



# STOP VIOLENCE

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NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT ALL  
FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

| 2015-2019

# National action plan to combat all forms of gender-based violence 2015–2019

## I. Introduction

For many years now, Belgium has dedicated itself to combating gender-based violence because it considers this an essential element in the equality between women and men. Despite the progress that has already been made, gender-based violence remains an important concern to our country<sup>1</sup>.

In 2014 the police registered 39,668 complaints pertaining to intimate partner violence. There were also 2,882 complaints about rape. According to a recent study by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) about violence against women<sup>2</sup>, 78% of the victims in Belgium did not report the most serious act of violence, committed by their partner, to the police or the authorities. Only 33% of the victims have talked about it with their doctor or in a care centre, 22% with the police, 18% in a hospital, 17% with a legal department or a lawyer and 10% with social services. According to the Security Monitor 2008-2009 only 7.2% of all sexual offenses (sexual assault, rape, indecent exposure, etcetera) are reported.

The FRA's study about violence against women reaches the same conclusion. According to the same study by the FRA, prevalence data concerning domestic and sexual violence are significantly higher than the number of complaints registered by the police. According to the data of this study, 24% of all women declare they have been the victim of physical and/or sexual violence by their (current or former) partner and 36% have been the victim of physical and sexual violence, irrespective of the perpetrator. Moreover, 13% of the women state that they have been the victim of sexual violence starting from the age of 15, and 14% before that age.

According to another Institute study from 2010 about women's and men's experiences with psychological, physical and sexual violence<sup>3</sup>, 15% of all women and 10% of all men declare they have been the victim of violence by their partner or former partner during the last 12 months. This study also shows that women are more often the victim of more serious and more frequently occurring forms of intimate partner violence. However, it also shows that men are less likely to share their experiences with intimate partner violence (64.8% of the women compared to 39.2% of the men). The stereotypical (self-)image of men likely functions as something of a threshold in this regard, making it more difficult for

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<sup>1</sup> See attachment 2: definition of gender-based violence

<sup>2</sup> See <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

<sup>3</sup> See [http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/nl/publications/emotional\\_physical\\_and\\_sexual\\_abuse\\_the\\_experiences\\_of\\_women\\_and\\_men](http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/nl/publications/emotional_physical_and_sexual_abuse_the_experiences_of_women_and_men)

them to reach out for help or to file a complaint. At any rate, more attention should be given to violence, both intimate partner violence and sexual violence, suffered by men, because it too often remains hidden.

Gender-based violence comprises more than just domestic and sexual violence. The prevalence study about circumcised girls and women risking gender-based violence, revised in 2014<sup>4</sup>, estimates that 13,112 girls and women “have in all probability already been circumcised” and that 4,084 girls and women “were at risk of being circumcised”. As far as forced marriages and so-called honour-based violence are concerned, it is very difficult to obtain real prevalence data, considering the secret and familial nature of this type of violence. Even so, several studies show that instances of both types of violence are reported to organisations responsible for victim care. Moreover, they are often quoted as a ground for requests for asylum.

All these studies and data show that all forms of gender-based violence are often kept under wraps. Furthermore, many victims find it difficult to acknowledge and to name the violent acts they have suffered and they still hesitate to talk about them with a third party.

These data should serve as an encouragement to step up the efforts to prevent and counteract gender-based violence.

## **II. National action plan to combat all forms of gender-based violence**

Ever since 2001, Belgium has pursued a policy to combat gender-based violence by means of a national action plan (NAP), supported by the federal government, the communities and the regions. This plan is coordinated by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. Several plans were drawn up: the first NAP 2001-2003, the second NAP 2004-2007, a third NAP 2008-2009 and a fourth NAP 2010-2014. This method of working is aimed at continuously improving the policy for combating gender-based violence.

On an international level Belgium was commended for its coherent approach to gender-based violence and in Geneva the fourth NAP was nominated for the 2014 Policy Award by the World Future Council, the Inter-parliamentary Union and UN Women. This award calls attention to the best laws and policies combating violence against women and girls.

Belgium wants to pursue its policy as part of its international commitments (see below) and has also resolved to extend its national action plan to all forms of gender-based violence. For this reason, a working group was put together in late 2013 to integrate the problems of sexual violence in the NAP 2015-2019. Civil society was also consulted to make a list of the specific problems related to this type of violence. The aim is to flesh out a coherent policy based on the NAP 2015-2019, one in which the federal government, the communities and the regions will closely cooperate, focusing on prevention as well as repression.

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<sup>4</sup> Dubourg D. and Richard F., Study on the prevalence and the risk of female genital mutilation in Belgium, 2014. Brought up to date 31 December 2012. FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment.

### **III. The Istanbul Convention**

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (hereinafter called 'Istanbul Convention') is the first legally binding instrument for combating violence against women and domestic violence. It is based on the observation that the practices differ from one European country to the next and it points up the fact that Europe has no clear legal framework in place. As such, the Istanbul Convention is a tool that can help European countries take measures in four important domains: preventing violence, defending victims, prosecuting perpetrators and developing integrated, global and coordinated policies. The main goal is for every European citizen to enjoy the same level of protection, publicly as well as privately, whether he or she has always lived in Europe or just recently arrived, and irrespective of his or her status and sexual inclination.

According to The Istanbul Convention there is a direct correlation between achieving equality between women and men and eradicating violence against women. The convention acknowledges that women and girls run a higher risk of gender-based violence than men and that women are excessively victimised by intimate partner violence and other forms of gender-based violence. However, it also stresses the fact that men can become the victim of intimate partner violence and sexual violence too.

Legally speaking, the states that ratify the Istanbul Convention will have to take immediate measures to make certain acts of gender-based violence punishable by law and to bring perpetrators to trial: rape, domestic violence, forced marriages, female genital mutilations, unwanted sexual behaviour, forced sterilisation and forced abortion. These crimes are included in the Belgian penal code.

As far as government policy is concerned, the countries are also invited to develop and finance an array of services such as care centres, 24/7 telephone assistance or medical and legal assistance, which are crucial to victims of violence. This provides them with the necessary medical assistance and case-specific counseling, but also with the help and support to bring the perpetrator to trial.

The Istanbul Convention imposes the implementation of effective, global and coordinated measures, including all relevant measures for preventing and combating all forms of violence within its area of application. In other words, Belgium must draft an extended national action plan that corresponds to the area of application defined in the Convention.

The implementation of an action plan to combat all forms of gender-based violence is also part of other commitments Belgium has made on an international and European level, such as the universal periodical investigation of the United Nations Human Rights Council or the observance of the recommendations of the UN concerning the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW).

### **IV. Area of Application**

#### A. Area of application of the Istanbul Convention

The area of application of the convention consists of a general section 'violence against women' and a more specific section 'domestic violence'. In this context, violence against women is defined as "a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women". Reference is made to "all forms of gender-based violence that lead or will or will probably lead to physical, sexual or psychological harm or injury or to economic damage to women, including the threat of such violence, coercion or random deprivation of liberty, whether this happens in public or in private."

The Convention goes on to clarify that the term 'gender-based violence against women' is in keeping with the term that is used in several international texts, such as CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 19 concerning violence against women (1992), the United Nations General Assembly's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) or the Recommendation Rec (2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the protection of women against violence (2002)<sup>5</sup>.

In line with the Istanbul Convention, violence against women is broken down into four main categories:

- Violence within the family;
- Violence within the community;
- Institutional violence;
- Violence in situations of armed conflict.

The Convention, however, focuses specifically on the campaign against domestic violence. According to the Convention this form of violence encompasses all forms of violence in which the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) have family ties<sup>6</sup>. As a result, the term refers to both intimate partner violence and violence between different generations. That is why this NAP also addresses the problem of 'children exposed to violence between partners', a form of prevention of intergenerational violence.

#### B. National Area of Application

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<sup>5</sup> See attachment 1: area of application of the Istanbul Convention.

<sup>6</sup> See Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (item 18): 'Where violence is committed in a close relationship, it is committed by a person who is a current or former spouse, or partner or other family member of the victim, whether or not the offender shares or has shared the same household with the victim. Such violence could cover physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence and could result in physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss. Violence in close relationships is a serious and often hidden social problem which could cause systematic psychological and physical trauma with severe consequences because the offender is a person whom the victim should be able to trust. Victims of violence in close relationships may therefore be in need of special protection measures. Women are affected disproportionately by this type of violence and the situation can be worse if the woman is dependent on the offender economically, socially or as regards her right to residence.'

The goal of the NAP 2015-2019 is to banish all forms of gender-based violence as enumerated below. According to the Istanbul Convention gender means “the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and assignments which a certain society considers appropriate for women and men.”

This type of violence can therefore be the result of an uneven balance of power between men and women. It is aimed at one person because of his or her gender. In the majority of cases the victims are women, but they can also be men. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, psychological or economic violations and can notably be divided into the types of violence presented below. Although the focus of the Istanbul Convention is mainly on women, the NAP 2015-2019 will also address itself to male victims of gender-based violence.

#### 1. Intimate partner violence

Since 2001 intimate partner violence has been included as a priority in the NAP to combat gender-based violence. In 2006 a joint definition of intimate partner violence was adopted. Intimate partner violence is understood to mean a complex of behaviours, acts and attitudes of one partner or former partner intended to control or dominate the other partner. It comprises physical, psychological and economic aggression, threats or acts of violence which are or can be repeated and which violate the other, or even his or her socio-professional integrity. It is stated explicitly that this violence also affects other members of the family, including the children.

The battle against intimate partner violence remains the main priority of the most recent NAP, because it is still the most common type of gender-based violence in Belgium.

On a federal level as well as in the communities, the regions and the municipalities, important efforts have been made to raise awareness, inform and welcome the general public and specific target groups (call centre, launching campaigns, developing tools, ...) and to counsel victims and call perpetrators to account (leaflets, website, references, ...). Already many efforts have been made in the field of scientific research; the compilation of statistics; the improvement of regulations; the startup of legislative initiatives to protect the victim; the startup of collaboration between police, justice and social workers; etcetera.

But considering the fact that intimate partner violence constitutes a real threat to the fundamental rights of thousands of people every day, it is the government's duty to continue its efforts and take appropriate measures in the field of prevention, victim protection and the counseling of perpetrators. In addition, it is also the government's duty to encourage all the different actors in the public sector and civil society (including the media and corporate life), each on his own level, to continue their efforts to eradicate this sort of violence.

This action plan will pay special attention to a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to intimate partner violence.

The efforts that have been made in the last couple of years will be continued, supplemented, strengthened and improved, and if necessary innovative actions will be carried out to optimise and further the campaign against intimate partner violence.

## 2. Female genital mutilations

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines female genital mutilation (FGM) as “procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.”

The WHO classifies FGM into four categories:

- ✱ Type I ‘Clitoridectomy’: partial or total removal of the clitoris and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce.
- ✱ Type II ‘Excision’: partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora.
- ✱ Type III: ‘Infibulation’: narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris.
- ✱ Type IV: all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterising the genital area.

Since 2010 the battle against FGM has been an integral part of the NAP in the fight against gender-based violence. In previous years significant progress has been made in several fields, thanks mainly to qualitative and quantitative studies, the development of a prevention kit intended for professionally involved stakeholders, the distribution of information tools, several trainings organised by social societies and numerous measures to raise awareness among the target audience.

As is clear from the recommendations of civil society, the policy on the matter must be bolstered, with a special focus on enhancing the decisiveness of the associations that are active in the field and the support mechanisms for women who have been the victim of FGM, improving the conditions of victim care and access to legal aid, intensifying legal action, developing the training given to people who intervene in the problem matter, and considering FGM in the asylum procedure.

## 3. Forced marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage that is concluded without consent of both spouses or in which the consent of at least one of the spouses was obtained by violence or threat. In other words, a marriage is only voluntary if both future spouses marry each other of their own free will<sup>7</sup>.

Since 2010 Belgium has used the NAP against gender-based violence to tackle the issue of forced marriages. Here, Belgium has chosen to focus on prevention. Especially in schools, it has organised a spate of campaigns to raise awareness and educate young girls and boys. Through various information tools and thematic presentations, these youths are told what to do in order to prevent ending up in a forced marriage, or what course to take if they find themselves in such a situation. Also, the actors who are professionally involved, in particular in the fields of police, justice, health care, education and social affairs, receive support in the prevention of forced marriages by means of targeted campaigns that raise understanding and awareness. Various studies have been carried out to improve the existing prevention and counseling and adapt these measures to the victims' specific needs.

Despite these efforts, however, there are still some bottlenecks, and a thorough policy remains necessary. Actions concerning the recognition of possible victims, specific care and aid are therefore included in this NAP.

#### 4. Honour-based violence

The term 'honour-based violence' refers to a continuum of forms of violence whose main motive is preventing or restoring a perceived violation of the sexual and family honour that is known (or might potentially become known) to the outside world. It can concern the honour of an individual, the family or the community and the violence can be initiated or supported by several people and aimed at several victims. The Istanbul Convention explicitly mentions that no single custom, tradition, culture or religion can be invoked to justify inequalities based on gender or acts of violence against boys, girls and women, such as honour-based violence.

Since 2010 honour-based violence is also included in the NAP to combat gender-based violence. On a local level projects are introduced to develop a prevention-based approach in order for the police and courts to formulate an appropriate answer when a violation has been committed. Moreover, a first scientific study was conducted on the phenomenon of honour-based violence in Belgium. Consultation of civil society has clearly shown the need for an approach that is geared specifically to this type of violence. The goal now is to convert this policy for the repression and prevention of honour-based violence into a multidisciplinary approach that is supported by all stakeholders. The emphasis here is on collaboration and the exchange of information between the actors involved, their education, the detection and prevention of the

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<sup>7</sup> The Act of 2 June 2013 (amending the Civil Code, Act of 31 December 1851 on consulates and consular jurisdiction, the Criminal Code, the Judicial Code and Act of 15 December 1980 on aliens' access to the territory, sojourning, registration and deportation, with a view to preventing marriages of convenience and legal arrangements for cohabitation of convenience) defined forced legal cohabitation (article 391 septies of the Criminal Code) as a crime. Legal cohabitation is not legally valid if it is concluded without free consent or if the consent of one the legal cohabitants was obtained by violence or threat.



phenomenon, the specific and long-term support for the victims and support for the professionals that can be confronted with this problem. In order to achieve real results, moreover, such forms of assistance and guidance must take into consideration certain cultural sensibilities.

