**Questionnaire**

**Child, Early and Forced Marriage**

**Ireland’s response**

The Domestic Violence Act 2018 (hereafter “the Act”) was commenced on 1 January 2019 and represents a significant improvement in legal protections available to victims of domestic violence in Ireland. The Act provides, *inter alia,* for a new criminal offence of forced marriage. The legislation also enhances the legislative measures available within the civil law system to support and protect victims, as required by the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which Ireland ratified in March 2019.

The new offence of forced marriage was introduced by section 38 of the Act. The Act also provides under section 49 for the necessary amendments to the Civil Registration Act 2004 (as amended) to remove the exemption for underage marriage from those provisions.

The introduction of the Act is a key action in Ireland’s Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016 – 2021, a whole of Government response to Domestic and Sexual Violence, which contains a range of actions to be implemented by Government Departments and agencies. The bulk of the Strategy’s actions are aimed at changing societal attitudes through awareness raising to help prevent domestic and sexual violence, improving services to victims and holding perpetrators to account. The community and voluntary sector, working in collaboration with the State agencies, have a crucial role in ensuring the delivery of a successful strategy. The strategy is a living document and has actions added on an ongoing basis. Currently there are 73 actions with 13 having been added since its publication in 2016.