

MARVOW 2.0

Coordinated Multi-Agency Response to Violence against Older Women

Policy Recommendations

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Deliverable 4.2: MARVOW 2.0 Policy Recommendations

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Executive Summary

Violence against older women is a pervasive yet largely overlooked human rights issue within the European Union. Addressing gender equality and ageing, older women remain excluded from data collection, policy design, and service provision. This invisibility undermines the EU's commitments under the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Istanbul Convention, the European Pillar of Social Rights, and international instruments such as the CRPD and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

As Europe's population continues to age, ensuring the dignity, safety, and equality of older women is both a moral imperative and a strategic necessity for sustainable social policy. Ageism and sexism intersect to render older women particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence—physical, psychological, financial, and institutional—often within care and domestic settings. Addressing this challenge requires coordinated EU-level leadership, harmonized data collection, and the integration of age and gender across all relevant policies.

A key insight of the MARVOW 2.0 project is the central role of EU-level coordination in achieving effective and harmonized outcomes. Initiatives that leverage shared knowledge, standardize practices, and support cross-border collaboration have proven particularly effective. Moreover, engaging stakeholders—including citizens, local authorities, and private sectors—enhances policy relevance, acceptance, and long-term sustainability.

The proposed policy recommendations for EU institutions, bodies and agencies—including the European Commission, Parliament, Council, EIGE, FRA, Eurostat, EEAS, EPPO, and the European Ombudsman—provide a roadmap for a comprehensive and inclusive EU response. Key priorities include:

- Filling the data gap by extending collecting and analysing data on older women and systemic violence they face.
- Mainstreaming intersectionality, specifically on gender and age, in all gender equality, ageing, and care policies.

- Strengthening prevention, protection, and justice systems to recognize and respond to violence against older women.
- Ensuring accountability and oversight through regular reporting, peer review, and independent monitoring mechanisms.
- Promoting awareness and participation, giving visibility to older women's voices and lived experiences.

A future European Year for Ending Violence Against Older Persons, with a focus on women, would symbolize the EU's renewed commitment to equality and human rights across the lifespan. Ending violence against older women is not merely a question of protection—it is a matter of justice, dignity, and the EU's credibility as a global leader in human rights.

Stakeholder engagement emerges as another cornerstone of successful policy implementation. Involving citizens, industry, academia, and local authorities ensures that policies are not only technically sound but socially accepted and sustainable. Participation also encourages innovation, as diverse perspectives contribute to problem-solving and the identification of practical solutions.

From a broader perspective, the MARVOW project demonstrates that **EU-level interventions** can achieve greater efficiency, equity, and resilience than fragmented national approaches. Targeted funding, shared knowledge platforms, and harmonized regulatory standards provide the tools necessary to address emerging challenges, including technological disruptions, environmental pressures, and socio-economic inequalities.

Ultimately, the project underscores that EU-level policy action, supported by funding, data infrastructure, and participatory governance, is crucial to fostering innovation, resilience, and equitable outcomes across all member states.

Preamble

Violence against older women is a widespread yet under-recognized human rights violation rooted in the intersection of ageism and sexism. Despite increasing awareness of gender-based violence (GBV), older women often remain invisible in research, policy, and service provision.

Older women face specific forms of violence—including physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and neglect—often committed by intimate partners, family members, or caregivers. They are also less likely to be identified as victims or to access appropriate support due to social isolation, dependency, health conditions, or fear of institutionalization.

The European Union (EU) has a legal and moral obligation to address this issue under international and European human rights instruments, including the Istanbul Convention, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The EU is founded on the values of human dignity, equality, and respect for human rights, as enshrined in the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**[1], the **Treaty on European Union**[2]**, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)**[3]. In addition, the EU's commitment to social justice and equality is reflected in the **European pillars of Social Rights**[4], the **EU Gender Equality Strategy**, and other forms of **Secondary EU Law and Soft Law** addressing age and gender-based discrimination. The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**[5] further reinforces the obligation to eliminate all forms of violence, abuse, and

[1] EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: Article 1 – Human Dignity "Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected.", Article 21 – Non-discrimination - Prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, age, or any other status. Article 23 – (Equality between women and men) Requires equality between the sexes in all areas, including employment, work, and pay. Article 25 – (The rights of the elderly) Recognizes the right of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life. These provisions jointly create a binding legal foundation for EU institutions to act against violence targeting older women, combining protections against age and gender-based violence.

