Gaps in response to violence against women and girls

Bosnia and Herzegovina signed on 8 March 2013, and ratified on 7 November 2013, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention.

Who are the key players in providing services for survivors of violence against women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- Service providers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are women’s NGOs and state institutions, including Centres for Social Work, health centres, and police departments.
- Although service providers noted satisfactory cooperation with police and NGOs, more collaboration is needed to improve referral mechanisms.
What are some gaps in services in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- There are still no crisis centres for survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence. Women and girls lack health and medical forensic services, trauma support and counselling.
  - Shelters are scarce and inaccessible for marginalised groups of women.
  - A very limited number of service providers offer perpetrator programmes. Work with perpetrators is rare because court order to attend these programmes are hardly utilised.
  - Telephone helplines do not have systems in place that allow callers to remain anonymous. According to the Convention, it is important that helplines support confidentiality.
  - Most service providers cannot offer support in Romani language or provide adapted information about their services for persons with intellectual disabilities.

What more can Bosnia and Herzegovina do to better address violence against women and girls?

- Legislation to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, including stalking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, must be strengthened and fully implemented.
  - The national government must provide necessary funding to service providers, according to the standards of the Istanbul Convention.
  - The Istanbul Convention needs to be fully implemented to end violence against women and girls, and achieve gender equality.