



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ  
WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION  
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE  
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'EUROPE  
REGIONALBÜRO FÜR EUROPA  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ БЮРО

Head office:  
UN City, Marmorvej 51,  
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø, Denmark  
Tel.: +45 45 33 70 00; Fax: +45 45 33 70 01  
Email: [eurocontact@who.int](mailto:eurocontact@who.int)  
Website: <https://www.who.int/europe>

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Date: 04 September 2025

Dr Karmen Joller  
Minister of Social Affairs  
Ministry of Social Affairs  
Suur-Ameerika 1  
10129 Tallinn  
Estonia

Dear Madam,

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

I have the honour to inform you that the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Ministry of Health of Spain plan to hold the aforementioned two-day, high-level meeting, marking a critical moment for action.

Thirty years after the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a global crisis. Far from being eradicated, it has intensified and evolved – most notably through the weaponization of technology, which has enabled new forms of abuse and deepened existing health, gender and socio-economic inequalities.

The health sector must rise to meet this challenge, as part of a multisectoral system of prevention and response. This event will convene health leaders and policy-makers from across the WHO European Region to hear directly from survivors, civil society organizations and experts. In addition, a new WHO Regional Report will be launched. Together, we will explore how to build health systems that are truly survivor-centred.

Demonstrating that WHO/Europe's commitment is the first step to increasing action, the Special Initiative on the Response to Violence against Women and Girls aims to strengthen the health sector response to the needs of women and girls who experience violence to support progress for gender equality. The event will:

- 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;
- launch the report: “Prevalence, policies and promising practices – The role of the health sector in addressing Violence against Women and Girls 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 in-depth analysis on policy implementation across the Region.

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- share and discuss good practices and innovative solutions from other regions with global and regional experts that will pave the way to address challenges in countries.

I have the pleasure of inviting you to nominate one participant to represent your country. We particularly encourage the participation of an official from the ministry of health responsible for the health sector's response to VAWG and related topics. While in-person attendance is preferred, online participation will be available for selected sessions.

The working language for the event will be English, with simultaneous interpretation into Russian and Spanish.

Kindly address your reply to Ms Melanie Hyde, Technical Officer for Gender, Equity and Human Rights, who serves as the focal point for the meeting, by email at [euwho.SIVAWG@who.int](mailto:euwho.SIVAWG@who.int). Please share your nomination at your earliest convenience and no later than **Friday, 10 October 2025**.

Kindly note that countries are expected to cover travel and accommodation costs related to their participation in the event.

Yours very truly,



Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge  
Regional Director

**Encls:**

Scope and Purpose

**Copy for information to:**

Ms Helen Söber, Adviser, European Union Affairs and International Co-operation Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Suur-Ameerika 1, 10122 Tallinn, Estonia

Ms Agne Nettan-Sepp, Head, European Union Affairs and International Co-operation Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Suur-Ameerika 1, 10129 Tallinn, Estonia

H.E. Ms Riia Salsa-Audiffren, Ambassador Representative of the Republic of Estonia, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28A, CH-1209 Genève, Switzerland

H.E. Mr Andre Pung, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the Republic of Estonia, Frederiksgade 19, 4th floor, 1265 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Ms Kristina Köhler, Liaison Officer, WHO Country Office, Estonia, Paldiski Road 81, 10617 Tallinn, Estonia