



**“I believe you”: Building survivor-centred
health systems for women and girls
Madrid, Spain
20–21 November 2025**

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Scope and purpose

2025 marks 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the key international instrument to progress gender equality globally and meet the gender-related targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Today, the world is still 300 years away from reaching gender equality as our societies continue to grapple with high rates of violence affecting 1 in 4 women and girls across the WHO European Region.

New WHO prevalence estimates show the ongoing reality of violence against women and girls (VAWG) across the Region. Intimate partner violence and sexual violence are among the most hidden and insidious of crimes perpetrated against women and girls, with individual, family, community and societal level impacts that have never been fully accounted for.

Nearly 10 years have passed since Member States adopted resolutions WHA67.15 and WHA69.5 on strengthening the role of the health system in addressing violence against women, we have yet to see the investment necessary to enable the reduction of the \$289 billion per year that violence against women costs in the Region alone. While important progress has been made in the justice and social protection sectors, all evidence shows the need to strengthen the health sector within a multisectoral response.

To respond to this need, and in the context of the new second European Programme of Work, 2026–2030 (EPW2), the WHO Regional Director for Europe launched a Special Initiative on the Response to Violence against Women and Girls on 8 March 2025 with three main objectives:

- a. **Increased sustainable investment** in effective health sector violence prevention and response strategies to end VAWG across the Region.
- b. **Increased capacity of health care workers and policy-makers** in the Region to prevent and respond to VAWG.
- c. **Increased role of the health sector in multisectoral policies** to prevent and respond to VAWG in the Region.

Purpose of the event

This event marks Beijing+30 not only in celebration, but in recognition that VAWG remains a crisis – and that health systems must be part of the solution. The purpose of the event is as follows:

- To discuss priorities for implementing the Call to Action to be made during the 75th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe by ministers of health from the Region.
- To launch the report: “Prevalence, policies and promising practices – The role of the health sector in addressing VAWG in the WHO European Region”. The report will include the 2025 update to the internationally comparable global, regional and country prevalence estimates of VAWG, pursuant to target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals; and an in-depth analysis on policy implementation across the Region.
- To share and discuss good practices and innovative solutions from across the regions with global and regional experts to pave the way to address challenges in countries.

Design of the event

The event will be organized in a hybrid format, allowing for in-person participation of speakers and options for participants to join sessions online. Sessions will be co-led by frontline civil society/women’s organizations to guide the transformation of health systems and shape policies that truly support survivors. The conference will take place on 20–21 November at the Ministry of Health of Spain. It will be held in English, with simultaneous interpretation into Russian and Spanish.