21-22 September 2026
Implementing the Istanbul Convention
after the EU's Accession in the Academic System.
Backlash, Gaps and Institutional Responsibility

A Pan-European Conference

Working Group 1.2
Consent, Harassment and Mobbing:
Are University Policies Effective?
Prevention, Reporting Mechanisms and Institutional Accountability
Working Group 1.4

Digital Spaces and Gender-Based Violence.
Online Sexism and the Responsibilities of Academic Institutions

Final Report

The working groups discussed these two topics, starting with the following questions:

- What can universities do to prevent and tackle gender-based violence among students?

- What measures should be taken to this end?

The proposals that emerged can be summarised in three points:

1) What: The primary mission of universities is education and training. This must be directed at all members of the university community: not only students, but also lecturers, professors and administrative staff. Based on the experience gained and the

data emerging from some surveys (in particular that promoted by the CRUI), it is proposed that these education and training initiatives be directed first and foremost at professors, to raise their awareness, provide them with the tools to foster critical thinking amongst students and bring to light hidden violence, and enable them to recognise and manage any cases of harassment or violence.

2) How: It is necessary to: gain prior knowledge of the wider context in which the university operates, through systematic data collection; promote the cross-curricular integration of issues relating to gender equality and gender-based violence within the various courses; overcome the issue of course selection by making courses dealing with these issues more attractive, whilst also addressing problems relating to available funding, human resources and administrative procedures; help people understand that combating violence is not merely a matter to be addressed through the legal system, but requires a profound cultural shift at all levels. From this perspective, it is important to work towards redefining educational and training models, with new language, communication skills and sustained commitment, based on the framework of the three Es: Enhance, Explain, Encourage.

3) Who: When discussing the case of sexist behaviour by a lecturer at the University of Milan on social media, the working groups debated the dilemma between public ethics and freedom of expression, concluding in favour of the former. From this perspective, the adoption of codes of ethics, self-regulatory codes and codes promoting respect for personal dignity must be encouraged. For this reason, we consider the proposed Code of Conduct for European universities to be of great importance.