, stalking and sexual harassment<sup>5</sup>.

### THE NON.NO.NEIN. CAMPAIGN #SayNoStopVAW:

A Commission campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and to draw attention to the important work done to combat this phenomenon by civil society organisations across the EU.

## EU FUNDING

The Commission supports national authorities and grass-roots organisations by funding projects on awareness-raising and education activities aimed at preventing and combating online violence against women, such as:

### #femfacts:

a fact-checking project to track and debunk false news and disinformation about women in European media.

### CYBERVAW:

an awareness-raising and information dissemination project on online violence in Slovenia.

### deSHAME:

a project on youth-led, multisectoral interventions to increase reporting of online sexual harassment among minors in Denmark, Hungary and the UK.

More projects to tackle online violence will be funded by the Commission in 2019.

<sup>4</sup> See Council of Europe [Cybercrime Convention Committee mapping study](#), 2018 and European Parliament, [FEMM Committee study](#), 2018

<sup>5</sup> The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No.210. The Istanbul Convention is ratified by 21 EU Member States and the process for the EU's accession is ongoing.