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The European Union signs the Istanbul Convention following the agreement reached by the Maltese Presidency

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On 13 June, the European Union signed the Istanbul Convention, following a historic agreement reached by the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

This development was possible following the lead taken by the Maltese Presidency of the European Union in the prioritisation provided to the negotiation of this dossier.

The European Agency for Fundamental Rights, following a survey among more than 42,000 women, reported that one in three women in the European Union are victims of gender-based violence during their lifetime, and that this form of violence is widespread across all of the European Union.

The Maltese Presidency held a conference on 3 February, in conjunction with the European Commission, to raise awareness on the need to address this form of violence, both through national ratification of the Convention and the attainment of an agreement at Council level to allow the European Commission to accede to it.

Following this conference, Minister for European Affairs and Equality Helena Dalli, European Commissioner Věra Jourová, and MEP Anna Maria Corazza Bildt signed the Malta Joint Statement which was hailed by European civil society as:

"a landmark initiative where three European Institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, and the Council Presidency) have jointly made a strong call for action to the Member States, asking them to ratify and fully implement the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and to approve the EU's accession to this Convention in a meaningful way."

Ambassador Joseph A. Filletti, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to Council of Europe on behalf of the Maltese Presidency, and European Commissioner Věra Jourová, responsible for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality signed the Istanbul Convention on behalf of the European Union.