

## **International and Governmental Organizations Work to Monitor and Implement Laws on Violence against Women and Girls**

As part of The Advocates for Human Rights' work in creating the section on Developing Legislation on Violence against Women and Girls for UNIFEM's new website, the Global Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls (<http://endvawnow.org>), we asked our colleagues from around the world to share information on projects on advocacy, monitoring and implementation of laws on violence against women and girls. In the last several months, we have highlighted some of the responses we received.

This month we end the series by highlighting the work of the international and governmental organizations who responded. We thank all who sent us examples of their work. The scope of the work that dedicated activists accomplish each year to end violence against women is truly inspiring!

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The [Council of Europe](#) has worked to analyze legislation on violence against women and to compile existing laws. The *Final Activity Report of the Council of Europe Task Force to combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence* gives examples of national legislation on different forms of violence against women, points to difficulties in implementation and offers an overall assessment of what type of legal measures should be taken.

See: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/EG-TFV\(2008\)6\\_complete%20text.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/EG-TFV(2008)6_complete%20text.pdf)

The Council of Europe has also collected English and French versions of existing national legislation in the area of violence against women from 32 member states. These are published in the *Compilation of legislation in the field of violence against women*.

See: [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/equality/05\\_Violence\\_against\\_women/069\\_EG\(2009\)3\\_E.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/equality/05_Violence_against_women/069_EG(2009)3_E.asp#TopOfPage).

Additional laws can be found in the section on domestic legislation of the website for the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIO):

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/domestic\\_law\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/domestic_law_en.asp)

This Committee is mandated to draft a convention on violence against women, which will be a very important contribution to setting legally binding standards in this field in Europe and beyond. It would harmonize existing legislation among state parties to this convention and would help to enhance the quality of legislation. The Committee is currently negotiating a first draft of the convention. All relevant documents can be found at [www.coe.int/violence](http://www.coe.int/violence).

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In June of 2009, the [OSCE Secretariat](#) published *Bringing Security Home: Combating Violence Against Women in the OSCE Region - A Compilation of Good Practices* (June 2009). See: [http://www.osce.org/gender/item\\_11\\_38013.html](http://www.osce.org/gender/item_11_38013.html). It compiles good practices in the area of prevention, protection and prosecution, including legislation.

For more information, contact the Advisor on Gender Issues at [www.osce.org/gender/](http://www.osce.org/gender/)

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In 2003-2004, the [International Centre for Reproductive Health](#) coordinated a monitoring study on the difficulties of implementing legal provisions related to female genital mutilation (FGM) in European countries, in order to find out why, despite the fact that specific laws on FGM exist, few cases reached courts in Europe.

The study analyzed the implementation of laws and barriers to their implementation in Belgium, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom, and France. The monitors assessed the following:

- presence of criminal law provisions on FGM
- existence of FGM practices in local communities
- reporting of cases
- investigations of reported cases
- court cases on FGM

Field work, consisting of document analysis and case study, was performed by local partners. A comparative analysis of the data from all five countries was performed.

See: International Center for Reproductive Health (ICRH), [Assessing the impact of legislation in Europe with regard to female genital mutilation](#) (2004).

In 2007 and 2008, the International Centre for Reproductive Health implemented a second project on FGM and law enforcement. As part of the project, capacity-building workshops were conducted in five EU countries. Each workshop identified a number of difficulties in implementing laws on FGM in the respective countries. The project identified specific problems regarding implementation:

- Lack of knowledge about FGM and the legal framework
- Risk assessment
- Mechanisms to increase reports of (suspected) FGM cases
- Coordination

Project coordinators also made recommendations for policymakers to improve law enforcement on FGM. See: Leye, et. al., [Striking the right balance between prosecution and prevention of female genital mutilation in Europe: A review of legislation](#) (2009).