There are also similarities between victims of honour-based violence and victims of loverboys (vulnerability, trust and affection towards the offender, the influence of a network, etcetera). To deal with this type of violence we will therefore base our approach on the field of honour-based violence.

## 5. Sexual violence

Unfortunately, sexual violence is still widespread in Belgium, at all levels of the population, and continues to be haunted by a considerable 'dark number'. No less than 90% of the victims of sexual violence do not go to the police, for various reasons<sup>8</sup>. The consequences for the victims are nevertheless considerable. Being confronted with sexual violence is a traumatic experience with far-reaching physical and psychological consequences and it can have an impact on sex life.

The previous national action plans on gender-based violence only dealt with sexual violence committed within a relationship. As such, the response to this complex problem was exceedingly fragmentary and lacking in a coordinated approach. This is why the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men convened a committee of experts to identify the main bottlenecks and shortcomings in the current policy and to gather the practical recommendations of civil society and experts in the field. More specifically, the recommendations concern the pursuit, resolution and follow-up of cases, raising awareness in education and counseling victims of sexual violence. To deal with this type of violence efficiently, a coherent policy needs to be put in place that will allow the federal government, the communities and the regions to cooperate closely, focusing on prevention and punishment both. The efforts will be aimed at victim support, relief by medical services, education of professionals, treatment of perpetrators, as well as educational programmes and campaigns designed to change the attitude of the general public and professionals to this problem. Important efforts are also being made in the area of burden of proof (DNA). These actions will be further supported so that more cases can be dealt with in a respectful and just manner, based on conclusive evidence.

Furthermore, victims of sexual violence will be encouraged to file a complaint so that they can start to deal with the trauma, find sympathy and support, receive counsel and be referred to the right services. Naturally, victims who do not want to file a complaint can also benefit from an ample supply of specific relief. That is why further efforts in this domain will be made as well.

## 6. Violence in armed conflict

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<sup>8</sup> Because of an undue feeling of guilt or shame, or because of enduring fear of the perpetrator, many victims prefer to keep silent or do not reach out for help. Victims often prefer to forget.

Wars and armed conflicts have a different impact on women and men. Whereas men are more often directly involved in armed conflicts, the majority of civilian casualties are women and children. Furthermore there is one type of violence which occurs more often in zones of conflict and which affects women more often than men: sexual violence. Besides, women often feel the effect of armed conflicts indirectly, because in these strenuous times they need to support families and communities on their own. Even after the conflict, then, women tend to feel its consequences for a longer time than men. Women are hardly ever involved in peace talks and in the preparations for reconstruction, and as a result their needs are rarely taken into account.

The advancement and protection of human rights and the importance of women in society have always been a priority in Belgium, which attaches great importance to the universality of these rights while safeguarding the respect for these rights throughout the world.

On the Belgian federal level, the first specific actions to improve the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict zones were enumerated and the first commitments were made by the stakeholders involved in the first National Action Plan 'Women, Peace and Security' 2009-2012. Considering the importance of the matter, a second NAP 2013-2016 was drawn up. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men plays a coordinating role in reporting on and monitoring the implementation of this plan. As the measures to combat violence against women in armed conflict have already been included in this action plan, they will not be repeated in this NAP.

## 7. Unwanted sexual behaviour at work

Unwanted sexual behaviour at work comprises all unwanted behaviour with a sexual connotation, aimed at or resulting in damage to the person's dignity or in the creation of a threatening, hostile, insulting, humiliating or offensive atmosphere. This unwanted sexual behaviour can take many forms, both physically and verbally (lascivious glances, ambiguous remarks or insinuations, showing pornographic material, compromising proposals, touching, assault and battery, rape, and so on).

In 2014 the Belgian Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue (FPS ELS) gauged the state of legislative affairs in the matter of unwanted sexual behaviour, summarising its canon and identifying its blind spots. Consequently, the legislation was adapted and strengthened so that it is now completely in line with the principles of the Istanbul Convention<sup>9</sup>. Given that the FPS ELS has already formulated a complete gender-based policy on unwanted sexual behaviour, these actions have not been included in this NAP. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men will continue to cooperate with the FPS ELS to combat unwanted sexual behaviour at work and to make the connection with the principles in this NAP and in the Istanbul Convention.

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<sup>9</sup> Law of 28 February 2014 completing the Law of 4 August 1996 regarding the well-being of employees in the performance of their work, as regards the prevention of psychosocial risks at work, including violence, harassment and sexual harassment at work (Belgian Official Gazette 28 April 2014), Law of 28 March 2014 modifying the Judicial Code and the Law of 4 August 1996 regarding the well-being of employees in the performance of their work, as regards the judicial procedures (Belgian Official Gazette 28 April 2014) and Royal Decree of 10 April 2014 regarding the prevention of psychosocial risks at work (Belgian Official Gazette 28 April 2014).

## 8. Prostitution

A chapter in the first NAP to combat gender-based violence (2001) was dedicated to prostitution, discussing human trafficking aimed at sexual exploitation and reviewing the underlying causes of prostitution. On the one hand, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation is extremely profitable for gangs of organised crime. On the other hand, there are a number of socio-economic factors that help explain why women become the first and foremost victims of prostitution, such as the feminisation of poverty by unemployment, for instance, the lack of education or access to resources, situations of conflict, and widespread discrimination and violence towards women. To be able to combat prostitution, then, one needs to grasp the nature and the scope of the phenomenon, an understanding which is still lacking in Belgium. First, the scale and extent of prostitution has to be mapped in full, and subsequently a working group will be established with the various actors in the field to translate the survey into a number of concrete policy recommendations. This map will also provide an overall picture of the existing and the necessary care for prostitutes. In addition, this NAP will also include research about the phenomenon of loverboys, and ways to counteract it.

At the moment Belgium has a 2015-2018 national action plan in place to deal with human trafficking. For this reason trafficking in human beings in the broad sense of the term will not be included in this NAP. However, to guarantee the integration of gender in the fight against human trafficking, a representative of the state secretary for equal opportunities will join the interdepartmental committee charged with coordinating the national action plan to fight human trafficking<sup>10</sup>.

**As some forms of gender-based violence are already treated in other national action plans (op. cit.) the future national action plan to combat gender-based violence will focus on the following forms of violence:**

- **Intimate partner violence;**
- **Female genital mutilation;**
- **Forced marriage;**
- **Honour-based violence;**
- **Sexual violence;**
- **Prostitution.**

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<sup>10</sup> See Royal Decree of 21 July 2014 amending the Royal Decree of 16th of May on the fight against trafficking and trafficking in human beings.

## **V. Structure**

The current national action plan to combat gender-based violence follows the structure of the Convention of Istanbul and is therefore divided into 6 overall objectives:

- pursue an integrated policy to combat gender-based violence and gather quantitative and qualitative data about all forms of violence
- prevent violence
- protect and support victims
- investigate, continue and adopt protective measures
- incorporate the gender dimension in asylum and migration policy
- fight against violence on an international level

Each overall objective comprises several operational objectives and matches the aggregate of the measures which will be taken in the period 2015-2019.

## **VI. VI. Monitoring**

The battle against gender-based violence constitutes a transversal matter which calls for an integrated approach. It requires the political commitment of all responsible politicians, in particular the federal government, the communities and the regions, as well as the participation of several public servants. Considering their expertise, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men is charged with coordinating the implementation of the NAP, because article 10 of the Istanbul Convention demands a coordinating body responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to combat gender-based violence.

As with previous action plans, an interdepartmental group will be established. The aim is to bring together all governmental institutions involved in the implementation of the NAP, thus contributing to its monitoring, updating and subsequent evaluation. The group will consist of representatives of the federal institutions and stakeholders from the communities and the regions that are involved in the battle against gender-based violence. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men is responsible for coordinating this interdepartmental group.

In addition, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men will also put in place expert groups, made up of representatives of organisations active in the field, aid organisations for victims and perpetrators, people from the academic community and specific experts (from the police, justice department and the psycho-medico-social sector). These expert groups will be responsible for exchanging scientific knowledge and best practices. They will also be charged with making recommendations about the state of affairs of the measures included in the NAP and they will look for lacunas in the text.

A steering committee will also be set up, consisting of staff members of the ministers that are involved in the action plan. This group is charged with a midterm evaluation of the plan, based on a progress report from the interdepartmental working group. This evaluation will then be submitted to parliament.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE I: PURSUE AN INTEGRATED POLICY TO COMBAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND COLLECT QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA ABOUT ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE.</b>
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**I.1. PURSUE A GENERAL AND COORDINATED POLICY BY MEANS OF AN EFFICIENT COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL PARTNERS (ARTICLE 7)**

**I.2. COLLECT DATA AND CONDUCT QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

**I.2.1. Collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP (article 11, §1a)**

**I.2.2. Support research in the field of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as well as the efficacy of measures taken (article 11, §1b)**

**I.2.3. Conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP (article 11, §2)**

**I.3. SUPPORT AND CONDUCT AN EFFICIENT COOPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

**I.3.1. Encourage and support the work of relevant non-governmental organisations and of civil society active in combating gender-based violence (article 9)**

**I.3.2. Establish effective co-operation with relevant non-governmental organisations and civil society active in combating gender-based violence (article 9)**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE II: PREVENT VIOLENCE</b>
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**II.1. CONDUCT AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC OR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS**

**II.1.1. Promote or conduct awareness campaigns or programmes among the general public to increase awareness and understanding of the different manifestations of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, their consequences on children and the need to prevent such violence (article 13, §1)**

**II.1.2. Promote or conduct awareness campaigns or programmes among specific target groups and especially young people to increase awareness and understanding of the different manifestations of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, their consequences on children and the need to prevent such violence**

**II.1.3. Ensure the wide dissemination of information on measures available to prevent acts of violence covered by the scope of the NAP (article 13, §2)**

## **II.2. EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS ABOUT EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN (article 14)**

**II.2.1. Include teaching material on equality between women and men in formal curricula and at all levels of education (article 14, §1)**

**II.2.2. Promote equality of women and men in informal educational facilities, as well as in sports, cultural and leisure facilities, religion and the media (article 14, §1)**

## **II.3. ENSURE TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS (article 15)**

**II.3.1. Provide more intense training on co-ordinated multi-agency cooperation (article 15, §2)**

**II.3.2. Provide or strengthen the general aspect of 'gender-based violence' in the initial training of professionals (article 15, §1)**

**II.3.3. Integrate specific aspects of gender-based violence in basic training (article 15, §1)**

**II.3.4. Provide or strengthen advanced training for professionals (article 15, §1)**

## **II.3 b PROVIDE PROFESSIONALS WITH SPECIFIC TOOLS WHICH ENABLE THEM TO RECOGNISE FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND TO REACT APPROPRIATELY**

## **II.4. INTRODUCE PREVENTIVE PROGRAMMES FOR INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT OF PERPETRATORS (article 16)**

**II.4.1. Set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships (article 16, §1)**

**II.4.2. Set up or support treatment programmes aimed at preventing perpetrators, in particular sex offenders, from re-offending (article 16, §2)**

**II.5. ENSURE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND THE MEDIA (article 17)**

**II.5.1. Collaborate with the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media and set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to prevent gender-based violence and to enhance respect for women's dignity (article 17, §1)**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE III: PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS</b>
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**III.1. INFORM VICTIMS (article 19)**

**III.2. PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES (article 20)**

**III.3. PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES AND APPROPRIATE SHELTERS IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS (articles 22 and 23)**

**III.4. PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH ROUND THE CLOCK (24/7) TELEPHONE HELPLINES (article 24)**

**III.5. SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE (article 25)**

**III.6. PROTECT AND SUPPORT CHILD WITNESSES TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (article 26)**

**III.7. IMPLEMENT THE REPORTING OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE BY PROFESSIONALS (articles 27 and 28)**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE IV: INVESTIGATE, CONTINUE AND ADOPT PROTECTIVE MEASURES</b>
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**IV.1. GUARANTEE A PROMPT AND APPROPRIATE REACTION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT (article 50)**

**IV.1.1. Ensure that the responsible law enforcement agencies respond promptly and appropriately to all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP and that they are effectively dealt with by means of a multidisciplinary approach (collect essential evidence, raise the number of convictions, etcetera) (article 50, §1)**

**IV.1.2. Ensure that the responsible law enforcement agencies engage promptly and appropriately in the prevention and protection against all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, including the employment of preventive operational measures, the**



collection of evidence (SAFE kit, DNA analysis) and judicial investigations and procedures, as well as analyse and evaluate the means of action deployed (article 50, §2)

**IV.2. PROVIDE RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT IN CASES OF VIOLENCE (article 51)**

**IV.3. APPLY EMERGENCY BARRING, RESTRAINING OR PROTECTING ORDERS (articles 52 and 53)**

**IV.4. PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF VICTIMS (articles 56 and 57)**

**IV.4.1. Protect victims of all forms of violence covered by the NAP at all stages of investigations and judicial proceedings, as well as in other situations (article 56)**

**IV.4.1.1. Ensure assistance and care tailored to the victims**

**IV.4.1.2. Guarantee that the rights and interests of the victims are protected during the hearings**

**IV.4.1.3. Make sure that the rights and interests of the victims are protected at all stages of investigations and judicial proceedings, as well as in other situations**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE V: INCORPORATE THE GENDER DIMENSION IN ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY</b>
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**V.1. ENSURE A GENDER-SENSITIVE INTERPRETATION WHEN GRANTING REFUGEE STATUS (article 60, §2)**

**V.2. INTRODUCE GENDER-SENSITIVE GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ASYLUM PROCEDURES (article 60, §3)**

**V.3. PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SHELTER FOR IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE BEING PERSECUTED OR RISK BEING PERSECUTED BECAUSE OF THEIR GENDER**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE VI: COMBAT VIOLENCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL</b>
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**VI.1. PRIORITISE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN AND PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE BATTLE AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL**

**VI.2. SUPPORT EFFORTS BY PARTNER COUNTRIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIRD STATES AND INITIATIVES BY CIVIL SOCIETY**

**TO COMBAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (artikel 62, §4)**

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE I: PURSUE AN INTEGRATED POLICY TO COMBAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND COLLECT QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA ABOUT ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE.</b>
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**I.1. PURSUE A GENERAL AND COORDINATED POLICY BY MEANS OF AN EFFICIENT COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL PARTNERS (ARTICLE 7)**

The battle against gender-based violence is a transversal matter, requiring an integrated approach. It also requires the commitment of all responsible politicians in the federal government, the communities and the regions, as well as the participation of local administrations. Cooperation between these partners by means of institutional coordination is essential to efficiently develop all measures.