[2] Article 2 TEU establishes that the EU is founded on the values of "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.", Article 3(3) TEU states that the EU "shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection...". These values support legislative and policy measures that protect vulnerable groups, including older women at risk of violence.

[3] While not yet fully ratified by all Member States, the EU acceded to the Istanbul Convention in 2023 for matters related to EU competences (notably asylum, judicial cooperation, and criminal law cooperation). Article 4(3) of the Convention: "Implementation… shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as… age…", Article 11 (Data collection and research) and Article 23 (Shelters) are directly relevant for older women, who are often underserved by general DV services.

[4] Principle 10: Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection. Principle 15: Old age income and pensions. Principle 16: Health care. These reinforce the EU's role in supporting dignity, independence, and care systems that protect older persons—including from abuse.

[5] The CRPD, adopted in 2006 and ratified by the EU in 2010, is legally binding and directly applicable in areas of EU competence. It emphasizes the protection of persons with disabilities, including older women with age-related disabilities, from all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect. Relevant Articles: Article 6 – (Women with

neglect experienced by older persons—particularly older women. The **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing**[6], although not legally binding, complements these efforts through policy guidance and soft law principles.

In alignment with these core principles, the MARVOW 2.0 policy recommendations recognize the urgent need to address **violence against older women**, a form of abuse that remains largely invisible in public discourse and policymaking despite its prevalence and severity.

Across the European Union, populations are ageing rapidly. In December 2024, 21.6 % of the EU's population was aged 65 or over—a significant rise from about 16 % in the early 2000s.[7]According to Eurostat projections, the share of people aged 65+ is expected to increase to approximately 27 % by 2040 and reach nearly 30 % by mid-century.[8] Women constitute the majority of this, owing to longer life expectancy—especially among those aged 85, where female-to-male ratios are notably higher.[9]

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disabilities) Recognizes that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination and requires States Parties to take measures to ensure their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 16 – (Freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse) requires States to protect persons with disabilities (including older persons) from all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation, ensure age- and gender-sensitive assistance and support, establish effective monitoring and investigation mechanisms. Article 17 – (Protecting the integrity of the person) ensures respect for the physical and mental integrity of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. Article 28 – (Adequate standard of living and social protection) includes the right to appropriate public support and services to prevent marginalization and abuse. Many older women live with age-related disabilities. The CRPD obliges the EU and Member States to address intersecting discrimination, especially in contexts of abuse, neglect, and violence in caregiving and institutional settings.

[6] Adopted in 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, MIPAA is a comprehensive international framework aimed at improving the lives of older persons. While not legally binding, it is politically endorsed by all EU Member States and forms part of the EU's global policy commitments on ageing. Priority Direction II: Advancing health and well-being into old age. Objective 2: Eliminate neglect, abuse and violence against older persons. Promote the identification and reporting of elder abuse. Develop legal and educational measures to protect older persons, especially women, from all forms of abuse and violence. Priority Direction I: Older persons and development: Calls for the integration of ageing issues into social and gender policies. Recognizes the need to address the feminization of ageing and the greater vulnerabilities of older women. Follow-up mechanisms (especially within the UNECE region, which includes the EU): Promote regular national reporting, civil society participation, and data collection disaggregated by age and gender. It urges governments to prevent and respond to violence against older persons, especially through policy, training, and service provision—and to prioritize older women due to their compounded risk.

[7] European Union - Proportion of population aged 65 and over. (2025). Trading Economics. Available at: https://tradingeconomics.com/european-union/proportion-of-population-aged-65-over-eurostat-data.html. ; Visualised: Europe's population crisis. (2025). The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2025/feb/18/europes-population-crisis-see-how-your-country-compares-visualised?.com.

[8]Eurostat. (2025, August). *Population structure and ageing*. Statistics Explained. Retrieved February 2025 from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/SEPDF/cache/1271.pdf.

[9] Ageing Europe – looking at the lives of older people in the EU – Eurostat 2019 report. (2019). AGE-Platform. Available at: https://www.age-platform.eu/ageing-europe-looking-at-the-lives-of-older-people-in-the-eu-eurostat-2019-report/.com.

