

# Combating violence against women: all EU countries must ratify the Istanbul Convention

*MEPs called on the 11 member states that haven't ratified the Istanbul Convention to do so, in a plenary debate with Commissioner Ansip on Monday evening.*

- The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women entered into force in 2014
- To date, 11 member states still have not ratified the Istanbul Convention
- One in three women in the EU has experienced physical and/or sexual violence

European Parliament Press Release (13.03.2018) – <http://bit.ly/2p8Tr0n> - To date, the 11 member states that still haven't ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention, are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

During the debate, a vast majority of MEPs regretted the fact that these countries (including Bulgaria, which is currently holding the Council Presidency) fail to consider the Convention as the best available instrument when it comes to

fighting violence against women. They stressed that reluctance to ratify the text was often based on misconceptions and misleading arguments regarding how the word “gender” is used in the Convention. They urged the EU Commission and the Council to take tangible action to help all member states to ratify the text as quickly as possible.

Some MEPs expressed fierce opposition to what they consider “the ideological baggage” of the text and its definition of gender. They rejected the idea that the EU has any competence on the issue and called for respecting “the internal order of every society”.

Commissioner Andrus Ansip reiterated that the Convention was about preventing violence against women, without any other hidden purpose, and hoped that member states that still have doubts about fully implementing the Convention will consider its fundamental purpose: supporting female victims of violence.

## ***Context***

The Istanbul Convention, the most comprehensive international treaty on fighting violence against women, was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011. It entered into force in August 2014 and was signed by the EU in June 2017.

According to the European Commission, one in three women in the EU has been a victim of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, over half of women have experienced

sexual harassment and one in 20 has been raped.

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