Belgium is fully aware of the need to put into place efficient and responsible control structures. To achieve this goal, an interdepartmental group has existed in Belgium for years now, tasked with bringing together all actors involved in the battle against gender-based violence and hence attain a joint, considered and coherent policy. The group consists of representatives of federal, community and regional institutions involved in the battle against gender-based violence. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men is charged with coordinating this interdepartmental group.

Through this action plan, Belgium aims to draw up a coordinated and integrated approach. The common circular concerning the criminal policy on intimate partner violence (COL4/2006) was a step in the right direction, prioritising the improvement of intersectoral cooperation between the justice department, police and aid agencies. Pilot projects focusing on the multidisciplinary approach, with a free flow of information and deliberation between the various services and stakeholders, have shown markedly improved succour and assistance for the victims, a more efficient handling of cases, and superior knowledge of the issues and challenges at large.

It is therefore all-important to wage the battle against all forms of gender-based violence across sectors and disciplines. Different professionals come in contact with victims, perpetrators and members of their families in many different fields, but in these often complex situations no single professional can provide an adequate solution.

In this respect, the lynchpin in the policy to combat gender-based violence in this latest action plan is the multisectorial and holistic approach, centred around the victim. An intervention must be tailored to the victim, taking into account the individual, familial, social, cultural and economic aspects, but also the more general context. During this process the victim's security and well-being must always take centre stage. In the same spirit, it is also important to offer the victims and the children accompanying them long-term care, to make sure that they pull through and can reintegrate in society, and to avoid new trauma and the repetition of violence. It is essential to keep developing and implementing

multidisciplinary services that are available and accessible to all victims of violence, including the specific groups with the most vulnerable victims. This multisectorial approach must, when necessary, at the very least guarantee an effective coordination and cooperation between the police and justice departments as well as aid to victims (including shelters, psycho-social auxiliary services and legal aid) and health services. Along the same lines, it is also crucial to create a map of potential new partners, such as public centres for social welfare, national health services, ...

Maximum cooperation between partners can be realised with the aid of cooperation and/or intervention protocols between various services, on a federal, provincial or local level. Consultative and exchange structures between professionals involved in combating gender-based violence are a must in order to create a strong and efficient network on the ground. The provincial coordinating structures and local administrations play a key part in this, because they are the link between the experts in the field and the political world. They often meet the associations, the pressure groups and the experts on the frontline, and they deal with these issues on a daily basis. They also guarantee that initiatives by federal and provincial government are implemented on a local level. Innovative pilot projects often start with their involvement.

One such innovative programme in the battle against domestic violence is the CO3 'safe house' project in Antwerp (CO3 project). This first multidisciplinary initiative related to partner violence is a Client-based Organisation with 3 partners, which focuses on the family. The three partners, police and justice department, assistance and care services and local administrations, work in unison by means of a chain-based model so that their various activities are geared to one another in an orchestrated plan of approach which starts with a joint risk assessment, case deliberation and case coordination. In addition, a holistic method is used: the focus is not only on the acts of violence, but also on the problems behind them, such as drug abuse, precarious situation of residence, stress, poor accommodation, as well as on the promotion of protective factors.

This action plan wants to consider how the roll-out of similar positive pilot projects can support the battle against domestic violence.

## **1.2. COLLECT DATA AND CONDUCT QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

Effectively combating gender-based violence requires a thorough understanding of the phenomenon. It is therefore essential that we continue collecting qualitative and quantitative data which have been broken down by gender and age, but also that we start harmonising the existing data and developing qualitative and quantitative indicators to improve the perception and the understanding of the phenomenon and that we start evaluating the impact of the acts of violence on its victims and perpetrators alike.

With regard to acts of domestic violence, it is compulsory to register them on the record following the implementation of circular COL 3/2006<sup>11</sup> concerning domestic violence. There are three registration codes: intimate partner violence, violence against descendants and violence against other family members. The general public can access police statistics on domestic violence via the internet<sup>12</sup>. The data about the cases that are handled by the office of the public prosecutor are centralised by the statistical analysts of the Board of procurators general. In addition, there are data available concerning sexual violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Here, too, there is a real need for relevant statistical data broken down per sex. Data about prevalence, causes and consequences of violence will also be collected, analysed and distributed. It is also important we define indicators to facilitate the monitoring of the evolution of the pursued policy to combat gender-based violence. The existing indicators, which are drawn up by various chairmanships of the European Union, can serve as a foundation<sup>13</sup>.

Apart from statistical data, we advocate ongoing research on gender-based violence to obtain a clearer picture of the root causes and the consequences of gender-based violence, the offender profile, the evolution of the number of complaints, the efficiency of the measures, the protective factors and the degree and causes of recidivism. Future studies on more general subjects, such as the national health study or the Security Monitor, will incorporate the gender dimension.

The last study on prevalence of domestic and sexual violence in Belgium dates from 2010. That study was limited in its scope, as it did not map all forms of gender-based violence. This is why new population screenings should shed more light on the scale, the trends and the dark number of all forms of gender-based violence, thus yielding a better picture of the issue.

#### **I.2.1. Collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP (article 11, §1a)**

##### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>1. In the context of gender mainstreaming the institutions concerned will make every effort to collect gender statistics about all</b>	<b>FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (police (DGR/DRI)), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital</b>	

<sup>11</sup> Circular of the Board of procurators-general at the appeals courts, defining domestic violence and specifying the stipulations of identification and registration of cases by police services and the office of the public prosecutor.

<sup>12</sup> These data can be consulted on the website <http://www.stat.policefederale.be/criminaliteitsstatistieken/>

<sup>13</sup> See "Combating Violence Against Women, and the Provision of Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence - Council Conclusions", Council of the European Union Brussels, 6 December 2012, 17444/12, Annex I "Indicators and sub-indicators on "Domestic Violence against Women".

forms of violence covered by the scope of this NAP. These data will be systematically provided to the Institute which gets a special mandate for this.	Region, German-speaking Community	
2.In this framework the Institute will draw up a gender matrix on the matter.	Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (IEWM)	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (police (DGR/DRI)), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community
3.Raise awareness with the registration services in hospitals so that they can register cases of gender-based violence (sexual and intimate partner violence in particular).	FPS Public Health	

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
4.Based on the new registration guidelines in the revised circular COL 4/2006 concerning intimate partner violence, draw up a new statistical report on the registered cases of intimate partner violence for the entire territory.	FPS Justice (Board of procurators general – statistical analysts), FPS Home Affairs (police (DGR/DRI))	
5.Identify these statistical data on cases of intimate partner violence by making the systems for collecting statistical data by	French Community	

the teams of SOS-Enfants uniform.		
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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
6.Improvement of the registration of the use and number of performed analyses with the kit for Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE kit) will be included in the circular on the SAFE kit.	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (police)	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
7.Continue the project for registration of cases of FGM which was organised in 10 hospitals from 2013 to 2014.  Organise additional awareness campaigns along the same lines in the gynaecology and registration wards of hospitals.	FPS Public Health	
8.Investigate the feasibility of a system to register cases of forced marriage and find out which services must be involved in this.	Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, COCOM, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	IEWM

<b>9. Make efforts to centralise the collected data on the registration of forced marriages.</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	
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**I.2.2. Support research in the field of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as well as the efficacy of measures taken (article 11, §1b)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>10. Translate the study of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)<sup>14</sup> into the public cost of gender-based violence<sup>15</sup> to the Belgian context and make it available for the general public.</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	
<b>11. Conduct an in-depth investigation into the extent of violence against disabled women and young girls, in coordination with the associations for disabled people and academia (state of affairs of accessibility of crisis centres, ICT, relief services, etcetera), taking into account existing European research (such as that</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal), Disabled People (federal), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF</b>	

<sup>14</sup> Based in Vilnius, Lithuania, The European Institute for Gender Equality was founded in December 2006 by regulation (EC) no. 1922/2006. The European Institute is entrusted with assisting the European institutions and member states with the implementation of an effective policy for gender equality, more specifically by taking charge of the development of appropriate methodological tools for the integration of gender equality into all EU and national policies, by collecting and analysing comparable and reliable information at EU level and by fostering the exchange of good practices and dialogue between stakeholders.

<sup>15</sup> See <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/estimating-costs-gender-based-violence-european-union-report>



of the FRA).		
12. Conduct a scientifically sound study into the prevalence of male victims of partner and sexual violence to determine the scale of the issue and their actual needs.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
13. Conduct a study of offender profiling in the case of intimate partner violence (why do they commit violence, what are the risk-triggers and the protective factors). This scientific research should map the causal chain of intimate partner violence from the point of view of the offender (proximal and distal factors). Based on these questions to offenders, the offender perspective will be used to evaluate the current preventive measures against intimate partner violence, and to reach relevant policy recommendations.	FPS Home Affairs, IEWM	FPS Justice
14. Draw up a map of the various forms of offender therapy (in Belgium and abroad)	IEWM	

and of the efficiency of these various therapies. Research how many offenders undergo some form of therapy in this country, taking into account the difference between compulsory and voluntary therapy/education and the fact that the supply of services is limited and typically project-based.		
15. Monitor the results of the evaluative research into the effects of judicial decisions in cases of intimate partner violence and come to new policy initiatives when necessary.	FPS Justice	
16. Carry out a specific analysis of the evolution in the number of complaints about violence between partners registered by the police.	FPS Justice (police (DGR/DRI))	
17. Conduct a study on the role that companies can play themselves when dealing with intimate partner violence.  Check which role the employer can play to prevent or raise awareness of intimate partner violence or to counsel his/her employees in such situations.	FPS Employment	

Research will show if this approach can be embedded in existing structures and functions such as health and safety officers, company doctors, fiduciaries, union representatives and social services by raising awareness among them.		
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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
18. Disseminate information about national and European good practices in the battle against sexual violence amongst all stakeholders.	IEWM, FPS Home Affairs (EUCPN)	
19. Conduct a study on the definition and the prevalence of sexual misconduct in hospitals and other health institutions (such as psychiatric institutions) and on the typology of offenders and victims.	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
20. Map the needs of the various actors on the ground who deal with honour-based	IEWM	Flanders, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-

violence.		speaking Community
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**I.2.3. Conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP (article 11, §2)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
21. Conduct an additional and specific analysis of the results of the national health study of 2014 to examine the results concerning intimate partner violence in greater detail. Based on this analysis, if necessary, the next health studies will further investigate gender-based violence.	IEWM	Scientific Institute of Public Health
22. Start new prevalence studies on experiences of physical, psychological and sexual violence, based on the methodology of the European FRA research into violence against women <sup>16</sup> .	French Community, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	IEWM
23. Integrate questions about gender-based violence into the future Safety Monitor, provided the budget allows for it.	FPS Home Affairs (Federal Police)	

<sup>16</sup> See <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-survey-methodology-sample-and-fieldwork>

## **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>24.Bring up to date the study on prevalence and risk of female genital mutilation in Belgium (dating from 2014).</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM</b>	<b>FPS Public Health</b>
<b>25.Conduct a prevalence study on forced marriages in Belgium.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal), FPS Home Affairs</b>	<b>Asylum and Migration (federal)</b>

## **PROSTITUTION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>26.Chart the issue of prostitution in Belgium.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	<b>French Community</b>
<b>27.Consult experts, field specialists, civil society, relief and self-help organisations and the police and justice system on the topic of prostitution, in order to formulate policy recommendations.</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	

### **I.3. SUPPORT AND CONDUCT AN EFFICIENT COOPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

The NAP will support the direct and constructive participation of civil society in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the adopted measures and strategies.

When drafting the NAP, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men consulted the various groups of experts on the ground, such as social organisations and the academic world, to perform a reality check and to keep their recommendations grounded in real life. This group of experts will also be involved when elaborating the measures in this action plan and they will be consulted beforehand if such is deemed opportune.

Throughout the NAP, Belgium is committed to the support of the work of relevant non-governmental organisations and of civil society in general, and to develop an efficient cooperation with these organisations<sup>17</sup>.

### **I.3.1. Encourage and support the work of relevant non-governmental organisations and of civil society active in combating gender-based violence (article 9)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
28.Support the actions of societies and organisations by granting once-only or structural grants and by supporting Belgian NGOs in the battle against all forms of gender-based violence, within the available budget.	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	

### **I.3.2. Establish effective co-operation with relevant non-governmental organisations and civil society active in combating gender-based violence (article 9)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<sup>17</sup> See Directive 2012/29/EU (item 62): "Member States should encourage and work closely with civil society organisations, including recognised and active non-governmental organisations working with victims of crime, in particular in policymaking initiatives, information and awareness-raising campaigns, research and education programmes and in training, as well as in monitoring and evaluating the impact of measures to support and protect victims of crime. For victims of crime to receive the proper degree of assistance, support and protection, public services should work in a coordinated manner and should be involved at all administrative levels — at Union level, and at national, regional and local level. Victims should be assisted in finding and addressing the competent authorities in order to avoid repeat referrals. Member States should consider developing 'sole points of access' or 'one-stop shops', that address victims' multiple needs when involved in criminal proceedings, including the need to receive information, assistance, support, protection and compensation."

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
29.Coordinating various thematic groups of experts in an effort to bring together organisations, field workers and the academic world to evaluate the plan, its progress and, if necessary, future steps and revisions.	IEWM	

#### HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
30.Help stimulate the sharing of information between public services and expert centres, such as ICRH, Intact and GAMS, for the purpose of education and advice related to FGM.	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, FEDASIL, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	
31.Start up cooperation with Prisma Centre and the Centre for Refugees of the German-speaking Community in order to collect representative data.	German-speaking Community	

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE II: PREVENT VIOLENCE

### II.1. CONDUCT AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC OR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS

In the last couple of years, there have been major efforts on the federal level, as well as in the communities, regions, provinces and municipalities, to lift the taboo on violence, to inform victims and offenders and to support them with the available tools and actions.

