



France did it, Germany did it, Spain did it – why won't the UK?

Engender urges UK to sign Convention to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is a ground-breaking treaty aimed at creating a legal framework at European level to tackle violence against women.⁽¹⁾ Years in the making and based on studies which found that one-fifth to one-quarter of all women in Europe have experienced physical violence at least once during their adult lives,⁽²⁾ the treaty has been signed by France, Germany, Spain and a number of other member states. As yet, the UK have not signed up to the treaty and Engender are asking why? We urge the UK Government to show its commitment to tackling violence against women and sign the treaty.

The Convention offers a framework for government action to prevent, investigate and prosecute violence against women; it supports sharing of good practice, and suggests models for legislation on the definitions of rape and sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, risk assessment, protection measures and services for survivors of violence. The treaty also encourages cooperation and coordination of policing and other criminal justice activity across borders.

Engender Convener Marsha Scott said “This convention is the result of hard-won negotiation across Council of Europe countries. It is the product of skilful consensus-building and reflects the conviction across Europe that violence against women requires more than lip service on the part of our governments. The UK government has a chance to act constructively on its stated intention to address violence against women by signing up to the Convention. Failing to sign must call into question its appetite for action on violence against women, despite political assurances”

The Scottish Government recognises violence against women as a cause and consequence of women's social, political and economic inequality.⁽³⁾ Engender calls on the UK Government to do the same and sign this treaty.

ENDS

Engender is a membership organisation that works in Scotland and Europe on an anti-sexist agenda to increase women's power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The purposes of this Convention are to:
 - protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;
 - contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women;
 - design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence;
 - promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;
 - provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.
2. <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Reports/Html/210.htm> (Introduction 1.2)
3. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women>