ECICW emergency motion
Date: 21/5/2025
Title of the emergency motion: Online harms
Organisation proposing the emergency motion
National Council of Women GB
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Text of resolution

ECICW calls on national governments, the Council of Europe and the EU to provide speedy and robust protections for us all, but especially children and women, from the many online harms. What is illegal offline should be illegal online.

According to UN Women, studies across the world show that 16 to 58 per cent of women and girls have been targeted by violence online. The impacts of this type of violence extend beyond the digital sphere, entrenching inequalities and posing a significant threat to women's rights and safety both online and off. Extreme online pornography effects real life violence, abuse and relationships. Children have not been protected from adult content so they have become both victims and perpetrators. There is an immense need for help and guidance in schools.

The tech giants have enormous resources at their disposal and extensive global reach. We need to answer the challenge by cooperating internationally.

We support The 2025 Commission on the Status of Women call for a comprehensive approach to eliminating violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology, including in its design, development and deployment, by combating the use of digital tools, such as social media and online platforms and artificial intelligence, for the purpose of harassment, racism, trafficking in persons and all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls.

Political context

Social media algorithms deliberately feed provocative content to keep consumers online for advertising. Misogynistic influencers, explicit sexual and violent content, self-harm sites and toxic beauty ideals are amplified by a business model prioritising profit over people's wellbeing.

women are 27 times more likely to be harassed online than men. The Inter-Parliamentary Union on online abuse of women parliamentarians found 82 per cent of those surveyed in

39 countries had been subjected to psychological violence, 65.5 per cent targeted with "humiliating sexual or sexist remarks", 42 per cent having "Extremely humiliating or sexually charged images" of themselves spread through social media, and 44.4 per cent being threatened with "death, rape, beatings or abduction".

Tech Facilitated Gender Based violence and humiliation forcibly silences women and removes them from the public sphere with an adverse effect on democracy.Tech fields remain male-dominated, limiting women's. Girls need to be encouraged to pursue STEM subjects. AI systems need to be rigorously audited for bias, trained on diverse and inclusive datasets, and governed by strong ethical and legal frameworks.

Boys are targeted by misogynistic influencers, causing relationship problems and discipline issues in schools. Social media has become a hotbed for bullying and abuse. In England over 1 million children were consulted and said the online world was one of their biggest concerns. Girlguiding's British surveys have found a fall in girls' happiness levels related to the online environment and sexual harassment.[Girls' Attitudes Survey 24 | Girlguiding] Australia has protected children under 16 from social media.

What is requested as follow up: The European Committee of the International Council of Women calls on its affiliated National Councils to:

- lobby their governments to work with the global community to introduce and strengthen legislation to protect populations, especially women and children from internet harms
- document and share with the ICW the effects of social media and violent and abusive online content and behaviour in their country, especially the effects on women and girls; and
- document and share with the ICW examples of best practice in tackling internet harms in their country – including making illegal in the online world that which is illegal offline.