The fight against violence requires the total commitment of all levels of society. It is crucial that all civilians, whether they be victims, witnesses or offenders, are informed about the various courses of action available to them when they are confronted with this type of violence.

Awareness campaigns or programmes for the general public are pivotal in this respect.

However, it is also important to raise awareness among specific target groups that are regularly confronted with a specific form of gender-based violence. This calls for close cooperation with experts on the ground.

This NAP will put a particular emphasis on specific awareness campaigns concerning sexual violence. The main focus will be on encouraging victims to promptly report the facts. This will enable us to furnish proof and provide aid as efficiently and as quickly as possible.

The professionals who come in contact with the victims or the perpetrators of gender-based violence also have a crucial role to play. They must be able to identify victims and potential offenders, give them the appropriate support and, if necessary, refer them to the qualified services.

**II.1.1. Promote or conduct awareness campaigns or programmes among the general public to increase awareness and understanding of the different manifestations of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, their consequences for children and the need to prevent such violence (article 13, §1)**

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
32.Organise various awareness campaigns, for instance on the international day for the elimination of	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region,	



violence against women on 25 November.	German-speaking Community	
33.Raise awareness about the battle against sexism and stereotyping as a way of preventing gender-based violence (by means of campaigns, studies, handbooks, etcetera).	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	
34.Start campaigns that are addressed to, and elaborated in cooperation with, (young) men, to encourage their contribution in the battle against gender-based violence.	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region	
<p>35.Launch awareness campaigns to make relationships and relational problems a valid subject of discussion and to promote the existing support options.</p> <p>In addition, expand on specific awareness campaigns related to helpline 1712.</p> <p>All these campaigns should emphasise gender neutrality and the battle against stereotyping.</p>	Flanders	
36.Structurally support awareness campaigns concerning gender-based violence in the framework of security and prevention plans.	FPS Home Affairs (ADVP)	

## **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>37.Launch specific awareness campaigns in waiting rooms of doctors, psychologists, family planning, etcetera.</b>	<b>Flanders, Walloon Region, German-speaking Community, COCOF</b>	<b>FPS Public Health</b>

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>38.Launch awareness campaigns on 14 February (V-day), highlighting the battle against sexual violence and encouraging victims to report or discuss the issue as promptly as possible.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	

**II.1.2. Promote or conduct awareness campaigns or programmes among specific target groups and especially young people to increase awareness and understanding of the different manifestations of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, their consequences for children and the need to prevent such violence**

## **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>39.Develop awareness and prevention projects concerning violence in</b>	<b>French Community, Walloon Region,</b>	

relationships between young people.	COCOF	
40.Raise awareness among ethnic and cultural minorities about gender-based violence, possible approaches and the array of aid agencies.	Flanders, Brussels-Capital Region	
41.Develop specific awareness campaigns for vulnerable groups such as newly arrived, elderly and disabled people.	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region	

#### SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
42.Elaborate specific actions that raise awareness with students, a group that is particularly vulnerable to rape.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	

#### HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
43.Make specific information about honour-based violence and forced marriages (including child brides) widely available, elaborate awareness campaigns and distribute them among relevant target groups. Involve the immigrant	IEWM, Flanders (VVSG), French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	FEDASIL

communities during the elaboration of these campaigns.		
44.Launch preventative actions, also addressed to parents, on the subject of the battle against honour-based violence and forced marriage.	French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region	
45.Drive targeted preventative actions, thereby raising awareness among local religious organisations about forced marriages and other forms of gender-based violence.	Brussels-Capital Region	
46.Raise awareness on the occasion of the international day against FGM on 6 February.	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region	
47.Collect good practices, for instance through the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG in Dutch), and make these publicly available.	IEWM, Flanders (VVSG)	

**II.1.3. Ensure the wide dissemination of information on measures available to prevent acts of violence covered by the scope of the NAP (article 13, §2)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
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48. Provide victims of violence with permanent and up-to-date information through the website <a href="http://www.1712.be">www.1712.be</a> .	Flanders	
49. Provide a comprehensive overview of all awareness tools in Belgium concerning gender-based violence and make these materials publicly available through the websites <a href="http://www.partnergeweld.be">www.partnergeweld.be</a> and <a href="http://www.verkrachting.be">www.verkrachting.be</a> .	IEWM, Equal Opportunities (federal)	

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
50. Provide victims of violence with permanent and up-to-date information about intimate partner violence through the national website ( <a href="http://www.partnergeweld.be">www.partnergeweld.be</a> ).	IEWM	
51. Launch information campaigns to inform the general public and professionals about the helpline 'Ecoute Violence Conjugale'.  Provide victims of violence with permanent and up-to-date information about intimate partner violence via the website <a href="http://www.ecouteviolencesconjugales.be">www.ecouteviolencesconjugales.be</a> .	French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF	

Specifically with regard to the repertory of the most important services and institutions involved in providing assistance to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence in the Walloon Region and Brussels.		
52.Distribute the leaflet 'Immigrant and victim of intimate partner violence. What are my rights?'	IEWM	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Asylum and Migration (federal), Flanders, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
53.Provide victims of violence with permanent and up-to-date information via the national website about sexual violence ( <a href="http://www.verkrachting.be">www.verkrachting.be</a> ).	Equal Opportunities (federal), FPS Home Affairs (Police), IEWM	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
54.Targeted distribution of leaflets to raise awareness and prevent people from becoming the victim of FGM, as elaborated	IEWM	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Asylum and Migration (federal), Flanders, French Community,

in the prevention kit against female genital mutilation.		COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community
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## **II.2. EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS ABOUT EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN (article 14)**

Promoting equality between women and men and the fight against violence in relationships should be discussed from an early age and be made a recurring theme of education. This way children and youngsters will be able to fully participate in a society with more gender equality and they will become more aware of the fact that violent behaviour is impermissible.

Our education system plays a key role in preventing violent behaviour, for instance in strengthening students' resilience. Encouraging these principles from the very beginning, a first and important barrier of prevention against gender-based violence is put in place across the entire education system.

For this reason, the focus will be on sexual, relational and reproductive education and primary prevention within the context of healthy sexual behaviour among young people. Education must also develop measures that avoid sexist stereotypes and promote a culture of gender equality, respect for human rights and nonviolence. Moreover, these principles should be promoted in informal educational structures as well as in sport, culture and leisure and the media.

### **II.2.1. Include teaching material on equality between women and men in formal curricula and at all levels of education (article 14, §1)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>55.Promote a more general implementation of EVRAS (relational, affective and sexual education) in primary education, in particular with the help of extracurricular actors.</b>	<b>French Community</b>	
<b>56.Elaborate the protocol dating from 20 June 2013 by structurally contuing</b>	<b>French Community, Walloon Region,</b>	

workshops about relationships, emotions and sexuality, in cooperation with centres for family planning and local centres promoting health.	COCOF	
57.Embed young people's attention to violence in relationships in the general matter of preventive sexual education.	Flanders	

#### **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
58.Commit to protect the sexual integrity of minors during education. Accordingly, provide tailored training for partners who have entered into the declaration of commitment.	Flanders	
59. Strive to unify the protection of the integrity of minors and various forms of violence, to come to a cross-domain policy for protecting the integrity of minors, with particular focus on combating sexual misconduct and sexual abuse.  Elaborate the Flemish declaration of commitment on protecting the sexual integrity of minors during education by further developing a Sexuality and Policy	Flanders	



framework and by means of the Sensoa flag system for teachers and school counsellors. This is done by monitoring the requirements and needs of the educational sector by a specially created steering committee. A Flag System will be used, complemented with drawings about the use of social media and drawings from the physical exercise classes. The training sessions will be monitored and adjusted as well, in cooperation with Sensoa, taking into account the questions that surfaced during the training sessions.		
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**II.2.2. Promote equality between women and men in informal educational facilities, as well as in sports, cultural and leisure facilities, religion and the media (article 14, §1)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
60.Focus on prevention of gender-based violence among actors in sports clubs and youth associations, for instance by elaborating educational modules for entertainers of groups of young people on the theme of 'violence and its many faces'.	Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community	

#### **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
61.Create a pool of community entertainers (key figures from the community with adequate training in the matter) in order to be able to organise preventive actions concerning the battle against FGM, honour-based violence and forced marriages among the communities represented in Belgium.	French Community	
62.Develop and distribute awareness tools and/or training promoting fundamental women's rights and warning against violence against women, including harmful practices. Make these tools and trainings available to civil society, actors on the ground, religious leaders and officially recognised preachers and dignitaries.	Brussels-Capital Region	

### II.3. ENSURE TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS (article 15)

Merely raising awareness is not enough to prevent violence. Organising training on this matter is crucial in the policy to inform the specific groups that are confronted with victims and perpetrators of acts of violence in a clear and precise way.

For instance, some people who intervene in these matters may be misinformed or confused about conflicts or violence between partners. Furthermore, people do not always know how to take care of victims of gender-based violence, or counsel them properly, especially in cases of sexual violence that require specialist skills to deal with the immediate consequences of violence, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Support for the victim and perpetrator benefits from improved knowledge and awareness, more expertise in detecting violence, and more efficient care. Moreover, collecting medical, psychological or legal evidence often plays a key role in the arrest and sentencing of the offenders.

The training should also devote special attention to the development of intercultural skills, especially in relation to gender-based violence against immigrants, honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Certain crimes are so specific that victims require the help and counsel of properly trained experts.

Again, it is important to emphasise the multidisciplinary and intersectoral character of the approach. A successful intervention calls for the cooperation of different professionals across different domains. This training will be tailored to the multidisciplinary approach to gender-based violence to ensure effective referral and coordination.

As far as sexual violence is concerned, more efforts will be made to improve the education of the police and justice sector (the first interrogation of adult victims of a sexual offence, use of the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence kit, etcetera). More advanced training will be provided to all professionals in the health care sector, such as general practitioners, gynaecologists, urologists, nurses, etcetera. This is a direct response to the appeal of the World Health Organisation, which has championed the unremitting education of all health-care providers in the field of sexual violence.

In short, Belgium commits itself to the introduction, development and strengthening of training for professionals who may come into contact with victims or perpetrators of gender-based violence.

### **II.3.1. Provide more intense training on co-ordinated multi-agency cooperation (article 15, §2)**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>63. Make a public inventory of the various trainings (and their instructors) provided in Belgium on the topic of gender-based violence.</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	<b>FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>

#### **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
64.Distributing and using the “blended learning module ‘cooperating in a chain’” methodology, developed by the province of Limburg on the occasion of the European project ‘form a chain to protect the children’ (2014).	Flanders, FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

#### HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
65.Translate the European e-learning module concering FGM and tailor it to the Belgian context.	IEWM	

#### II.3.2. Provide or strengthen the general aspect of ‘gender-based violence’ in the intial training of professionals (article 15, §1)

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
66.Strive for public support to include the knowledge of different forms of gender-based violence <sup>18</sup> in the initial training of the following categories of professionals:  - Health care (doctors, dentists,	Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community	

<sup>18</sup> Intimate partner violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based violence.

<p>midwives, nurses, ...);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Judicial and police sector (law, criminology, public safety, ...);</li> <li>- Psycho-social sector (social workers, social science, psychology, disability care, ...);</li> <li>- Education (preschool teachers, school teachers and professors).</li> </ul>		
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### II.3.3. Integrate specific aspects of gender-based violence in basic training (article 15, §1)

#### General

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
<p>67.Strive for public support to include the knowledge of different forms of gender-based violence<sup>19</sup> in the basic education of the following categories of specialised professions by organising extra training days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forensic pathologists</li> <li>- Mediators</li> <li>- Magistrates</li> </ul>	<p>FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Flanders, French Community, COCOF, German-speaking Community</p>	<p>Brussels-Capital Region</p>

<sup>19</sup> Intimate partner violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based violence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Local Police</b></li> <li>- <b>Paramedics</b></li> <li>- <b>Social nurses</b></li> <li>- <b>Relief workers</b></li> <li>- <b>Public centre for social welfare employees</b></li> <li>- <b>Psychiatrists</b></li> <li>- <b>Lawyers (including legal aid counsel) and notaries</b></li> <li>- <b>Veterinaries</b></li> <li>- <b>Urologists</b></li> <li>- <b>Midwives</b></li> <li>- <b>Gynaecologists (antenatal consultation)</b></li> <li>- <b>General practitioners</b></li> <li>- <b>Intercultural mediators (e.g. in hospitals)</b></li> <li>- <b>Disability care</b></li> <li>- <b>Postnatal consultations (ONE (Office of Birth and Childhood),</b></li> </ul>		
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Kind en Gezin and Kaleido) - CLB (school counseling)		
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#### Specific points of interest for the police

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
68.Focus on sexual offenses in police inspectors' basic training. Encourage all police academies to provide a thorough foundation, dealing with sexual offenses.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	
69.Encourage the inclusion of care for victims of sexual violence in the training of desk clerks with the police.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	
70.Keep FGM included as part of the issue of child abuse in police academies' basic training and expand it if necessary.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

#### Specific point of interest for medical and psycho-social assistance

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
71.Strive for public support to include the different forms of gender-based violence (sexual violence in particular) in the training of various categories of health	Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community	

and care professionals.		
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#### II.3.4. Provide or strengthen advanced training for professionals (article 15, §1)

