

# Ending Violence against Women and Girls: Prevalence, Proposals and Partnerships

A side-event to the UNECE Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting, organised by the International Council of Women and the Council of Europe, and co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN in Geneva, the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and NGO/CSW Geneva

**WEDNESDAY, 30 October 2019, 13:30-14:45**  
**Room XXV, Palais des Nations (Building E, 1<sup>st</sup> floor).**

## SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES



**Moderator:** **Brigitte Polonovski**,  
President ECICW



Brigitte Polonovski is an expert on violence against women and girls. She has been President of the International Abolitionist Federation (IAF). Since 1992, Brigitte has been the UN Representative for the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF), President of the European Centre of the ICW (ECICW-CECIF) and Vice-President of the National Council of French women (CNFF). Brigitte is a member of the UN Women France committee

## Panellists

- **Nicole Ameline**, Vice-Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Women's Rights, CEDAW and Beijing+25*



After completing her post-graduate studies in law (DESS), **Nicole Ameline** pursued a career in the ministerial cabinets, then in the regional and local civil service, before becoming a Member of the French Parliament, where she was continuously re-elected from 1993 to 2017. (Law Commission and Foreign Affairs and Defence Commission); Minister in charge of decentralisation in 1995, Minister in charge of Maritime Affairs in 2002, then Minister of Parity and Professional Equality until 2005, Nicole Ameline was committed to Women's Rights in the world at an early stage. Appointed Ambassador in charge of Social Issues and Globalisation, she was France's Delegate to the ILO from 2005 to 2007. Nicole Ameline elected within CEDAW, President (2013/2014), is currently Vice-Chairperson of CEDAW, as well as Chair of the Working Group on SDGs and the Working Group with the IPU. Nicole

Ameline is very committed to promoting professional equality in conjunction with the international private sector and conducts development policies on the ground, particularly in the Mediterranean.

- **Alia El-Yassir**, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Europe/Central Asia, *VAWG across the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region: the importance of partnerships with civil society organisations – best practices and lessons learned.*



**Alia El-Yassir** is UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Representative to Turkey since September 2018. She has been working with UNIFEM/UN Women since 1997. She previously worked as the UN Women Special Representative in the occupied Palestinian territory, managing a complex portfolio of programmes and projects, as well as supporting the UNCT and HCT on establishing coordination mechanisms for tackling gender equality and women's empowerment issues. She is part of the UNDG roster of gender experts and has supported other UNCTs in this capacity. Before joining UN Women, she briefly worked with UNDP and was engaged in the education field. In addition to volunteering with a number of women's and human rights NGOs, she has worked

on educational media for children. Alia El-Yassir graduated from McGill University in Montreal and pursued post-graduate studies in Education and Anthropology, with a specialisation on Gender Studies at Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

- **Simona Lanzoni**, Second Vice-President of the independent group of experts monitoring the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Monitoring implementation of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention – strengthening legal and other measures to end VAWG – how NGOs can contribute to GREVIO's work.*



**Simona Lanzoni** has been a GREVIO member since 2015, and the second vice-president since 2017. She graduated in Political Sciences from the University La Sapienza in Rome. For many years Simona has been working at women grassroots level bridging women organisations in Italy and in other part of the world with institutions, facilitating dialogue and concrete action and projects on VAW and women's empowerment. In particular, since 2002, she set up an Italian NGO with other persons, Fondazione Pangea Onlus – working for the promotion of women's empowerment and women's human rights, the protection and empowerment of women survivors and children witnessing domestic violence. She has had different roles in many countries, such as, for example, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, and she has followed projects in South Africa and in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Colombia. She has been the vice-president of Pangea Onlus since 2012. Finally, she started programmes on VAW and women empowerment in Italy. A network has been created under her co-ordination among victims, professionals and shelters: REAMA, for the empowerment and self-help of women victims of gender-based violence. In addition, she is deeply involved in advocacy activities, bridging Italian women's civil society organisations in participating at international and national level to advance their rights and fights against gender-based violence. She participates in several advocacy tables at the institutional level on violence against women, on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, on gender equality, and has spent time in awareness raising and teaching at university level or where she is requested to train. In 2014, the President of the Italian Republic awarded Simona Lanzoni with the honorary title of Commendatore della repubblica, for the work carried out to empower women in the world and for the work to combat violence against women. She has contributed to draft, in collaboration with other women and civil society organisations, and presented the Italian shadow reports in 2011 and 2017 to the CEDAW Committee, at the United Nations, the report and recommendation at the pre-session of the Universal Periodic review on Italian women's rights issues in 2019 and the alternative report to Beijing+20 in 2014. She was also involved extensively in efforts advocating for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Italy.

