

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European
Commission

Ms Helena Dalli
Commissioner

[Letter sent by e-mail]

Dear Ursula von der Leyen,
Dear Helena Dalli,

Violence against women must stop, full stop. Trade Unions across Europe fully support your call on the European Union to do all it can to fight violence against women. You can rely on us; we are with you in this battle we have to win.

Violence against women does not stop at the doorstep of a woman's home. Physical or psychological violence against women also happens at the workplace, irrespective of the sector they work in, their profession, or educational level. Some jobs are particularly vulnerable, for example nurses, teachers, carers, cleaners, transport, retail and domestic and hospitality workers. But the risk is real for all:

- 63% of women workers in transport across Europe have experienced at least one recent act of violence;
- 1 in every 4 female workers in The Netherlands have been exposed to violence from clients, customers, students or passengers;
- 50% of health workers in Bulgaria have experienced violence at work.

Trade unions and employers play an important role in preventing violence against women at work, setting up proper procedures for reporting and recording violence and harassment at work, supporting the victims and dealing with the perpetrators. Increasingly violence and harassment are specifically addressed in collective agreements across Europe (and the ETUC has collected information on 80 such agreements).

We back your demands and concrete proposals to stop violence on women. We join you in calling for

- EU accession to the Istanbul Convention against violence against women;
- Stronger support, protection and rights for victims of violence against women if the Convention remains blocked in the European Council;
- Violence against women to be added to the list of EU crimes (supporting prevention, protection and redress, including cross border European arrest warrants can be issued for crimes of violence against women).

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We also urge you to take urgent steps to encourage:

- The ratification of the Istanbul Convention by those six EU member states who have not done so (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and UK);
- The ratification by all EU Member States of the ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment at work.

EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and the ratification by Member States of the ILO Convention would greatly boost the efforts of unions, employers and other organisations to tackle violence against women including in the world of work. It would support stronger implementation of the European social partner Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work.

So, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, and on every other day, we want the EU to support workers and their unions and to achieve our common goal to prevent violence against women at work, at home and everywhere it occurs in all European Union countries.

Yours sincerely



Esther Lynch,
Deputy General Secretary

Other signatories:

National Trade Unions :

Miranda Ulens, General Secretary FGTB, BELGIUM and ETUC Vice-President
 Bente Sorgenfrey, First Vice-President FH DENMARK and ETUC Vice-President
 Patricia King, General Secretary ICTU, IRELAND
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Gloria Mills, President, on behalf of the ETUC Women Committee