##### General principles

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
<p><b>72.Strive to organise specific advanced and separate training concerning forced marriage, honour-based violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and FGM in the following professional categories:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The various reference public servants within the police</li> <li>- The various reference magistrates (see above)</li> <li>- Victim care officers with the police</li> <li>- General practitioners</li> <li>- Desk clerk and crisis intervention (0800.30.030/emergency services/107)</li> <li>- Hospitals / Sexual assault centres</li> <li>- Forensic pathologists</li> </ul>	<p><b>FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Asylum and Migration (federal), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b></p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Police interrogators sexual violence</b></li> <li>- <b>Staff of asylum and migration services, aliens office, Office of the commissioner general for refugees and stateless persons</b></li> <li>- <b>Psychologists and trauma psychologists</b></li> <li>- <b>Municipal officials (registry office dealing with forced marriage)</b></li> <li>- <b>Specialised service providers in public centres for social welfare</b></li> <li>- <b>Reference persons FGM and honour-based violence at school counsel CLB, Kind en Gezin, One and Kaleido.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>For all these advanced training programmes methodical frameworks will be developed for each form of violence and each target group separately.</b></p> <p><b>These trainings will be organised in an interdisciplinary, interinstitutional and multicultural fashion, taking into account the existing tools (for risk assessment) and reporting codes (see below).</b></p>		
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#### Specific measures for the police

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
73.Encourage the integration of specific advanced training on 'sexual offences' in all police academies.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

#### Specific measures for the department of justice

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
74.Provide a two-day compulsory training about intimate partner violence for second year judicial trainees.	FPS Justice	

#### Specific measures for the health care sector

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
75.Continue the training 'train the trainers' in hospitals on the topic of intimate partner violence and sexual violence.	FPS Public Health	
76.Investigate the need for a specific training to become a forensic expert who is able to recognise injuries of sexual violence and intimate partner violence. These forensic experts would be able to diagnose victim's injuries in lieu of police	IEWM	FPS Public Health

physicians (analogous to injury examination at the Forensic medical child abuse center in the Netherlands).		
77.Organise trainings for general practitioners, based on recommendations concerning the detection of intimate partner violence, within the available budget.	Flanders, Walloon Region	

#### Specific measures in the psycho-social sector and in education

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
78.Sharing know-how and networking to provide quality support of 1712 and 106 employees and to enable them to refer victims efficiently.	Flanders	
79.Implement the proposals about necessary education facilities for professionals, so that they can detect intimate partner violence and deal with it properly.	French Community, Walloon Region	
80.Add the module 'professional contact with dysfunctional families' to the design of the education for family care and elderly care.	German-speaking Community	

### Specific measures in the sector of asylum and migration

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
81. Provide professionals in the support network of FEDASIL with training about the issues of FGM and sexual violence, with particular attention to prevalence and consequence, risk assessment and risk management.	FEDASIL	

### II.3 b PROVIDE PROFESSIONALS WITH SPECIFIC TOOLS WHICH ENABLE THEM TO RECOGNISE FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND TO REACT APPROPRIATELY

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
82. Include a component about intimate partner violence and one about children who have witnessed violence. These components should fit within the CAW's global methodological framework for dealing with violence and abuse.	Flanders	
83. Create or extend a system of psychological assistance for professionals from the police and justice sector who are confronted with cases of domestic violence. The aim is to limit	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

psychological and emotional strain.		
84. Provide professionals concerned (see below, IV.2) with risk assessment tools and reporting codes about intimate partner violence. Focus will be on professionals in the health care sector.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	IEWM
85. Raise awareness with animal welfare inspectors about the connection between domestic violence and animal abuse. Provide tools to enable them to detect and signal domestic violence.	Brussels-Capital Region	

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
86. Make recommendations to doctors about dealing with sexual violence, analogous to the recommendations concerning intimate partner violence.	Flanders, Walloon Region	FPS Public Health
87. Start a project about a system of specific assistance for professionals (in this case audiovisual interrogators of TAM (audiovisual interrogation of minors)), proactively, preventively and curatively.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE / RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
88. Follow-up of the Mechelen project, concerning the creation of a local centre of expertise on honour-based violence, with a view to a potential nation-wide deployment. Integrate the issue of loverboys in this project.	IEWM	
89. Distribute the necessary information about possible primary assistance concerning the issue of forced marriage. Do this for all educational actors, intermediators and mobile teams.	IEWM	Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community
90. Encourage the development of additional know-how about forced marriages for the cells that, in some cities, deal with marriages of convenience.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	IEWM
91. Make information tools about female genital mutilation available.	German-speaking Community	
92. Provide professionals concerned (see IV.2) with risk assessment tools and reporting codes about honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.	IEWM	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Asylum and Migration (federal), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community
93. Raise awareness about this issue, in particular in police zones in the major	FPS Home Affairs (local police VCLP)	

cities.		
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#### **II.4. INTRODUCE PREVENTIVE PROGRAMMES FOR INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT OF PERPETRATORS (article 16)**

The measures taken against perpetrators of honour-based violence must be efficient and, if necessary, treatment options must be put forward to avoid that this violence reoccurs.

The existing prevention programmes for intervention and treatment of perpetrators of intimate partner violence will therefore be coordinated, streamlined and strengthened within the available budget to provide appropriate treatment, voluntarily, by court order and in the penitentiaries.

The treatment programmes to prevent perpetrators of punishable acts from relapsing, in particular with respect to crimes of a sexual nature, will also be geared to one another, based on the evaluation of cooperation treaties concerning the counsel and treatment of sexual offenders.

In all these prevention and treatment programmes for offenders, the safety, support, and rights of the victims remain an absolute priority, as well as the sharing of relevant information. Such programmes will be developed in cooperation with services that specialise in victim care.

##### **II.4.1. Set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships (article 16, §1)**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>94. Make an inventory of the available programmes (judicial (including prisons) and non-judicial) and crisis centres for offenders (with a focus on the law regarding the short term barring order in cases of domestic violence).</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	
<b>95. Carry out an investigation into the application and the best practices of the law regarding a short term barring order in cases of domestic violence and into the</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	

real requirements and efficiency of offender therapy.		
96.Evaluate the supply of offender programmes and gear them to one another, within the available budget.	Flanders, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (ADVP)
97.Coordinate the services for justiciables, focusing on social assistance and offender counsel.	French Community	

**II.4.2. Set up or support treatment programmes aimed at preventing perpetrators, in particular sex offenders, from re-offending (article 16, §2)**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
98. Check how the available aid initiatives for sexual offenders can be streamlined, based on the recommendations of the evaluative report of the cooperation treaties regarding the counsel and treatment of sexual offenders.	Flander, FPS Public Health	FPS Justice
99.Improve the accessibility of aid and treatment programmes for mentally disabled sexual offenders.	Walloon Region	
100.Strengthen the existing aid and treatment programmes for sexual offenders.	Walloon Region	



## **II.5. ENSURE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND THE MEDIA (article 17)**

The private sector, the public sector, the ICT sector and the media must be involved in the battle against gender-based violence, in particular by elaborating guidelines and self-regulating standards.

The battle against intimate partner violence often begins at the place of work. Whether you look at it from an ethical, a logical or an economic point of view, such a hands-on approach will benefit everyone.

The policy combating gender-based violence will investigate which part the private sector can play, mainly by means of financial support to various initiatives, by the elaboration of partnerships with social organisations, by raising awareness among members of staff, and so on.

The public sector also contributes to the prevention of violence, for instance through projects aimed at improving people's safety in public places and on public transport. There will also be an investigation into strategic and operational goals and concrete actions concerning the prevention of sexual intimidation / unwanted sexual behaviour and sexual misconduct in public transport and into the possibility of including those goals and actions into future management contracts with the NMBS and other public transport services.

Equality between women and men, the battle against discrimination and the battle against violence will also receive special attention in the public media, advocated through specific programmes and audiovisual content in line with the network's general objectives and policy statements, and also in a transversal way as part of a more comprehensive media policy.

### **II.5.1. Collaborate with the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media and set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to prevent gender-based violence and to enhance respect for women's dignity (article 17, §1)**

#### **Media**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>101.Include awareness about gender-based violence with the general public in future management contracts with RTBF/VRT.</b>	<b>Flanders, French Community</b>	

102.Include the battle against sexism in the media in the recommendations concerning advanced media training (mission of the high council for media training).	Flanders, French Community	
103.Draw up codes of conduct concerning gender-based violence for professionals in the media, in cooperation with the Raad voor Journalistiek (council for journalism) and the Conseil de déontologie journalistique (council for ethical journalism).	IEWM, Flanders, French Community	

#### Companies

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
<p>104.Encourage employers to provide first assistance and proper referral within their enterprise and within the existing structures for employees who have been confronted with intimate partner violence.</p> <p>Involve, make aware and train existing partners within companies, such als health and safety officers, confidential counsellors, company doctors, or union representatives.</p>	FPS Employment	

105.Include awareness programmes about gender-based violence and sexual misconduct in future management contracts with NMBS, subway, tram and bus companies.	Equal Opportunities (Federal), Flanders, Brussels-Capital Region	
106.Cooperate with travel agencies and the tourism industry and organise campaigns to make tourists aware of the issue of sex tourism (in cooperation with EPCAT <sup>20</sup> and the Tourism Industry Federation) and expand the existing website <a href="http://www.ikzegstop.be">www.ikzegstop.be</a> .	FPS Foreign Affairs	
107.Draw up a list of good examples of awareness campaigns by companies on the issue of gender-based violence.	IEWM	Equal Opportunities (Federal)

<sup>20</sup> End child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE III: PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS

### III.1. INFORM VICTIMS (article 19)

Proper<sup>21</sup> information must be made available to victims of gender-based violence, in a language they can understand. This information focuses on the legal measures, the aid services and the crisis centres for victims. Among other things, it is important to organise specific information campaigns which will encourage victims to file a report or a complaint and which will inform them about their rights.

Only by distributing information about the seriousness of the issue as widely and as continuously as possible will victims acknowledge their plight and be moved to take action. By informing victims they can broach the subject and they can be persuaded to report these acts of violence when they occur.

New information tools will be developed, preferably in multiple languages when they are intended for immigrants. At the same time, several information measures that have already been implemented on a federal, a community and a regional level (leaflets, brochures, websites, etcetera) will be reinforced.

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
108.Improve and expand existing websites about (gender-based) violence (see above).	Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region	
109.Elaborate measures which will make multilingual information tools available to	IEWM, Flanders, German-speaking Community	COCOF

<sup>21</sup> See Directive 2012/29/EU (item 21): "Information and advice provided by competent authorities, victim support services and restorative justice services should, as far as possible, be given by means of a range of media and in a manner which can be understood by the victim. Such information and advice should be provided in simple and accessible language. It should also be ensured that the victim can be understood during proceedings. In this respect, the victim's knowledge of the language used to provide information, age, maturity, intellectual and emotional capacity, literacy and any mental or physical impairment should be taken into account. Particular account should be taken of difficulties in understanding or communicating which may be due to a disability of some kind, such as hearing or speech impediments. Equally, limitations on a victim's ability to communicate information should be taken into account during criminal proceedings."

immigrant women and men.		
110.Incorporate training about the gender dimension, sexual and reproductive rights, existing assistance and existing criminal laws (intimate partner violence, honour-based violence and FGM) and awareness programmes into the trajectory of recent arrivals, including practical information to better arm women against gender-based violence.	Walloon Region, COCOF	
111.Inform recent arrivals about gender-based rights and the subject of sexual identity.	Flanders	
112.Make all government ICT relating to gender-based violence accessible to disabled people (for instance by meeting the accessibility criteria of the 'AnySurfer' label for disabled people).	Equal Opportunities (federal), Disabled People (federal), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
113.Inform reunited partners about the existing (assistance) structures and programmes concerning integration and aid in case of violence (e.g. Ciré leaflet,	IEWM	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region

see above)		
114. Employees who are confronted with intimate partner violence in their private lives are informed at work about the existing company structures that offer guidance and help.	FPS Employment	

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
115. Encourage victims of sexual violence to go the police and report the facts as quickly as possible.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
116. Distribute the 'prevention kit' FGM in schools, hospitals, ONE (Office of Birth and Childhood), Kind en Gezin, Kaleido, PSE and CLB centres, SAJ, SPJ, etcetera.	FPS Public Health, Flanders, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	
117. The travel advice section on the website of FPS Foreign Affairs concerning countries where FGM exists should point out that FGM is prohibited by law and that	FPS Foreign Affairs	

it is punishable in Belgium, even if it is committed abroad.		
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### III.2. PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES (article 20)

Accessible services should be available to victims of gender-based violence to facilitate their recovery. These services can take up the following tasks: judicial and psychological advice, financial help, housing, basic and advanced education and assistance when looking for a job. These services will devote more attention to methodology and a proactive outreach, adopting a hands-on approach when making contact with potential target groups.

Health and social services will also be available. They have the wherewithal and expertise to assist victims and refer them to the appropriate services.

This chapter will focus on outpatient services that are not typically geared to victims of gender-based violence but that can nonetheless take care of them and refer them.

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
118.Exchange information about existing projects, evaluate and start pilot projects relating to Family Justice Centers, where victims of gender-based violence have access to a range of essential police, justice and care services.	Flanders, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police)
119.Create a clear judicial framework for the approach to risk assessment, case deliberation and case coordination.	Flanders	





## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
122.Organise a 'cell or reference person intimate partner violence' within the various public Centres for General Welfare Work.	Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region	
123.Conduct an external evaluation of the existing services in consultation with Steunpunt Partnergeweld (centre intimate partner violence) to improve the regional policy for violence prevention.	Walloon Region	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
124.Evaluate and, if necessary, expand the good practices concerning FGM that were developed in the maternity clinic of Ixelles and CHU Sint Pieters in Brussels. Thanks to a FGM protocol approved by the entire care team, re-infibulation and excision of the child can be prevented.	FPS Public Health	
125.Develop a prevention programme based on the tasks of ONE (Office of Birth and Childhood), Kind en Gezin and	Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community	

<p><b>Kaleido. It will include the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Appoint attention officials within ONE (Office of Birth and Childhood), Kind en Gezin, Kaleido and CLB centres to monitor and counsel risk families</b></li> <li>- <b>Initiate a dialogue with parents from a country or an ethnical background where excision is common practice</b></li> <li>- <b>Include findings in the medical file and transfer information to all professionals involved</b></li> </ul>		
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### **III.3. PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES (article 22) AND APPROPRIATE SHELTERS IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS (article 23)**

It is important that services for immediate care are geographically distributed and available in the short and in the long term for all victims of any form of gender-based violence<sup>22</sup>.

