

# **The Digital Dimension of Violence Against Women**

## **A CSW64 SIDE EVENT**

**Co-organised by the Council of Europe  
and the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations**

**9 March 2020, from 4:45 to 6:00 pm  
Conference Room 2, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Growing reliance on technology makes us ever more vulnerable to the potential misuse of technology. Cyberviolence against women and girls is a problem of enormous proportions. It is the use of computer systems to cause, facilitate, or threaten violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering of women and girls.

Encouraged by anonymity and increasing automation, online attacks are vicious, widespread and cause real harm. Moreover, in cases when the perpetrator is known to the victim, many forms of violence against women occurring in the real world are often replicated and, in many ways, intensified, through digital means: examples are stalking, abusive control, psychological violence, sexual harassment. Through various digital means, including readily available spyware or other digital surveillance applications, controlling partners or former partners track women's communications, transactions and movements, hijack women's online identities in order to harm or discredit them, and/or disseminate intimate visual material without their consent.

These are forms of gender-based violence that urgently need to be addressed. Yet criminal justice systems are often inadequately equipped to handle such phenomena. It is not enough to leave protection from abuse through digital means to self-regulation by the industry – an industry which may benefit financially from, for example, the sale of digital surveillance products.

What are governments around the world required or encouraged to do to combat/prevent digital manifestations of violence against women? What needs to be done to address this challenge? What are some key initiatives which have shown to be effective?



**Presidency of Georgia**  
Council of Europe  
November 2019 – May 2020  
**Présidence de la Géorgie**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Novembre 2019 – Mai 2020



The event will explore the digital dimension of violence against women and focus on:

- the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – in particular Articles 33, 34, 40 on psychological violence, stalking and sexual harassment, respectively, as well as Article 17 on engaging with the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media to prevent violence against women; and relevant extracts from the reports of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) on States Parties' implementation of the Istanbul Convention;
- the Council of Europe's Recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, in particular its sections on digital media literacy and awareness raising about threats in the digital environment, as well as rights and responsibilities related to the use of new media;
- a good practice example from a victim's advocacy group; and
- good practice examples in the fight against violence against women through digital means.

Speakers will include:

- **Khatuna Totladze**, Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia, currently chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- **Nathalie Muylle**, Federal Minister for Equal Opportunities, Belgium [TBC]
- **Irene Montero**, Minister of Equality, Spain [TBC]
- **Helena Dalli**, European Union Commissioner for Equality [TBC]
- **Dubravka Šimonović**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences
- **Marceline Naudi**, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (GREVIO)
- **Charles Ramsden**, Chair of the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe
- **Kate Jenkins**, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australia
- **Carrie Goldberg**, Founder of Victims' Rights law firm, C. A. Goldberg, PLLC

The organisers will not be taking registrations or reservations for this event.

For further information, please contact:

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