According to Eurostat, 31% of all women are aged over 60, and women represent around 60% of all people aged 75 and above, with their share increasing further in the oldest age groups.[10]
Barriers to recognition and support are considerable. Older women are:

1. Less likely to be identified as victims by health, justice, or social services.
2. More likely to underreport abuse due to fear of institutionalization, stigma, or losing essential caregiving relationships.
3. More prone to isolation, chronic illness, or disability, lack of financial independence which can intensify dependence on potential abusers.
4. Often excluded from outreach campaigns, shelter services, and prevention programmes, which are typically designed for younger women.

While older age can be a time of continued independence and societal contribution, older women often face compounded forms of discrimination emerging from intersecting inequalities, including ageism, sexism, ableism, and socio-economic marginalization. These intersecting factors increase their risk of experiencing violence—such as intimate partner violence, domestic and intrafamily violence or violence against older women—and simultaneously hinder access to justice, support services, and adequate protection.[11]

Evidence-based and qualitative literature shows:

- Global prevalence estimates of violence against older women average around 14 % in the past year, with psychological abuse the most prevalent form.[12]
- Among community-dwelling older women aged 65+, interpersonal violence (physical or sexual) ranges from 6–18 % from age 50 onwards.[13]
- Older women who were victims of domestic homicide represent a disproportionate share: for example, a UK-based femicide report found that one in four domestic homicides involved a victim over 60, and one in eight women killed by men were aged over 70.[14]
- In several EU countries, data indicate a high prevalence of femicides among older women. In Austria, figures from the Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters (AOEF) show that femicides involving women aged 60+ rose from 14% in 2019 to over 50% in 2024. In Cyprus, 19 femicides were recorded between 2019 and 2023. In France in 2024, women aged

[10] Eurostat. (n.d.). *Population on 1 January by age group and sex* (Dataset code DEMO_PJAN). Retrieved [date you accessed], from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_pjan/default/table?lang=en.
[11] Meyer, S., Lasater, M., & Garcia-Moreno, C. (2020). *Violence against older women: A systematic review of qualitative literature.* PLoS One. Available at: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7514024/.com.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Topping, A. (2025). One in eight women killed by men are over 70, report reveals. *The Guardian.* Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/mar/06/one-in-eight-women-killed-by-men-are-over-70-report-reveals.com.

70 and above were the most affected group, accounting for 26% of victims in couple-related killings. Greece saw a 187.5% increase in femicides in 2021, while Italy reported 100 cases, up from 54 in 2018. In Spain, women aged 60+ represent about 14% of intimate partner femicide victims. In Bulgaria, NGO data indicate that 37% of femicides between 2020 and 2025 targeted women aged 60+, with the share increasing from 26% to 50% during that period.[15]

The launch of the most recent **EU Survey on Gender-Based Violence (EU-GBV)** in November 2024 marked a significant step toward data-driven policymaking to combat gender-based violence (GBV)[16]. However, a critical gap remains: **the exclusion of women aged 75 and above**. This omission perpetuates a systemic lack of data on violence experienced by older women, undermines EU equality commitments, and risks reinforcing ageist assumptions embedded in current survey methodologies.

A coordinated EU-level response is therefore imperative to ensure that older women are fully protected from all forms of violence and can live in dignity, free from fear and harm. These MARVOW 2.0 policy recommendations aim to provide a framework for action that is inclusive, rights-based, and informed by an intersectional understanding of the complex realities faced by older women across European Member States. In alignment with the EU's founding values of dignity, equality, and respect for human rights, the policy recommendations acknowledge that violence against older women is not a marginal issue, but a pressing challenge to Europe's commitments on gender equality, social justice, and human rights.

Addressing this issue requires coordinated EU-level leadership, harmonized data collection, and integrated multi-sectoral responses.

A human rights-based, intersectional approach is crucial. We must recognize older women not as passive recipients of care, but as autonomous individuals whose voices, lived experiences and needs, must shape EU policies on gender equality, ageing, care, and violence prevention. Failing to do so risks perpetuating systemic neglect and denying justice to a rapidly growing segment of the population.

