**For the IFSW European Region a statement to Incorporate the Rights of Women and specifically the Istanbul Convention in the Human Rights Commission.**

The Istanbul Convention was agreed by all the European state 25 years ago recognising the rights of women, yet women’s rights are under pressure in the entire European Region. Especially the right to safety: 1 in 4 women have experienced physical violence, psychological violence and (death) threats, sexual abuse , financial exploitation, human trafficking, online harassment in their lives. And domestic violence effects children too, who are at least silent witnesses or victims themselves and have a huge risk of domestic violence being repeated later in life. They too have the right to grow up in safety.

IFSW European members observe that while that nations have agreed with the Instanbul Convention, in every country and community there is a lack of and commitment to social policy to implement conventions that realise the rights of women.

Social Workers are advocates for the (rights of) women and children. We could use our regional network within IFSW to focus on how effective social policies to protect women are. Do they have easy access to safety, like women’s shelters or is the path to claim their right to safety obstructed? Do women have the right to choose abortion, or do they have to get support from an advocate that works for a strong religious organisation that is actually against ending a pregnancy? Are women really taken seriously when they report violence to the police, or are they send home to ‘talk to their partner’ and sort things out?

These are the experiences where we as social workers can make huge differences. We should use the IFSW European Region to map how women can access their rights to safety, to find out how social policies have taken form and are in line with human rights.

IFSW Europe commit to prioritise violence against women:

* IFSW Europe will collect and address circumstances in which women are hindered or obstructed to their right to safety.
* IFSW Europe will make a statement and use their influences and lobby opportunities to address the problems in social policy and social media.
* The rights to safety and women’s rights are a global issue and the realities of women world wide are hugely different. Therefore IFSW Europe will support/ initiate to bring the rights of women to the global agenda.
* IFSW Europe will request their national associations to report the status in their country the rights of women (using the GREVIO reports and Shadow Reports) and campaign for the rights and safety of women.
* IFSW (in collaboration with EASSW) supports social work schools and education to incorporate women’s rights and domestic violence in their curriculum as an official part of social work.