At the moment, specialist shelter exists mainly for victims of intimate partner violence. However, victims of other forms of gender-based violence such as forced marriage or honour-based violence do not have access to specific support. While the existing shelters and support services for victims of intimate partner violence can also accommodate victims of other forms of gender-based violence, several scientific studies have demonstrated that specific types of violence demand specific support and specialist intervention.

<sup>22</sup> See Directive 2012/29/EU (item 38): "The types of support that such specialist support services should offer could include providing shelter and safe accommodation, immediate medical support, referral to medical and forensic examination for evidence in cases of rape or sexual assault, short and long-term psychological counselling, trauma care, legal advice, advocacy and specific services for children as direct or indirect victims."

Accessibility of care and support services for foreigners will also be improved. These people are often not familiar with the existing structures, or do not know them well enough, and they often come up against (mainly linguistic) obstacles. This is why outpatient services with an important intercultural knowhow will be involved and why a specific awareness and information campaign should focus on this target group.

Sufficient and easily accessible shelters should also be provided for victims of gender-based violence, in particular for women and their children, to provide them with safe accommodation and to help them in a proactive way. According to the minimum standards for support services as stipulated by the Council of Europe, there should be accommodation for 1 family per 10,000 inhabitants (a place where a woman and her children can find refuge and shelter).

The number of shelters must therefore be adapted to the existing needs. Research will show if specific and specialist shelters are necessary for victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence.

Finally, a study should establish if there is a need for shelters for male victims of gender-based violence, in particular intimate partner violence.

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>126. Make the existing support services more accessible to immigrants and other vulnerable groups that are victims of gender-based violence, perpetuate and strengthen those services.</b>	<b>Flanders, COCOF</b>	

#### **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>127. Draw up a decree for the continuation of the outpatient services specialised in</b>	<b>Walloon Region</b>	

caring for victims of violence.		
128.Check if financing of the existing shelters for adults in difficulties, especially victims of violence, can be expanded and used for other accomodation and shelters.	Walloon Region, COCOF	
129.The CAWs will expand their (residential) assets for care and counseling of victims of violence, taking into account the available resources, and based on welfare needs and necessities within their scope of action.	Flanders	
130.Conduct an investigation into the need for shelters for male victims of intimate partner violence.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	

#### **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
131.Develop specialist support and care methods for young people and young adults that are victims of specific forms of violence (honour-based violence, forced marriages and victims of loverboys).	Walloon Region, COCOF	
132.In that context the Flemish Agency for Youth Welfare (Agentschap	Flanders	

<b>Jongerenwelzijn) uses its project funding to educate relief workers and to share good practices related to diversity and interculturality. We also invest in the exchange of know-how, for instance by sharing the knowledge of the categorial services recognised for the care and counsel of unaccompanied foreign minors with other services.</b>		
<b>133.Start new initiatives in the context of foster families and create a cross-border relief network.</b>	<b>Flanders</b>	
<b>134.Evaluate projects for support of victims of honour-based violence.</b>	<b>Flanders</b>	

## **PROSTITUTION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>135.Finance the nonprofit organisations Sürya, Payoke and Pag-Asa to support, counsel and accommodate victims of human trafficking, including sexual exploitation.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal), FPS Justice, Asylum and Migration (federal), Walloon Region, COCOF, COCOM</b>	
<b>136.Jongerenwelzijn (Youth Welfare) has used its project funding to have Child Focus investigate the sexual exploitation of underage girls (the phenomenon known</b>	<b>Flanders</b>	

as loverboys). This research should shed light on the following: the prevalence of the issue, which care is available in this context and how justice and police can cooperate better with care services to create a trajectory that offers a strong alternative to closed care within the private services of Jongerenwelzijn. This will be based on the concept of 'Proeftuinen', which offer structure and security to a phased but intensive trajectory where accommodation, counsel and support modules can be tailored to the needs.		
137.Discuss the results of the Child Focus research with welfare organisations and investigate how youth welfare services may help to arm young people against sexual exploitation.	Flanders	
138.Implement the Walloon decree of 27 March 2014 to create care and support services for prostituted people, by accepting a decision of the Walloon government.	Walloon Region	
139.Provide support for victims of loverboys:  - Expand the community institutions so that there is extra capacity for victims of	Flanders	

<b>loverboys</b>  - Invest in specific and intensive trajectories to redirect the victims after their stay in community institutions  - In the private services of youth welfare, create clear modules that offer security to young people who run the risk of withdrawing from any assistance  - Invest further in the cooperation between the services of Jongerenwelzijn (Youth Welfare), the Flemish Agency for disabled people, and child and adolescent psychiatry to meet the complex needs of young people		
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#### **III.4. PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH ROUND-THE-CLOCK (24/7) TELEPHONE HELPLINES (article 24)**

At the moment, Belgium does not have a round-the-clock, national phone number dedicated to victims of gender-based violence. On a regional level, there are helplines (106, 107, 108), but these are primarily intended for people seeking a more general social or personal support.

There is a specific phone number for intimate partner violence in the French Community (0800/30.030) and an emergency number for any form of violence (intimate partner violence, child abuse, violence against the elderly) in Flanders (1712). Recently, the French Community started a new helpline for forced marriages (0800/90.901).

However, none of these numbers is available 24/7. It is our aim to make these numbers more accessible, providing an open and confidential helpline that people can call about all forms of gender-based violence, at any time of the day.

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
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<b>140.Expand the existing primary telephone assistance and/or make it more accessible, so that they are available 24/24 and 7/7.</b>	<b>Flanders, Walloon Region, COCOF</b>	
<b>141.Expand the familiarity, the approachability and the accessibility of 1712 and 0800/30.030, for instance by means of awareness campaigns, by making the website more suitable for children and by creating more ways for disabled people to reach 1712 and 0800/30.030.</b>	<b>Flanders, Walloon Region, COCOF</b>	
<b>142.Expand the existing primary telephone assistance with a chat service.</b>	<b>Flanders, Walloon Region, COCOF</b>	

### **III.5. SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE (article 25)**

The Istanbul Convention asks for the creation of new specialist urgent assistance centres because they make it possible to:

- provide lasting support such as advice and therapy, individual conversations, conversation groups and referral to other services;
- support victims during legal procedures by offering legal counsel and practical help.

The convention emphasises the need for multidisciplinary centres that offer primary care for victims of sexual violence. These centres are specialised in offering acute primary care, forensic analysis, trauma care and aid to victims. The convention stipulates that there should be one victim centre for every 200,000 inhabitants and that the centres are distributed geographically to include both rural and urban areas. For this reason, we have commissioned a feasibility study that will look into the establishment of 'sexual assault referral centres' (SARCs) throughout Belgium.



Hospitals also have to provide round-the-clock care and permanence by staff members specialised in caring for victims of sexual violence. It is crucial that as many hospitals as possible have multidisciplinary teams on stand-by who can take proper care of victims of sexual violence and know how to work with the sexual aggression set. Based on the results of the aforementioned feasibility study, a SARC pilot project will be launched. We will also investigate the need for a specific interuniversity education programme relating to trauma after sexual violence. Finally, we will compile a list of psychologists specialised in traumas caused by sexual violence, and provide this information to victims of sexual violence.

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>143. Conduct a feasibility study about starting Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in Belgium.</b>  <b>Based on the results of the feasibility study, elaborate a SARC pilot project, involving staff specifically trained in the matter of sexual violence, who are available 24/7.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	<b>FPS Public Health, FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>
<b>144. In the context of the feasibility study of SARCs, investigate how a specific interuniversity education programme for trauma psychologists in the matter of sexual violence might be established.</b>  <b>Make a list of expert trauma psychologists and provide that list to victims of sexual violence through the various professional channels.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	<b>FPS Public Health, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>

<b>145.Validate and formalise the medical certificate ‘sexual violence’<sup>23</sup>, for instance through the efforts of the board of procurators general in the context of the revision of the circular concerning the sexual aggression set (COL 10/2005).</b>	<b>FPS Public Health, FPS Justice</b>	
<b>146.Improve the distribution of information by first-line caregivers (doctors, emergency services and telephonic crisis assistance) to victims of sexual violence about the need to file a report with the police within 72 hours. This improvement will take place by means of specific trainings and information dissemination.</b>	<b>IEWM, FPS Public Health, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>	
<b>147.Improve general practitioners’ care for victims of sexual violence, so that they can recognise the signals, make the violence a subject of discussion and refer victims appropriately.</b>	<b>FPS Public Health, Flanders, Walloon Region</b>	
<b>148.Support partners and family of victims of sexual violence in the context of assistance programmes.</b>	<b>FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Public Health, Flanders, COCOF</b>	
<b>149.Expand the number of cooperation protocols between the public prosecutor</b>	<b>FPS Public Health, FPS Justice</b>	<b>FPS Home Affairs (Police)</b>

<sup>23</sup> It is important to look at the necessity of medical certificates of sexual violence with general practitioners and gynaecologists. At this time, victims of sexual violence who have not (yet) filed a complaint, but who do go to the doctor or gynaecologist for a medical examination, do not have the possibility of obtaining a medical certificate. At the moment there is only a medical certificate of physical violence, but not specifically one of sexual violence. Victims of sexual violence would derive great benefit from the reintroduction of a specific medical certificate of sexual violence, which afterwards can be filed as evidence, and eventually health insurance can pass the costs on the offenders.

and hospitals regarding the use of the sexual aggression set (SAS) and formalise this in the circular concerning SAS (COL 10/2005).		
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### III.6. PROTECT AND SUPPORT CHILD WITNESSES TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (article 26)

When protecting and counseling victims, the rights and the needs of children who have witnessed any form of gender-based violence should always be taken into account. In particular, psycho-social care should be made available and adapted to the child's age, taking into account the interests and experiences of the child. This is a fundamental part of the multidisciplinary holistic approach endorsed in these pages.

According to the study on violence against women, conducted by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency, 73% of all women who have experienced violence by their current or former partner say that the children living with them were aware of this violence.

Several studies show that exposure to similar forms of violence can have a serious and long-lasting impact on the child's development. Frequently cited among the psychological traumata are deep-seated depression and fear, feelings of sadness and agitation, a greater dependency on adults, an inferior self-image, learning disabilities and, last but not least, a large number of health problems.

Children who have witnessed gender-based violence must receive adequate post-traumatic care, support and monitoring in the care centre where they reside. The quality of the counsel they receive immediately after the facts plays a crucial role in their further development.

In this regard, the emphasis will be on improved training for the caregivers who will take charge of these children and provide succour. Finally, there will also be efforts in education to discern and deal with children who have had similar experiences.

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
150.Continue the range of care available to child witnesses of violence and organise training to support youth welfare workers in dealing with stressful situations.	French Community, German-speaking Community, Flanders	

151.Raise awareness with social societies, schools and professionals who come into contact with children so that they can recognise the signals and can properly refer child witnesses of domestic violence. For an example, see the French Community's tool 'un enfant exposé aux violences conjugales est un enfant maltraité' from 2013.	French Community, German-speaking Community	
152.Support services and organisations within welfare, education, youth and sports in achieving a specific, proactive and reactive integrity policy.	Flanders	
153.Compulsory introduction to divorce mediation and elaboration of a parenting plan in case of a divorce and when there are children.  In the case of divorce mediation there will be a particular focus on the issue of child witnesses of domestic violence.	FPS Justice	
154.Develop an intervention protocol for teachers and staff of PSE / CLB and ONE / Kind en Gezin / Kaleido concerning child witnesses of intimate partner violence.	French Community, German-speaking Community, Flanders	
155.In the context of child witnesses of intimate partner violence, pedagogical assistance services will keep supporting	Flanders	

<p><b>schools in the elaboration of a policy concerning transgressive behaviour. They will use existing tools, such as Raamwerk Seksualiteit en Beleid (Framework Sexuality and Policy). Schools and centres for student counseling (CLB) will receive extra training. In the context of a policy concerning transgressive behaviour the schools and CLBs will work out how to deal with different forms of transgressive behaviour and mutually agree on the division of roles. The CLBs as hubs will make arrangements with external care providers and if necessary they will refer children.</b></p> <p><b>Distribute the roadmap and the protocol elaborated by Welfare, Justice and Police within 'Vlaams Forum voor Kindermishandeling' (Flemish Child Abuse Forum) allowing to deal with (suspicions of) child abuse as widely as possible.</b></p> <p><b>Also distribute the roadmap of Kind en Gezin about dealing with distressing situations (preventive care), including intimate partner violence, as widely as possible, to be on the alert for situations of intimate partner violence, to provide help in supporting victims and to refer or report situations.</b></p>		
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<b>156. Conduct scientific research, every five years, for both genders separately, into the prevalence and incidence of violence on children in the family.</b>	<b>Flanders</b>	
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### **III.7. IMPLEMENT THE REPORTING OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE BY PROFESSIONALS (articles 27 and 28)**

In view of society's responsibility vis-à-vis gender-based violence, everyone who witnesses an act of violence, has serious reasons to believe such an act has been committed or fears new acts of violence, must be encouraged to report this to the relevant organisations or authorities. Professionals' confidentiality rules should not be an obstacle in this context. The importance of early detection will be a priority of this NAP.

In Belgium, the act of 23 February 2012 amending Article 458bis of the Criminal Code has expanded the list of punishable offenses that gives holders of a duty of professional confidentiality the limited and conditional right to speak and report acts of domestic violence to the Public Prosecutor. This provision has come into effect 1 March 2013.

In the context of their training, new care professionals (in particular social workers, psychologists and doctors) are taught a restricted view of professional confidentiality and the right to speak. The training in this matter will therefore be adapted to the new legal possibilities.

However, the question of professional confidentiality and reporting acts of domestic violence raises numerous questions during an intervention, such as weighing the observance of professional discretion against the duty to assist a person in need.

Therefore, special guidelines will be elaborated regarding the approach to all forms of gender-based violence for professionals bound by professional confidentiality. The Dutch model implemented by the Law 'Wet Meldcode Huiselijk Geweld en Kindermishandeling' can serve as an inspiration here.