[15] MARVOW 2.0, (2025). Risk Factor Checklist and Case Management Tool for cases of violence against older women.

[16] The launch of the EU Survey on Gender-Based Violence (EU-GBV) in November 2024 represents a meaningful shift toward more robust, evidence-based policymaking because it fills long-standing data gaps on the prevalence and characteristics of gender-based violence across the European Union. Previous data collections were often fragmented, outdated, or inconsistent across Member States, limiting the EU's ability to design targeted interventions or monitor progress effectively. By offering harmonized, EU-wide data, the survey strengthens the foundation for policies that better reflect the lived experiences of women and other affected groups, supports more accurate resource allocation, and enhances accountability for national and EU institutions. In this sense, the 2024 survey is not only a technical milestone but a critical step toward more informed, coordinated, and impactful efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

MARVOW 2.0 Policy Recommendations - Topics

1. European Commission

European Commission Policy Initiatives:

- Clarify intersectionality in Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence implementation: Issue guidance ensuring that "age" is explicitly interpreted as a critical dimension of intersectional discrimination—prompting Member States to include older women in national transposition measures.
- Support the development of a dedicated **EU Action Plan on Ageism,** aiming at a comprehensive EU approach to age equality, including reviewing EU law for compliance with age equality principles and addressing legal gaps (particularly in cross-border and digital contexts[17]); organising a high-level annual event on 1 October (UN International Day of Older Persons) to promote older persons' rights; developing age-friendly labour market policies to combat workplace ageism and increase employment opportunities for older workers; ensuring adequate pensions and recognition of unpaid care in social protection; expanding home- and community-based care with EU-wide targets; issuing guidelines to combat ageism in external and humanitarian policies; launching public campaigns to challenge age stereotypes; and establishing a dedicated Commission coordination body to ensure policy coherence, share best practices, and mainstream age and gender perspectives—including the needs of older women victims of violence—across all equality strategies.[18]
- In the absence of a comprehensive EU strategy on ageing, ensure that **age and gender are systematically mainstreamed** across all current and future EU equality strategies (including those on gender equality, disability, anti-racism, and LGBTIQ+ equality), explicitly highlighting the situation and needs of **older women victims of violence**.
  Mainstream age and gender across all relevant equality strategies:

[17] In the context of an EU Action Plan on Ageism, "digital contexts" refers to the ways age discrimination can occur in online environments, digital services, and technology-mediated interactions. This includes unequal access to essential digital services (such as e-government, online banking, or telehealth), age-biased algorithms that limit opportunities for older people, inaccessible or poorly designed platforms that exclude older users, and the lack of legal safeguards for age equality in emerging technologies and digital markets. It also encompasses inadequate protections against online fraud, abuse, or exploitation that disproportionately affect older adults. Addressing these digital gaps ensures that age equality principles apply fully in the online sphere, not just in physical or traditional settings.

[18] AGE Platform Europe. (2025). *Proposal for EU action plan to combat ageism*. https://www.age-platform.eu/content/uploads/2025/09/AGE_Action-Plan-on-Ageism_2025-layout_version.pdf.

- EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030 due to be released in the beginning of 2026
- European Disability Strategy 2021–2030. Ensure that the forthcoming EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (expected Q2 2026 - according to the Commission's draft work programme for 2026) explicitly addresses the needs of older women, including victims of violence, integrating age and gender perspectives across disability policy.
- Intergenerational Fairness Strategy.[19]

- Intersectionality studies[20]: mainstream age and intersectionality in EIGE's monitoring and policy guidance on the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030.
- Ensure older persons' organisations and women's NGOs are consulted in policy design and monitoring.[21]

Monitoring and Accountability:

- To ensure a coordinated EU response to gender-based violence (GBV) against older women, the EU must first collect, consolidate, and share relevant data, guidelines, and best practices with all Member States. Building on this, an EU-wide implementation scorecard can then be developed to assess how effectively Member States integrate older women into their national GBV strategies, monitor progress, and identify areas requiring additional support or intervention.
- Establish annual reporting obligations on violence against older women. Data should be disaggregated by *age and gender* without an upper age limit, through Eurostat, the European