- **Elke Sleurs**, Former Belgian Secretary of State, current Member of the Flemish Parliament, *Prevalence and manifestations of intimate partner violence/domestic violence against women and girls, including the physical and psychological impact on victims. Solutions.*



**Elke Sleurs** was formerly Secretary of State for Poverty Reduction, Equal Opportunities, People with Disabilities, Urban Policy and Scientific Policy in Belgium and she is currently a member of the Flemish Parliament. Elke graduated as a gynaecologist. She has been active for many years as a specialist in prenatal ultrasound and diagnostics. As a specialist, Elke has the task of informing and supporting her patients who are confronted with a (serious or life-threatening) foetal anomaly to the best of her ability. From 2011 to 2014, Elke was chairman of the Social Affairs Committee in the Senate. She is also a member of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. In addition, she is a deputy in the Commission for Home Affairs and Administrative Affairs and the Commission for External Relations and for National Defence.

- **Mohinder Watson**, Founder, Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage, Main UN NGO Permanent Representative, International Council of Women, Geneva. *Causes and consequences of forced marriage and 'honour killings' and examples of best practices to address these.*



**Mohinder Watson** is a British Asian who was ostracised for refusing to go through with an arranged marriage in the United Kingdom as a teenager. I have also done a lot of research on child widows including presenting the work to the CEDAW committee in 2018. A researcher with a PhD in Health Sciences and Masters in International Public Health, Mohinder works in the field of child marriage and in 2014, founded Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage (ACE&FM), an international NGO dedicated to advancing awareness, research and education on child, early and forced marriage, with a view to ending this practice. In particular the NGO aims to highlight these practices amongst immigrant communities in Europe, Canada, the United States, Australia and other 'western' countries where many people are still unaware that such practices occur.

### Summing up and closing statement

**Moderator:** **Charles Ramsden**,  
Chair of the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Commission.



**Charles Ramsden** is the Chair of the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe. He is responsible for International Relations in the Government Equalities Office in the United Kingdom. The Government Equalities Office leads on issues relating to women, sexual orientation and transgender equality matters; it also has responsibility across government for equality strategy and legislation. Charles has been involved in promoting equality and tackling discrimination with the United Kingdom Government for many years. He has worked on legislation, funding programmes, stakeholder liaison and developing the United Kingdom equality strategy. Prior to working in equality, he

has worked within the criminal justice system and on immigration policy.

- **Marlène Schiappa**,  
State Secretary for Gender Equality, France, *"Ending Violence Against Women: A priority for France and its Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe"*



**Marlène Schiappa**, Secretary of State for equality between women and men and the fight against discrimination, France. Born on 18 November 1982 in Paris. University education: Graduated in communication & new media, with a specialisation in electronic writing. Professional background: Secretary of State to the Prime Minister, in charge of equality between women and men, until 16 October 2018; Assistant, then in charge of monitoring new media for the Euro RSCG agency; Journalist for Yahoo.fr; Editorial Director of a press agency; Creator of the "Maman travaille" network; Novelist and essayist. Electoral mandates: Deputy to the Mayor of Le Mans, Jean-Claude Boulard, Equality Delegate from 2014; Community Advisor, French Tech Delegate in Le Mans Métropole.