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>157. Start campaigns also directed at people who have witnessed violence, encouraging them to report the facts with professionals.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal), French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>	

158.Elaborate a specific working method regarding the approach to gender-based violence for professionals bound by professional confidentiality, analogous to the Dutch reporting code.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	
159.Validate the elaborated reporting code and distribute it with the concerned target groups.	FPS Public Health, FPS Justice, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community	FPS Home Affairs (Police)
160.Adapt trainings (in particular those for social workers, psychologists and doctors) to the new law concerning professional confidentiality to provide students with a more complete view of professional confidentiality and the right to speak. Start specific awareness campaigns relating to reporting codes and to the method 'approach to gender-based violence'.	FPS Public Health, FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community (advanced training)	

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE IV: INVESTIGATE, CONTINUE AND ADOPT PROTECTIVE MEASURES

### IV.1. GUARANTEE A PROMPT AND APPROPRIATE REACTION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT (article 50)

The circular from the Minister of Justice and the Board of Procurators General concerning the criminal justice policy of partner violence (COL 4/2006) has strengthened the existing services to combat partner violence. This has led to the elaboration of a uniform criminal justice policy in the context of partner violence.

The circular COL 4/2006 is a good tool to protect victims of partner violence and deal with the offenders. Its main aim is to prevent recidivism and it is not only repressive. Its implementation caused a positive change in attitude. Police now systematically registers all forms of domestic violence and magistrates of the office of the public prosecutor attach more importance to this form of violence.

In 2015 COL 4/2006 was improved and revised. The revised circular follows the same intervention logic as the original document, and it is based on the conviction that the sooner an offender comes up against a government reprimanding him, the sooner this type of violence can be limited and escalation can be prevented.

COL 4/2006 shows the need to react promptly and appropriately to all forms of gender-based violence and the need to provide victims with adequate and immediate protection. For this reason, the circular concerning the sexual aggression set (SAS) will be revised as well. Simultaneously, a specific circular concerning honour-based violence will be drafted.

In addition, combating gender-based violence (in particular intimate partner violence and sexual offenses) will remain a priority of the national security plan (and accordingly of all local security plans) and of the 'Kadernota Integrale Veiligheid' (framework memorandum integral security). These tools determine the overall police and justice framework relating to gender-based violence and they will be incorporated into the current plan and the principles of the Istanbul Convention.

**IV.1.1. Ensure that the responsible law enforcement agencies respond promptly and appropriately to all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP and that they are effectively dealt with by means of a multidisciplinary approach (collect essential evidence, raise the number of convictions, etcetera) (article 50, §1)**

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
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<p><b>161.Include sexual violence and domestic violence as crime phenomenons that should be combated with priority in the national security plan and local security plans.</b></p> <p><b>The battle against sexual violence and domestic violence will be included in the ‘Kadernota Integrale Veiligheid’ (framework memorandum integral security) and considered an action that will require constant attention and will be strengthened if necessary.</b></p>	<b>FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Justice</b>	
<p><b>162.Elaborate an integrated approach to the issue of loverboy girls with police, justice and welfare, both to protect the victims and to deal with the offenders.</b></p>	<b>Flanders</b>	

#### **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<p><b>163.Evaluate circular COL 18/2012 about the short term barring order and revise the laws on the matter to reach a better and more efficient application of the measure.</b></p> <p><b>Referral and cooperation with offender care and victim protection merit particular</b></p>	<b>FPS Justice (Board of procurators general)</b>	<b>Flanders, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>

attention.		
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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
164. When revising the circular concerning the sexual aggression set (COL 10/2005), include a specific point of interest, stating that magistrates must clearly explain to victims their motivation when they decide not to have samples of sexual violence analysed.	Justice (Board of procurators general and IGO)	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
165. Draw up the circular about the judicial policy relating to honour-based violence.	Justice (Board of procurators general)	

IV.1.2. Ensure that the responsible law enforcement agencies engage promptly and appropriately in the prevention and protection against all forms of violence covered by the scope of the NAP, including the employment of preventive operational measures, the collection of evidence (SAFE kit, DNA analysis) and judicial investigations and procedures, as well as analyse and evaluate the means of action deployed (article 50, §2)

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
166. Collect national and international good practices of judicial policy vis-à-vis perpetrators of gender-based violence and distribute the results among all magistrates.	FPS Justice	
167. Strengthen the role of the local police inspector in view of his ability to detect dangerous situations.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	
168. Encourage police in immigrant neighbourhoods to appoint a special liaison officer responsible for contacting and proactively cooperating with immigrant communities, so that people in these communities – especially illegal immigrant women – are more likely to report gender-based violence.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
169. When instead of pre-trial detention, the perpetrator of intimate partner violence is made to wear an ankle monitor, it is not recommended to let him live in the same home (domicile) as the victim. In cooperation with the so-called	FPS Justice (Board of procurators general), Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community	

<b>'justitiehuizen' (houses of justice) alternative options must be found.</b>		
<b>170.In the context of an ankle monitor as a way of serving a sentence, evaluate and if necessary revise circular COL 11/2013 to improve the sharing of information between the office of the public prosecutor and all other services involved, so that protection of the victim can be sufficiently guaranteed.</b>	<b>FPS Justice, Flanders, German-speaking Community</b>	<b>French Community</b>
<b>171.Formulate a recommendation for the joint appearance before the family judge following the law of 30 July 2013 (creation of the family court) in the context of possible domestic violence.</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	
<b>172.Elaborate a regulation for evaluating possible antecedents relating to intimate partner violence in cases of suicide (see UK legislation and DAPHNE project = Domestic Violence Review Act).</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	
<b>173.In the context of revising mediation in general by the courts, particular attention should be afforded to the phenomenon of possible previous intimate partner violence and/or future harassments in the case of a divorce.</b>	<b>FPS Justice</b>	

174.Encourage police stations to buy a system to read and monitor text messages.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	
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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
<p>175.Ensure continuity of ViCLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System) for instance by approving the relevant directive. The database of sexual and violent crimes provides a steady flow of information and can raise the efficiency of the battle against sexual violence.</p> <p>Encourage all police stations to use ViCLAS efficiently and to systematically enter all data in the database.</p> <p>Efforts will be made concerning (further) reforms, the creation of working procedures and the elaboration of research guidelines for the correct use of the questionnaire.</p>	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	
176.Give magistrates the possibility to ask for forensic advice to judge the necessity and the choice of forensic analysis. In this context there will also be an expansion of the number of authorised forensic	FPS Justice	

<b>analysts.</b>		
<b>177.In the context of the reform of criminal law:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- check if sexual criminal law still shows lacunas</li> <li>- categorise all sexual offenses under the denominator of ‘crimes against persons’</li> <li>- investigate when or if the relevant laws need additional aggravating circumstances</li> <li>- adapt the periods of limitation to reality</li> </ul>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal), FPS Justice</b>	
<b>178.Investigate the criminal settlement of sexual crimes in Belgian legal practice.</b>	<b>IEWM</b>	
<b>179.Conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the various causes of under-reporting of rapes with police and justice, of the reasons why public prosecutors dismiss cases<sup>24</sup> and of the current sentencing rate.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	<b>FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police)</b>

<sup>24</sup> There are various reasons for deciding to dismiss a case. See the list with COL 12/1998 relating to the law of 12 March 1998 (Belgian Official Gazette 2 April 1998) to improve criminal procedures in the stage of criminal and judicial investigation.

<b>180. Investigate the extension of grooming and cyberstalking to adults.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	<b>FPS Justice</b>
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#### **IV.2. PROVIDE RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT IN CASES OF VIOLENCE (article 51)**

Belgium does not currently have a risk assessment and risk management tool for cases of intimate partner violence, tailored to the various professionals. This is why Hoge School Thomas More Kempen has elaborated such a document in cooperation with the National Institute for Criminalistics and Criminology (NICC) and the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. This risk assessment and risk management tool for cases of intimate partner violence will be distributed among police, the justice department and relief workers.

There have been efforts to develop risk assessment tools and lists of signals relating to honour-based violence as well as forced marriages. They will improve the ability of professionals (who frequently come into contact with potential victims) to identify and track this sort of violence.

Finally there will be an investigation into the optimal monitoring of sexual offenders who are released conditionally.

#### **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>181. Create a 'risk assessment / reporting code' for the medical sector, care workers and all other professionals bound by professional confidentiality.</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities (federal)</b>	<b>FPS Justice, FPS Public Health, Flanders, French Community, Walloon Region, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region, German-speaking Community</b>
<b>182. Before equipping a perpetrator of domestic violence with an ankle monitor, always set up a social inquiry (analogous to the exception for sexual violence against minors) in cooperation with houses of justice (which use risk assessment).</b>	<b>FPS Justice, Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community</b>	

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
183. Investigate how sexual offenders can be optimally monitored when they are set free, for instance by implementing a tool for assessing the risk of recidivism.	Equal Opportunities (federal)	FPS Justice
184. The federal police will investigate the creation of a traveling sex offender profile and will use this profile in cooperation with customs / federal police at airports and with the police of the countries of origin.	FPS Home Affairs (federal police)	

## **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
185. Create a risk assessment tool for police and public prosecutor and guarantee its inclusion in the future circular about criminal policy concerning honour-based violence.	FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Justice	



186.Promote use of the specific 'assistance' risk assessment tool for honour-based violence, elaborated in the context of the partnership agreement between IEWM, Flanders and the province of Antwerp.	IEWM, Flanders	
187.Look at the possibility of examining genitalia in the context of high school medicine and the possibility of organising additional health examination for children who find themselves in a risk situation with regards to FGM (in the presence of the parents and if necessary an intercultural mediator).	French Community, German-speaking Community	
188.To better protect minors, include the phenomenon of specific forms of violence in the risk assessment tool used by the 'service de l'aide à la jeunesse' (SAJ) (address this in the ongoing reflection in the institution about the frame of reference for situations in which children and young people are in danger).  Elaborate an additional tool kit in this context and distribute it to all primary care workers. The tool kit should include all preventive tools as well as a decision tree relating to forced marriages and honour-based violence.	French Community	

<b>189. Draw up guidelines for risk assessment and communications to parents in cases where women who recently gave birth in a maternity clinic are diagnosed with FGM.</b>	<b>FPS Public Health</b>	
<b>190. Develop a tool intended for municipal officers, to detect and report cases of forced marriage, for instance by revising the circular of 6 September 2013 relating to marriages of convenience.</b>	<b>IEWM, FPS Home Affairs</b>	

#### **IV.3. APPLY EMERGENCY BARRING, RESTRAINING OR PROTECTING ORDERS (articles 52 and 53)**

In cases of immediate danger, the authorities must apply emergency barring orders, preventing the perpetrator of intimate partner violence from entering the victim's house. Belgium has a procedure for removal from the family home in cases where no violence has been committed yet, with the possibility to impose a quick cooling down period on the offender to temporarily neutralise the threat, independent of eventual criminal prosecution of the case.

In the near future, legislation will be evaluated to improve the scope of this measure. This evaluation will take into account the recommendations of the stakeholders.

Stalking, i.e. the repeated and unwanted intrusion and harassment causing alarm or fear, is another form of gender-based violence which needs to be combated. According to the survey of the FRA almost one in four women has experienced at least one type of stalking since the age of 15. It is crucial that we guarantee the safety of victims of stalking, in particular in cases of stalking by a former partner.

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>191. Evaluate circular COL 18/2012 about</b>	<b>FPS Justice (Board of procurators general)</b>	<b>FPS Home Affairs (Police)</b>

the short term barring order and if necessary revise the relevant legislation to obtain a better and more efficient implementation of the measure.		
192. When equipping an ankle monitor, whether the offender can serve his sentence at home or in a penitentiary, make it possible to issue a restraining order <sup>25</sup> that keeps the offender away from the victims.	FPS Justice	Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community

#### **IV.4. PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF VICTIMS (articles 56 and 57)**

It is crucial to provide protective measures and care options for the victim in any phase of the violence. The victim must never feel alone and must be efficiently counseled and protected.

Tools must therefore be made available to offer appropriate care and enable the continuation of police and justice procedures in the best possible circumstances: also to avoid the risk of intimidation, reprisals or new victimisation, inform victims during all stages of the judicial proceedings, guarantee proper assistance, provide victims with interpreters, etcetera.

As such, all necessary measures will be taken to improve the victim's position, in particular in the legal field.

##### **IV.4.1. Protect victims of all forms of violence covered by the NAP at all stages of investigations and judicial proceedings, as well as in other situations (article 56)**

###### **IV.4.1.1. Ensure assistance and care tailored to the victims**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<sup>25</sup> See article 20, §3, Law about pre-trial detention offering this possibility.

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
193.Optimise the free availability of interpreters to victims of gender-based violence when they come into contact with the police.	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	
194.Look at the possibility of creating a pool of intercultural mediators and interpreters who have had specific training concerning FGM, forced marriages and honour-based violence.	IEWM	FPS Justice, FPS Home Affairs (Police), Flanders, French Community, German-speaking Community

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
<p>195.Create guidelines for police services to make sure they provide victims with the correct information (see circular 4/2006 concerning domestic violence) and that they make the connection with the victim's residence status (see article 11 of the Law of 1980) when they are confronted with people without a valid residence permit.</p> <p>In this context, investigate the problem of professional confidentiality between judicial and administrative police services so that, in the case of people with a temporary residence permit (based on</p>	FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

family reunification) reporting intimate partner violence, judiciary police can always inform administrative police of the intimate partner violence. This way victim care officers can inform the victim about the possibility to maintain his/her residence permit, even in the case of a breakup.		
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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
196.Distribute the scenario 'sexual offenses' amongst all police zones, place it on the intranet and emphasise its importance.	Equal Opportunities (federal), FPS Home Affairs (Police)	

### IV.4.1.2. Guarantee that the rights and interests of the victims are protected during the hearings

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
197.Evaluate the circular 'audiovisual interrogation' and revise it where necessary.	FPS Justice (Board of procurators general)	
198.Investigate to what extent an expertise network and a permanence system for interrogating underage victims of sexual	FPS Home Affairs (Police), FPS Justice (Board of procurators general)	

<p>violence can be developed. These must consist of police officers who have taken the advanced training 'sexual offenses'.</p> <p>As a temporary and short-term solution, until the aforementioned expertise network and a permanence system is put in place, extra funding must be found to enable members of the TAM network (network audiovisual interrogation of minors) to take charge of the task of audiovisual interrogations of adult sex offenders.</p>		
<p>199. Make sure that during the interrogation the police provide the victim with information concerning the intervention of health insurance in cases of victimisation.</p>	<p>FPS Home Affairs (Police)</p>	

**IV.4.1.3. Make sure that the rights and interests of the victims are protected at all stages of investigations and judicial proceedings, as well as in other situations**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<p>200. Encourage the appointment of contacts within immigrant organisations to guarantee frequent interaction with the police and to help victims of violence find</p>	<p>FPS Home Affairs (Police), Equal Opportunities (federal)</p>	

protection, assistance and rehabilitation services.		
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#### **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
201.Pay particular attention to informing victims about the measures concerning the offender, for instance as regards early release.	FPS Justice, Flanders, German-speaking Community	French Community
202.Create cooperation protocols between police services and public centres for social welfare about cooperation when dealing with crisis situations that arise during the weekend.	FPS Home Affairs (Police and ADVP)	Flanders, Brussels-Capital Region (local level)

#### **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
203.Pay particular attention to the elaboration of voluntary mediation for victims of honour-based violence returning home. In this context the safety of the victim will be crucial. This mediation will be organised by specially trained experts and only after assessing the	FPS Justice, Flanders, French Community, Brussels-Capital Region	

<b>risks<sup>26</sup>.</b>		
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<sup>26</sup> Start mediation only in case of a green light



## **OVERALL OBJECTIVE V: INCORPORATE THE GENDER DIMENSION IN ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY**

In the context of gender-based asylum requests, the Istanbul Convention repeats the necessity of recognising gender-based violence against women as a form of persecution as defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and as a form of grievous harm that gives rise to complementary/subsidiary protection.

