



Programme of Exchange of Good Practices on Gender Equality:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second seminar of the second year of the programme was held in Madrid, Spain, on 24 and 25 September 2009, and chose as its theme gender-based violence. The exchange is organised with the financial support of the Progress programme.

The development of legislation concerning gender-based violence in Spain dates back to 1989 when the offence of “domestic violence” was included in the Criminal Code in force. In 2004, the landmark Organic Law on Measures of Integrated Protection against Gender-based Violence was enacted. The legislation is highly complex, ambitious and has the support of all stakeholders in society and politics. Defined as encompassing physical, economic and sexual violence, the legislation is rooted in gender equality and the elimination of unequal power relations between men and women, and as a result has a wide scope.

The National Action Plan for Awareness and Prevention of Gender-based Violence is an important measure aimed at changing the traditional culture and implementing change in education, communications, justice, safety, health, etc. Actions introduced by the government include the creation of an Observatory on Gender-Based Violence, with competencies in each of the 17 autonomous regions, and the coordination of actions at the national, regional and local levels. This national network has resulted in 59 coordination units, which provide data, information and resources for victims. There are three main facets to this: protection of victims, individualised follow-up, particularly for women most at risk, and sensitisation programmes.

Prior to the seminar, the independent Spanish expert on gender-based violence, María Jesús Parra Pérez, produced the host country report in accordance with the guidelines approved by the EC, and this was subsequently distributed to the independent experts of the countries attending the seminar, who themselves produced response reports (again based on approved guidelines).

The seminar commenced with a description of how gender-based violence is addressed in Spain in the form of keynote addresses on the following themes from Spanish governmental representatives: generic introduction to the topic; co-ordination and institutional monitoring instruments; women’s associations and institutional participation; court specialization in response to gender violence; new technologies for protecting women victims of gender violence. This was followed by a presentation by the independent Spanish expert of her report and, in the afternoon, a visit to the Ministry of the Interior.

The two parallel Friday morning workshops focused on two topics: the main gaps and challenges at the national level in fighting gender-based violence; and the key elements of good practice and transferability of measures.

The main lessons for policy from the exchange include: the holistic nature of the Spanish approach, with the consequent eradication of duplication of resources; Spain’s multi-agency approach, together with its risk assessment system and utilisation of new technology; the efficacy of the Government State Observatory and the possibility of creating a similar, Europe-wide institution; the importance of NGOs and the women’s movement in exerting pressure; the importance of co-ordination across the governmental and NGO sectors, to help mobilise all relevant actors; the importance of effective funding measures; the importance of awareness-raising, mainstreaming and education; the requirement for programmes of treatment for perpetrators; the importance of 24-hour hotlines; the need for a legal basis to gender-based violence and an EU Directive that requires necessary standards and monitoring mechanisms; and the critical requirement for political will at the national level to implement a programme of eradicating GBV that is linked into gender equality policy.