



**Tackling gender-based violence with the support of companies: this was the objective of the CARVE project – Companies Against gender Violence. On 16 June 2016 in Brussels, Belgium, eight organizations from six European countries have presented the “Responding to Violence Against Women” guide for companies on the occasion of a European conference in Brussels, Belgium. Several renowned stakeholders – from civil society organizations to private companies – bore witness of their initiatives.**

*“Violence against women is a flagrant violation of human rights”* reminded Mrs Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality in its preface to the CARVE guide for companies. When we spend most of our life time at work, companies do have a role to play. When one in three women in the EU has already been a victim of violence, *“each of us, regardless of social class, culture or nationality, is surrounded by victims of this scourge”* as Mr François-Henri Pinault, Chairman of the Kering Corporate Foundation said.

The lack of data on the participation of women victims of violence to the economic activity of our societies is a missed opportunity to sensitize private stakeholders. Yet and beyond the moral duty, the incredible cost of domestic violence is reminding: partner violence costed 1 million euros every 30 minutes in the EU-25 in 2006, the most important costs being production losses (Psytel, 2009).

On the conference day, several best practices were highlighted by companies and NGOs themselves. Among them, the Ana Bella Foundation provides professional trainings to “survivors” of gender-based violence so that they become brand ambassadors for private companies such as Danone, L’Oréal, Bonduelle, etc. The German association Terre Des Femmes works along with employers to help them set up policies against partner violence.

While budget cuts in public expenses are increasing, private companies can also provide a valuable support to the organisations offering services to women victims. The Body Shop and Philip Morris are renowned for their financial support to associations supporting victims of violence in Europe, Asia or America. In Greece, Ikea furnished a shelter while two Greek companies renovated flats to transform them in an emergency centre.

The conference provided companies and corporate stakeholders with tools to address violence against women. However, it also turned out into a unique opportunity of networking between the multiple stakeholders having joined the event: indeed, if companies can play a major role in tackling violence against women, the conference also focused on the need to build a sound ecosystem including specialized associations and public services to support companies in this task.

In general, a holistic and comprehensive approach was defended by the speakers who underlined the need to address gender stereotypes and sexism as roots of gender-based violence. The European Trade Union Association also emphasized the importance to adopt regulatory frameworks to ensure the wellbeing and the protection of all workers, including women.

**More is to be found in the [Guide for companies](#) “Responding to Violence Against Women”.**

**A 1’30” teaser is also available at the following link: [carve-daphne.eu/conference](http://carve-daphne.eu/conference).**



About the CARVE project

This event is organized as part of the CARVE project ([carve-daphne.eu](http://carve-daphne.eu)) which started in December 2014 and is co-financed by the ‘[Daphne Programme](#)’ of the European Commission. Eight partners, in five European countries, coordinated by FACE Foundation, implement it. Interviews with companies, experts and NGOs have resulted in 5 national studies, which in turn provide the basis for the European guide for best practices. Local events with presentations of the guide in each country and language will take place between June and September 2016. Details available on the [project website](#).

For further information

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