[19] AGE Platform Europe emphasizes that an EU Intergenerational Fairness Strategy must embed age equality across all policy areas to ensure that no generation is disproportionately disadvantaged. Their work highlights that ageism—whether in employment, social protection, care, or digital access—creates systemic barriers for older adults, while younger generations also face risks from unsustainable pension systems and unequal opportunities. AGE advocates for a dedicated EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism, including reviewing EU legislation for gaps in age equality, addressing cross-border and digital contexts, and promoting participation, dignity, and life-course rights. Linking this to the broader Intergenerational Fairness Strategy ensures that policies are both rights-based and forward-looking, fostering intergenerational solidarity, economic inclusion, and democratic participation. The organization stresses that meaningful impact will depend on concrete reforms, consistent monitoring, and the creation of mechanisms to hold institutions accountable for enforcing age equality across generations. See also, AGE Platform Europe, (2025). *Proposal for EU Action Plan to Combat Ageism.* Available at: https://www.age-platform.eu/content/uploads/2025/09/AGE_Action-Plan-on-Ageism_2025-layout_version.pdf.

[20] Violence against older women is compounded by intersecting factors like disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation. EIGE should deepen intersectional analysis to capture these overlapping vulnerabilities, improving the relevance and inclusiveness of data.

[21] Ensure that older persons' organizations, women's NGOs, and grassroots groups are actively consulted during the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies addressing violence against older women. Their lived experience and expertise are vital for effective policymaking.

Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) and the Commission's gender equality monitoring frameworks.

- Appoint a Commission focal point on violence against older persons within DG JUST to coordinate cross-sectoral efforts. Set up an EU Anti-Ageism Task Force or designate DG JUSTICE as the coordinating body to strengthen inter-institutional collaboration, promote knowledge sharing, and identify both effective practices and remaining policy gaps.
- Launch a biennial stakeholder forum with Member States, NGOs, and survivors to review progress and refine EU-level support mechanisms.

Mainstreaming in Health and Care Policy:
Integrate the prevention of violence against older women into all EU health and care policies, ensuring robust protection standards in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and home-care services.

Digital & Non Digital Tools:
Promote the development of EU-wide helplines, online reporting platforms, and awareness campaigns specifically tailored for older women, including accessibility features for women with disabilities. Complement these digital tools with non-digital alternatives—such as telephone hotlines, community outreach programs, printed information materials, and in-person support services—to ensure that all older women, including those with limited Internet access or digital skills, can access information and assistance.

2. European Parliament

Parliamentary Action:

- Initiate and adopt a dedicated resolution on the prevention of violence against older women, highlighting their invisibility in public policy.[22]
- Ensure explicit inclusion of older women in legislative texts and amendments related to gender equality and violence, including:
    - The Equality Bodies Directive[23]
    - Files on the implementation of Directive 2024/1385
- Call for a European Year for Ending Violence Against Women with a specific focus on Older Women.[24]

[22] This is partially covered in a broader ageing report, but the next step should be to pass a stand-alone resolution specifically focused on violence against older women, including intersectional dimensions.
[23] This is not formally adopted. The next step should be to adopt amendments to legislative texts to mention older women explicitly.
[24] This proposal for a "European Year on Ending Violence Against Older Persons – with a focus on Older Women" builds on the EU's commitments under the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, the Madrid International

Monitoring and Accountability:

- Request regular progress reporting by the European Commission on how Member States are addressing violence against older women, in line with obligations under the Istanbul Convention and drawing on GREVIO evaluations. This approach ensures that monitoring is consistent with established EU and international standards, facilitates accountability, and highlights best practices and gaps in national responses.[25]
- Organize hearings and intergroups focused on the impacts and specificities of gender-based violence against older women and how to address it , inviting survivors, researchers, and practitioners to inform policymaking.[26]

Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), and the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. It follows the precedent of thematic European Years (e.g., 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations) as a mechanism to mobilize EU institutions, Member States, and civil society. Objectives of the European Year (See, also: Council Decision 940/2011/EU; EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 (COM/2020/152 final); EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030 (COM/2021/101 final); Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (United Nations, 2002); European Pillar of Social Rights (Principle 15: Old Age Income and Pensions; Principle 18: Long-term Care); Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)):

- Raise public awareness about the prevalence, forms, and impact of violence against older persons—particularly older women.
- Promote prevention and early intervention, especially in domestic, institutional, and caregiving settings.
- Empower survivors through campaigns and storytelling, helping to challenge stigma and silence.
- Encourage Member States to adopt or revise national action plans and frameworks that include age- and gender-sensitive approaches.
- Support civil society and professional training, including healthcare, police, and social services, to identify and respond appropriately to older victims.
- Mainstream age and gender considerations in EU policy debates on GBV, ageing, and care.

