**Students urged to combat sexual violence and harassment with launch of ‘It Stops Now’ campaign video**

**Press Release**

**X October 2018**

Students at [**NAME OF INSTITUTE**] are being urged to take an active response to sexual violence and harassment with the ‘It Stops Now’ campaign.

The ‘It Stops Now’ campaign is an integral part of the Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third-Level Education (ESHTE) project which aims to prevent and combat sexual violence and harassment in third-level institutes across Europe. As well as an active social media presence and the release of a campaign video, the campaign will also see posters, stickers and other material shared across [**NAME OF INSTITUTE**] to raise awareness, with further training, outreach and resources to be unrolled in the coming months.

‘It Stops Now’ is informed by extensive research and student focus groups across five partner countries. It showcases the experiences and perspectives of students on issues of sexual violence and gender inequality, ranging from incidents of rape, groping, stalking and catcalling to online harassment, secret filming, and the sharing of private or unsolicited, explicit images. Students from across Irish institutes came up with key messages and concepts for ‘It Stops Now’ at a campaign development session in August, demonstrating the strong activism and leadership of students which has already been critical in opening discussions on sexual violence on their campuses.

31% of women students in Ireland have reported feeling harassed in their current educational institution, with one in four experiencing unwanted physical groping. Women from marginalised groups, such as women living with disabilities or women from migrant or ethnic minority communities, are most at risk. Under-reporting of these issues remains a significant problem, with only 3% of students in Ireland disclosing an incident to an official representative in their institution.

Campaign coordinator Tara Brown said, “The ‘It Stops Now’ campaign is calling for a broad cultural change towards sexual violence and harassment. Students have the right to study and live in a safe and engaging environment, yet the reality is that harmful behaviours and unwanted sexual experiences towards women are endemic in our third-level institutes. We all have a role to play in ensuring women’s rights and safety, and this campaign compels us all to consider and act on our shared responsibilities. It is imperative that we build a culture of zero tolerance which prevents and combats sexual harassment and violence of all kinds both on and off campus”.

She continued, “One of every three women from the age of 15 will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime, affecting women aged 18-25 most highly. ‘It Stops Now’ aims to move on the momentum built by movements like #MeToo by empowering students to lead change, ending victim-blaming attitudes, and changing perceptions of sexual violence and harassment. By believing and supporting survivors, challenging toxic behaviours, and understanding and acting with consent, students and institutes can create a culture of respect and equality for women”.

[**NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE OR CAMPUS COORDINATOR**] OF [**NAME OF INSTITUTE**] said, “[**QUOTE FROM REPRESENTATIVE OR CAMPUS COORDINATOR**].

For more information please contact [**NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE OR CAMPUS COORDINATOR**] at [**CONTACT DETAILS**],  or visit [www.itstopsnow.org](http://www.itstopsnow.org/).

**Notes to the Editor:**

The ESHTE project is funded by the European Commission, with the NWCI standing as its lead coordinator and working with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) in Cyprus, Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS), the Women’s Issues Information Centre (WIIC) in Lithuania and the Women’s Equality Commissioner, Ludwig -Maximilian University in Munich, Germany.

Each project partner is working closely with staff and students in higher education institutions, statutory agencies, and NGOs focused on combating sexual violence and harassment against women.  In Ireland, the NWCI facilitates a National Advisory Committee to support the development and implementation of the project.

The project is informed by research from across the EU which has reported the high prevalence of sexual harassment and violence experienced by young women in third level institutions