



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen  
The President

Brussels, 08. 02. 2022  
Ares (2021) 7645143

Dear Ms Sáfrány,

*I would like to thank you for your letter in which you voice the support of the European Women's Lobby, and the joint support of 72 MEPs, for combatting violence against women and calling for a strong and comprehensive proposal for an EU legal instrument tackling this violation of women and girls' human rights.*

*Combatting violence against women is a key priority of this Commission. We will adopt shortly, for the first time under EU law, a proposal for a directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence. It will aim to ensure that EU Member States have effective measures in place to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, both online and offline. It is expected to include the criminalisation of specific forms of violence, including cyber violence, on the basis of the existing EU crimes in Article 83(1) TFEU.*

*As you are aware, on 9 December 2021, we adopted an initiative inviting the Council to extend the list of EU crimes in Article 83(1) to hate speech and hate crime. This new EU crime would subsequently allow the Commission to propose criminalising, for instance, misogynistic hate speech and hate crime, online and offline at EU level.*

*./..*

*Ms Réka Sáfrány  
President  
European Women's Lobby*

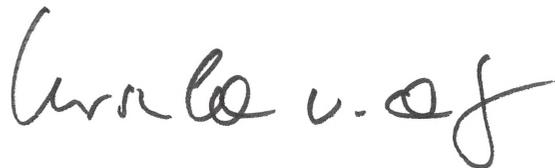
*E-mail: [Reka.safrany@Womenlobby.org](mailto:Reka.safrany@Womenlobby.org)  
[claire.fourcans@womenlobby.org](mailto:claire.fourcans@womenlobby.org)*

*Several other projects remain on our agenda, as spelled out in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, such as the recommendation on harmful practices against women and girls, which will complement the above legislative framework. We will also facilitate the development of a new framework for cooperation between internet platforms and other relevant stakeholders in order to protect women's safety online. We will be setting up a prevention network with Member States, managing our increased funding of projects on violence against women and domestic violence, carrying out a survey to collect prevalence data, and launching a campaign on gender stereotypes. We are furthermore in the process of reserving an EU-wide number for a helpline on violence against women and domestic violence, following up on an initiative from the German Presidency.*

*We also remain committed to the EU's accession to the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence. We hope that the recent opinion from the Court of Justice will allow negotiations in the Council to resume and that the EU's accession can be finalised.*

*I would like to thank you all for your relentless support in highlighting and advancing this cause. I am confident that this robust package of actions, both legislative and non-legislative, will provide us with powerful tools to prevent and combat gender-based violence against women and domestic violence.*

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ursula v. d. L.', written in a cursive style.

*Ursula von der Leyen*