Moreover, the Convention requires gender-sensitive interpretation be given to each of the Convention grounds and stipulates that when fear for prosecution on the basis of one or more of these grounds has been established, applicants shall be granted refugee status according to the applicable and relevant instruments.

Finally, the Convention asks for the necessary legislative or other measures to develop gender-sensitive reception procedures and support services for asylum-seekers as well as gender guidelines and gender-sensitive asylum procedures, including refugee status determination and application for international protection.

In this context, Belgium will continue to play an active role in including the gender dimension in asylum and migration policy in three distinct areas: the assessment of asylum requests which depends on the Office of the Commissioner General for refugees and stateless persons (CGVS), the asylum procedure which depends on the CGVS and the Immigration Office and finally the reception of people requesting asylum which depends on FEDASIL or similar centres.

### **V.1. ENSURE A GENDER-SENSITIVE INTERPRETATION WHEN GRANTING REFUGEE STATUS (article 60, §2)**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>204. Revise article 24 of the Royal Decree of 11 July 2003 to include the contents of article 4.1 of the Qualification Guideline so that the burden of proof is shared in the context of an asylum procedure, and add the mention “in cooperation with the</b>	<b>Asylum and Migration (federal)</b>	

applicant” to article 27 of the Royal Decree <sup>27</sup> .		
205.Execute Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast of the minimum standards in Belgian Law).	Asylum and Migration (federal)	
206.Add a reference to victims of FGM as belonging to a vulnerable group with specific needs in the enumeration of article 36 of the Law of 12 January 2007 (Chapter II concerning vulnerable persons).	FEDASIL	

## V.2. INTRODUCE GENDER-SENSITIVE GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ASYLUM PROCEDURES (article 60, §3)

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
207.Guarantee quality social and medical assistance for vulnerable asylum seekers, as well as meticulous monitoring of the asylum procedure.	FEDASIL	
208.Draw up a circular explaining that female immigrants without an independent residence permit can use the legal	Asylum and Migration	FPS Home Affairs, FPS Justice

<sup>27</sup> Art 10,(1),d) of the directive 2001/95/EU provides cumulative conditions. And transposed in art.48/3,§3,d) of the law of 15/12/1980.

protection rules if they are seeking refuge from a violent relationship or a violent marriage. Distribute this circular to inform relief workers about legislation and procedures.		
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### **V.3. PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SHELTER FOR IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE BEING PERSECUTED OR RISK BEING PERSECUTED BECAUSE OF THEIR GENDER**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
209.Draw up directives for domestic violence and sexual violence (including sexual abuse by relief workers) to strengthen the deontological code.	FEDASIL	
210.Introduce the procedure for identifying vulnerable persons in the regulations or draw up clear directives on the level of dispatching to promote the tracing of vulnerable persons (including child brides). A practical and simplified mechanism to guarantee this assessment and the relevant monitoring will be in operation as long as the asylum crisis and the emergency reception continues.  Improve the tracking of vulnerable	FEDASIL	

persons in the reception structures.  Guarantee a proper monitoring of these people, even in the case of a reception crisis.		
211.Introduce a standard procedure for reporting of sexual or gender-based violence in the reception structures.	FEDASIL	
212.Provide information and awareness sessions concerning the practical mechanism for assessing risk situations (child brides in particular) and the relevant monitoring, and also concerning the introduction of a standard procedure for reporting of gender-based violence.	FEDASIL	

#### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
213.Introduce and finance counseling measures to prevent sexual violence during the reception of asylum seekers, in particular in the emergency shelters.	FEDASIL	

#### **HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION**

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
<p>214.Introduce specific mechanisms to detect FGM in the reception structures: inclusion of a reference to the acts of violence – including FGM – the victim has been subjected to in the form for the medical intake interview, socio-medical follow-up of the victim, information about FGM in the Belgian context and reference to specialised organisations.</p>	<p>FEDASIL</p>	

## **OVERALL OBJECTIVE VI: COMBAT VIOLENCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

The Istanbul Convention contains various regulations on an international level, including international cooperation in civilian and criminal matters, judicial assistance in criminal matters, the integration of the prevention of, and the battle against, gender-based violence in development programmes, and finally the exchange of information between states in cases when people are in danger.

In light of the Belgian development cooperation, equality of women and men is considered a transversal theme. More specifically, the battle against all forms of violence against women (the battle against forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful acts, as well as the battle against sexual violence as a weapon of war) is included as the main theme.

Belgium will keep promoting development programmes and measures preventing, reducing and penalising gender-based violence, with a particular focus on the physical integrity of refugee women and girls.

Belgium will also support initiatives by international, Belgian and local NGOs devoted to the protection of women and battle against sexual violence, for instance by means of an integrated treatment of medical and psycho-social care, by providing socio-economic reintegration of the victims and by offering sufficient protection and accommodation.

Belgium will also champion initiatives contributing to the elaboration and implementation in third countries of a national legislation punishing sexual violence and encouraging women and girls to file a complaint when they become the victim of sexual violence.

### **VI.1. PRIORITISE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN AND PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE BATTLE AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL**

#### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>215. Include specific indicators of the target 'violence against women' in the context of long-term development objectives after 2015. Also, in all other targets, request the inclusion of separate</b>	<b>FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation, Equal Opportunities (federal), IEWM</b>	

indicators for each gender, in the context of prevention of violence against women.		
216.Fund multilateral partner organisations playing a normative, coordinating, innovating and catalysing role in the field of equal opportunities and particularly in relation to the fight against violence against women and girls.	Development Cooperation	
217.Elaborate a new gender strategy within development cooperation.	Development Cooperation	
218.Collaborate on the implementation of the new EU Gender Action Plan in Development Cooperation.	Development Cooperation	
219.Call on states to ratify the CEDAW and the facultative protocol and to withdraw restrictions that are not compatible with the subject and the objective of the Convention. Call on states to report promptly to and follow the recommendations of the CEDAW committee.	FPS Foreign Affairs	
220.Financially support non-governmental organisations that fight violence against women and children and promote their fundamental rights.	Development Cooperation, Equal Opportunities (federal), Flanders, French Community, COCOF, Brussels-Capital Region	

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
<b>221.</b> In the context of all EU, NATO and UN peace missions, support the implementation of the action plan ‘Women, Peace and Security’, emphasising the physical integrity of refugee women and girls. In the same context, emphasise that sexual violence, committed by members of these (civilian or military) missions will be punished.	<b>FPS Foreign Affairs</b>	
<b>222.</b> Call on all countries to apply the broadest definition of sexual violence, as stated by the International Criminal Court <sup>28</sup> .	<b>FPS Foreign Affairs</b>	
<b>223.</b> On a political and operational level, prioritise the battle against all forms of violence, before, during and after armed conflicts, with particular attention to sexual violence.	<b>FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation, Equal Opportunities (federal), Ministry of Defence, FPS Home Affairs (Police), IEWM</b>	
<b>224.</b> Call on all countries to pay attention to sexual violence against men during conflicts.  When supporting projects relating to sexual violence in situations of conflict,	<b>FPS Foreign Affairs</b>  <b>Development Cooperation</b>	

<sup>28</sup> See attachment 3 ‘definitions of crimes of sexual violence in the rome statute of the icc – The Elements of Crimes’



also encourage taking into account the specific situation of male victims of sexual violence.		
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## **VI.2. SUPPORT EFFORTS BY PARTNER COUNTRIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIRD STATES AND INITIATIVES BY CIVIL SOCIETY TO COMBAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (artikel 62, §4)**

### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>
225.Raise awareness about gender equality and sexuality and provide tailored, specific and accessible services in various health programmes.	Development Cooperation	
226.Support and promote birth registration, in particular in African countries, because unregistered children cannot assert their rights.	FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation	
227.Support initiatives in third states that help develop and implement national legislation for punishing gender-based violence (sexual violence in particular) and that encourage women and girls to file a complaint in cases of gender-based violence (sexual violence in particular).	FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation	
228.Introduce strategies to increase the involvement of men, boys, village chiefs	Development Cooperation, Belgian Technical Cooperation	

and religious leaders in projects and programmes concerning gender.		
229. Contribute to development programmes and measures that prevent, reduce and penalise violence against women.	Development Cooperation	

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
230. When relevant, encourage third states to assume first responsibility proper to each state in the battle against sexual violence (ownership)	FPS Foreign Affairs	

## HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE, FORCED MARRIAGES AND GENITAL MUTILATION

MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNER
231. Develop international partnerships on a political level and on the level of social associations for an improved approach to the issue of forced marriage.	COCOF	
232. In the context of the political dialogue with countries where FGM is still prevalent, make sure to pay particular attention to the observance of the stipulations in the Maputo Protocol, which	Development Cooperation, FPS Public Health	

is signed and to a large extent ratified by those countries, and verify the inclusion in national legislation of those stipulations as well as their application		
233.Promote awareness campaigns, seminars and conferences about FGM in the partner countries and on a regional level.	Development Cooperation	
234.Keep distributing the 'STOP FGM' passport in Belgian embassies abroad and in travel clinics.	FPS Foreign Affairs (Directorate General for Consular Affairs), FPS Public Health	
235.Implement the resolution on the battle against forced child marriage across the world, particularly in partner countries of the Belgian Development Cooperation <sup>29</sup> .	FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation	

<sup>29</sup> See DOC 54 0630/006 (Belgian Chamber of Representatives, 5 March 2015)

## **Attachment 1: Area of application of the Istanbul Convention**

### **I. Definition**

#### **Definition of violence against women – Istanbul Convention**

In the Convention ‘Violence against women’ is defined as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women. Reference is made to all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

The Convention clarifies that the term ‘gender-based violence against women’ is in keeping with the term that is used in several international texts, such as CEDAW’s General Recommendation No. 19 concerning violence against women (1992), the United Nations General Assembly’s Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) or the Recommendation Rec (2002)5 from the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe on the protection of women against violence (2002).

#### **General Recommendation No. 19 concerning violence against women (1992)**

The Convention in article 1 defines discrimination against women. The definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

#### **United Nations General Assembly’s Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993)**

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

- b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

**Recommendation Rec (2002)5 from the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe on the protection of women against violence**

For the purposes of this recommendation, the term 'violence against women' is to be understood as any act of gender-based violence, which results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. violence occurring in the family or domestic unit, including, inter alia, physical and mental aggression, emotional and psychological abuse, rape and sexual abuse, incest, rape between spouses, regular or occasional partners and cohabitants, crimes committed in the name of honour, female genital and sexual mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, such as forced marriages;
- b. violence occurring within the general community, including, inter alia, rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in institutions or elsewhere trafficking in women for the purposes of sexual exploitation and economic exploitation and sex tourism;
- c. violence perpetrated or condoned by the state or its officials;
- d. violation of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict, in particular the taking of hostages, forced displacement, systematic rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and economic exploitation.

## II. Summary

### ➡ **Violence against women**

Domestic violence:

- physical or psychological aggression;
- emotional and psychological abuse;
- sexual violence and rape between (former) partners;
- incest;
- genital mutilation;
- honour-based offenses, forced marriage, other traditional practices harmful to women;
- violence between non-partners;
- exploitation-based violence.

Violence within the community:

- sexual abuse and rape;
- sexual assault;
- unwanted sexual behaviour;
- unwanted sexual behaviour at work;
- pimping and forced prostitution;
- trafficking in women aimed at sexual and economic exploitation;

- sex tourism.

Institutional violence

Violence in situations of armed conflict

➡ **Domestic violence**

Intimate partner violence

Intergenerational violence

## **Attachment 2: definition of gender-based violence**

### **Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (item 17)**

Violence that is directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression or that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately, is understood as gender-based violence. It may result in physical, sexual, emotional or psychological harm, or economic loss, to the victim. Gender-based violence is understood to be a form of discrimination and a violation of the fundamental freedoms of the victim and includes violence in close relationships, sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment), trafficking in human beings, slavery, and different forms of harmful practices, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour crimes'. Women victims of gender-based violence and their children often require special support and protection because of the high risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, of intimidation and of retaliation connected with such violence.

## **Attachment 3 : definitions of crimes of sexual violence in the rome statute of the icc – The Elements of Crimes**

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has established in article 7(1)(g) that "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity." constitutes a crime against humanity. Sexual violence is further explained in the ICC's Elements of Crimes, which the Court uses in its interpretation and application of article 7. The Elements of Crime establishes that sexual violence is:

"an act of sexual nature against one or more persons or caused such person or persons to engage in an act of sexual nature by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or persons or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or such person's or persons' incapacity to give genuine consent."