

FRA Press Release
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A new start to end the inequalities that still threaten women everywhere

Widespread gender-based violence, hate and discrimination continue to threaten the well-being and ability of women to live full and active lives in society, as a new paper by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) shows. It calls for renewed and stronger efforts by the EU and its Member States to promote gender equality and change societal attitudes to help eradicate discrimination and violence towards women.

"Too many men treat women as second class citizens, disrespecting their rights. This paper and recent revelations highlight unacceptable levels of discrimination, violence and misogyny," says FRA Director [Michael O'Flaherty](#). *"The EU and its Member States are challenged urgently to promote gender equality and change societal attitudes for the eradication of discrimination and violence against women."*

FRA's paper '[Challenges to women's human rights in the EU: Gender discrimination, sexist hate speech and gender-based violence against women and girls](#)' explores human rights commitments and gives telling examples from across the EU over the last three years. It builds on FRA's 2014 [violence against women survey](#), the largest and most comprehensive survey of its kind to date.

The evidence collected reveals how persistent discrimination and endemic gender-based violence severely limit the ability of women to enjoy their rights and to participate on an equal footing in society. It gives examples of how harassment, including online and towards female journalists and politicians, and gender stereotyping, fuelled also by media representations of women, further reinforce such inequalities.

Taking this evidence into account, the paper suggests a number of ways that could help improve gender equality and change how society treats women and girls. These include:

1. Creating a safer online environment to counter the growing use of the internet and social media to abuse women and girls;
2. Breaking gender stereotypes from an early age through promoting gender equality in education and lifelong learning;
3. Introducing gender quotas to compensate for the lack of women at higher levels of politics and business, for example;
4. Incorporating gender equality across all EU socio-economic policies to help Member States meet their gender equality commitments;
5. Enabling national equality bodies to tackle all issues that impact women's rights, from gender equality to violence against women;
6. Improving data collection and the sharing of knowledge on all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls to help decision makers better assess the impact of their laws and policies.

The paper is part of FRA's contribution to the European Commission's [3rd annual Fundamental Rights Colloquium – 'Women's rights in turbulent times'](#) that takes place in Brussels from 20 to 21 November.

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Notes to editors:

- FRA's [online data explorer](#) provides access to the full 2014 survey results.
- FRA is the EU's independent body for delivering fundamental rights assistance and expertise to the EU and its Member States.