Proposed Themes and Actions:

- Launch of EU-wide awareness campaigns featuring testimonials from older women survivors.
- Funding calls under CERV, Erasmus and ESF+ for multi-agency and community-based projects.
- National and local-level roundtables, conferences, and exhibitions co-organized with older persons' organizations and women's NGOs.
- Coordination with EIGE, FRA, and Eurostat to enhance data visibility and reporting mechanisms.
- Special emphasis on intersectionality—including disability, rural isolation, ethnic background, and socio-economic disadvantage.

[25] The main purpose is to keep violence against older women on the EU political agenda and ensure ongoing institutional attention. Through the yearly or biannual written or oral updates, the transparency and pressure on both the Commission and MS are increased.

[26] The main purpose here is to amplify the voices of survivors and researchers / front-line professionals. In order to bring direct experience into legislative debate and support evidence-based policymaking, the Parliamentary Intergroup on Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity should be used.

Awareness Campaigns:
Use Parliament's public outreach platforms - including its website, social media channels, newsletters, and events- to launch EU-wide campaigns that highlight survivors' voices and raise awareness about abuse in later life.

3. Council of the European Union

Council Conclusions and Guidance:

- Adopt Council Conclusions[27] specifically addressing violence against older women and promoting integrated multi-sectoral responses. These Conclusions should emphasize the need for tailored prevention strategies, victim-centered responses, and intersectional approaches addressing age, gender, disability, and socio-economic factors.
- Encourage Member States to:
  - Integrate older women into national action plans on GBV to ensure visibility, dedicated resources, and specialized measures.
  - Adapt and implement age-inclusive risk assessment[28] and safety planning tools for frontline professionals within national frameworks, ensuring older women victims of violence are adequately protected.
  - Fund interdisciplinary teams including health, police, social care, and older people care representatives.

Peer Exchange:

- Establish a peer-to-peer process for Member States to exchange good practices and challenges in protecting older women against violence.[29]

Cross-Sectoral Cooperation: Promote cooperation between health, social, police, and justice sectors through *joint training programmes* supported by EU funding.

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[27] Council Conclusions are official statements that articulate the Council's political position on key issues. A dedicated conclusion on violence against older women would formally recognize this issue as a priority at the EU level. It raises awareness among Member States, aligns their efforts, and provides a policy framework encouraging harmonized action across sectors such as justice, health, social services, and law enforcement.

[28] E.g.: MARVOW2.0Risk Factor Checklist.

[29] Peer reviews are mechanisms whereby Member States voluntarily assess each other's policies and practices to promote mutual learning and improvement. A dedicated peer review cycle focused on violence against older women would enable sharing innovative service models, legislative reforms, and data collection methodologies, identifying obstacles and capacity gaps, building consensus on minimum standards and promising approaches. The Council could organize thematic peer reviews under the EU Justice or Social Affairs Councils, involving relevant stakeholders such as victim support organizations and experts.

4. European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Knowledge Development:

- Produce a thematic report on violence against older women across Member States.[30]
- This report would inform EU and national policymakers, service providers, and civil society about the scale and nature of the problem, and include best national practices on how Member States intend to address gender-based violence against older women, providing a basis for targeted interventions.
- Incorporate data on older women into:
    - Gender Equality Index: include women aged 75+ as a distinct analytical group in the EIGE Gender Equality Index and its Gender-Based Violence domain.
    - GBV indicators: commission targeted research on the intersection of age, gender, and disability in experiences of violence.

