

Ending Violence against Women – Opportunities and Challenges of ICT

On 14 March at 15.00 in Conference Room 11

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Mr Ambassador, Mme Deputy Secretary General, Minister,
dear friends,

It is with great appreciation that I participate in this session on opportunities and challenges of ICT and ending violence against women. Thank you for the Estonian government for bringing up this most important issue.

Women´s organizations have a role to play in empowering the active involvement of women and girls in the digital developments. As an example, the National Council of Women of Finland - established in 1911 by the first female parliamentarians, nowadays with 58 member organizations in which there are 400 000 women, 20 per cent of all women of Finland as members.

The council coordinates a joint program called Women in the Digital Age on how digitalization can enhance gender equality. The project challenges private, public and third sectors to increase their cooperation for active changes in order to increase the number of women and girls in ICT.

Women and girls are the main targets of online violence. According to the European Women´s Lobby´s #HerNetHerRights report it is a growing phenomenon and human rights violation.

And according to a recent UN report, 73 percent of women had reported experiencing online abuse and are 27 times more likely than men to be harassed online.

In our modern world the vicious circle of violence deepens: more than two third of women victims of cyberstalking also experience at least one form of physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner.

Women and girls are also targets because of what they do. Feminists, female politicians and decision makers, NGO and human rights activists and journalists are at specific risk. The aim to silence powerful and brave women and to limit their participation and freedom of speech can´t be accepted.

Dear friends,

Multiple women´s organizations have raised their voice to end violence against women already more than 100 years ago. In recent years the governments have started paying deeper attention into violence against women. At present women´s NGO´s work against violence on international, regional and local level in policy and advocacy work, often with a special focus on prevention.

MONIKA – Multicultural Women´s Association provides multisectoral services for women and children with an immigrant background who have experienced violence. MONIKA has recently started two forms of online services.

MONIKA has been able to guarantee safe, easy-to-use online services which is not always obvious, with several languages to discuss violence-related issues with trained crisis workers.

An online peer support group is a closed form of online service through which people can process experiences of violence together with other group members, under the guidance of a group leader.

Women's Line and Seta – LGBTI Rights in Finland organized a pioneering nation-wide anonymous online peer support group for transfeminines who have faced violence. The discussions concentrate on fundamental rights and provide professional support on how to recognize various forms of violence and how to recover.

As a part of the Finland's 100 years anniversary of independence women's rights were strongly on the agenda. With this launch Women's Line won a "Breaking the Silence" award of the recent 100 acts for gender equality program. This program received close to 300 acts to promote women's rights both in Finland and globally.

Dear friends,

We certainly need more basic information and awareness raising on online violence. The Istanbul convention requires online violence as a form of violence against women and girls. This should be recognized in national implementation of the convention, as well as in policies and strategies at all levels.

Prevention of online violence requires strong commitment and cooperation between governments, women's organizations and other actors.

The digital world should be a safe space for women and girls. Online violence against women deserves the same attention as other forms of violence. To be able to participate entirely into the society, women must be free from harassment, exclusion and marginalization.

We all should defend girls' and women's freedom to live online!

With zero tolerance for violence, Loud and United!