Capacity Building Tools:

- Support the development of training and assessment toolkits for shelters, health systems, and law enforcement that address older women's specific needs[31], drawing on EIGE's research, methodological tools, and technical guidance on gender equality and intersectional approaches[32]. Develop policy briefs highlighting the invisibility of older women in GBV data

[30] Currently, in most EU countries data on violence against older women is scarce and fragmented. A dedicated thematic report would synthesize existing data, highlight gaps, and provide a comprehensive overview of the prevalence, types, and contexts of violence faced by older women in the EU. The report should cover multiple forms of violence including physical, psychological, financial abuse, neglect, and institutional violence. It should also address risk factors linked to age, health status, dependency, and social isolation.

[31] Provide research, collect and analyse data on gender equality with an intersectional perspective; Develop methods to improve gender statistics and data collections; Communicate our comparable and reliable data and information with a hope-based approach; Measure the state of gender equality both at EU and Member State levels; Develop methodological tools and provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in all EU and national policies; Cooperate with EU institutions; Member States; international organisations; NGOs; equal opportunities organisations; universities and experts; research centres; social partners and related bodies; the media and our EU sister agencies

[32] Shelters and frontline service providers often lack age-appropriate knowledge or resources to adequately support older victims. Tailored training materials can improve understanding of specific challenges older women face, such as mobility issues, cognitive impairments, or dependence on caregivers who may be perpetrators. *MARVOW2.0 Training Material* provides comprehensive training for front-line professionals to better manage cases of violence against older women and how to implement multi-agency collaboration in these limits. Assessment toolkits would help institutions evaluate and improve their accessibility, policies, and practices to be more inclusive and effective for older women survivors. *MARVOW2.0 Case Management Tool and Risk*

and the consequences for EU policy coherence and facilitating cross-sectoral collaboration between equality bodies, older persons' organizations, and disability advocates to ensure inclusive policy design.

- Provide technical support to Member States for integrating intersectional data collection, including on the intersection between age and gender. Technical assistance can include guidance on survey design, administrative data use, privacy and ethical considerations, and capacity-building workshops.

5. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Surveys and Reports:

- Collect and analyse data on gender-based violence against older women, including women aged 75 and over[33]:
  - Access to justice for older female victims
  - Rights violations in care institutions
- Assess the **human rights implications of age-based exclusions** in EU data collection through a dedicated FRA Opinion or Thematic Focus.
- Integrate findings into FRA's annual Fundamental Rights Report, highlighting the intersection between gender, age.

Advisory Role:

- Provide guidance to EU policymakers on ensuring compliance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights for older women[34]. Promote adherence to **Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which prohibits age discrimination,** and ensure alignment with the CRPD and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.
- Encourage **Eurostat** and **Member States** to collect disaggregated data by age, gender, and disability to better inform national protection and prevention policies.

Assessment Developmental Tool provide tools, guidelines and steps for frontline professionals to work on cases of violence against older women.

[33] Publish targeted legal opinions and country-specific reports focusing on older women's access to justice, highlighting barriers such as physical mobility, lack of tailored legal support, or discriminatory attitudes in judicial proceedings. Investigate and report on rights violations in institutional care settings (e.g., nursing homes, assisted living facilities), where older women may face abuse or neglect, a topic that is often opaque due to limited data and oversight.

[34] Offer expert legal guidance to the European Commission and Parliament to ensure that EU policies comply with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, with particular emphasis on the protection and empowerment of older women facing violence. Advise on the incorporation of fundamental rights principles in legislation and implementation mechanisms related to violence prevention and victim support.

6. Eurostat (Statistical Office of the EU)

- Revise the "Methodological Manual for the EU Survey on Gender-Based Violence (EU-GBV)" to remove the upper age limit of 74.
- Collect and analyse data that are inclusive of all older women, including those living independently, in residential care, or supported environments.
- Introduce reasonable accommodation mechanisms in data collection — such as simplified questionnaires, assistive technologies, or supported interviews — in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Conduct pilot studies to test inclusive survey methodologies for participants aged 75+, ensuring scientific robustness and ethical compliance.
- Report publicly on progress toward age-inclusive data collection within the European Statistical System.
- Expand the age range on their next reports on GBV beyond the current 15–74 age bracket to include 75+. This is crucial to capture data on the experiences of the oldest cohort, who are currently underrepresented, if at all, in EU-wide victimization data.
- **Developing methodological guidelines** for collecting sensitive data from older populations, including those living in institutions or with disabilities.
- **Disaggregating data by age groups beyond 74**, so that policymakers can clearly see trends among women aged 75–84, 85–94, and 95+.
- **Providing training to national statistical offices** to strengthen their ability to gather and interpret data on violence against older women, in line with EU standards.

7. Committee of the Regions / European Economic and Social Committee

Local Action and Participation:

- Support initiatives at the local level that engage older women and communities in prevention and early detection of abuse[35].
- Promote age- and gender-inclusive urban planning, services, and emergency response systems.[36]

[35] Encourage regional and local governments to lead grassroots initiatives that engage older women and their communities in violence prevention, detection, and response. This includes supporting community education programs, awareness campaigns, and peer support networks tailored to older women.

[36] Promote age- and gender-inclusive urban planning and service design, such as safe public spaces, accessible transportation, and emergency response systems that take into account the mobility and safety needs of older women. This can reduce social isolation and vulnerability to abuse.

Civil Society Engagement:

- Ensure older persons' organisations and women's NGOs are consulted in policy design and monitoring.[37]

8. European Ombudsman

- **Oversight & Monitoring:** Systematically review how EU institutions and agencies integrate older women's rights and age equality in their programmes, data collection, and funding mechanisms (especially in gender equality, health, social care, and digital inclusion). Include age and gender intersectionality in ongoing Ombudsman inquiries related to equality, participation, or access to justice.
- **Complaints Mechanism:** Provide a dedicated channel for older women, NGOs, and service providers to raise concerns about discrimination, exclusion, or neglect in EU-funded projects and grant schemes. Publish guidance for complainants on age discrimination and how to report maladministration related to the exclusion of older women.
- **Awareness Raising:** Publish special reports or own-initiative inquiries on maladministration arising from the invisibility of older women in EU data and policy. Highlight good practices from EU institutions and Member States that demonstrate inclusive policymaking for older persons.

9. European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)

- **Financial Abuse & Fraud:** Collaborate with OLAF, Europol, and national prosecutors to identify patterns of financial exploitation affecting older women.
- **Guidance & Preventive Action:** Develop EU-wide guidelines for Member States on preventing, detecting, and prosecuting financial crimes that exploit older or dependent women. Encourage the integration of age and gender sensitivity into financial fraud investigations and training for prosecutors and investigators**.**
- **Data Collection & Transparency:** Include sex- and age-disaggregated data in EPPO's annual reporting to identify demographic patterns in financial abuse cases. Support cooperation with Eurostat and FRA on collecting evidence of cross-border financial exploitation of older women.

[37] Ensure that older persons' organizations, women's NGOs, and grassroots groups are actively consulted during the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies addressing violence against older women. Their lived experience and expertise are vital for effective policymaking.

Annex 1 Targeted EU Projects

Although most EU-wide policies are general, some key projects specifically address older women:

- **WHOSEFVA**: A project under the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" programme focusing on removing barriers in healthcare systems to better support older women experiencing domestic violence.
- **MARVOW**: A multi-agency cooperation model aimed at developing best practices in responding to elder abuse, facilitating interventions and coordinated support services.
- **TISOVA**: An Erasmus+ program linking centers for older people across EU countries to train key groups about violence against older people, including older women.

Good Practice Examples from EU-Funded Projects

WHOSEFVA (2016–2018) https://www.whosefva-gbv.eu/

- Focus: Trained healthcare providers to detect and respond to signs of elder abuse that older women face.
- Key outcome:
    - Developed a Best Practice Protocols BPP for identifying and supporting older women victims of violence in health care settings.
    - Training Material for Healthcare Professionals
    - Online course 'Five Signs of Abuse'!

MARVOW (2019–2022) https://marvow.eu/

- Focus: Multi-agency cooperation (police, social services, NGOs, healthcare) to address cases with violence against older people.
- Key outcome: Piloted an *Elder Abuse Intervention Model* in Austria, Greece, and Germany - Replication guidelines

TISOVA (2017–2020) https://wave-network.org/training-to-identify-and-support-older-victims-of-abuse-tisova/**.**

- Focus: Training modules for centers for older people and local communities on identifying and addressing elder abuse.
- Key outcome: Developed *peer-to-peer education models* in senior centers.

These show that the EU *funds innovative pilots*, but scaling up across all Member States is still a challenge.