



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality


Preventing domestic violence with men and boys: Challenges and opportunities

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Summary Report



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Introduction

The mutual learning seminar, held in Stockholm, examined Sweden's recent innovative policy to prevent domestic violence with men and boys. Domestic violence (also defined as domestic abuse) is defined by the Istanbul Convention to mean '...all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim (Article 3b).

The seminar was attended by government representatives and gender experts from 15 Member States, including the host country, Sweden, and participating countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, as well as a stakeholder from the UK.¹ Representatives of the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) also participated in the seminar.

The seminar was an excellent opportunity to discuss new thinking and approaches to the prevention of domestic violence with men and boys. The importance of this is reflected in the general framework for prevention in the Istanbul Convention² (Articles 12, 14, 16), which all EU Member States have signed and 21 have ratified. The EU signed the Convention in 2017 and is in the process of acceding to this instrument.

1. The good practice in Sweden

1.1 Introduction

The Swedish good practice is based on a new policy priority on preventing domestic violence with men and boys introduced under the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Men's Violence against Women 2017-2026. The Strategy has the objective to end men's violence against women and girls, including honour related violence and oppression, and acknowledges that men and boys have an important role to play in violence prevention. Actions are aimed at three levels: i) early intervention to address adverse childhood experiences and break the cycle of violence; ii) a universal (primary) prevention approach, for example, by working with young people; and iii) a targeted prevention approach through perpetrator treatment programmes to prevent recidivism.

The Strategy is addressed to victims and perpetrators, regardless of their gender. It recognises that men and boys are potential victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Priority is given to the need to address both violence between men and destructive masculinity, and to ensure that men and boys become change agents benefitting from non-violence and gender equality.

¹ CocoAwareness is an organisation established by Luke and Ryan Hart to raise awareness about masculinities and coercive control to end domestic abuse. <https://www.cocoawareness.co.uk>

² The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. For further information see: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home?>

1.2 A focus on universal and targeted interventions at multiple levels

Interventions are being implemented at multiple levels: societal, community, relational and individual, and through short-term and long-term measures. The Strategy has a budget of SEK 1.5 billion (€ 144 million) to implement specific measures under the coordination of the Gender Equality Agency, the County Administrative Boards, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association for Local Authorities.

Two of the Strategy's four objectives address prevention. The first objective 'Enhanced and effective violence prevention' is, on the one hand, aimed at targeted programmes with men who use or are at risk of using violence by preventing violence happening before it begins. This is carried out through interventions to prevent perpetrators relapsing through prison-, probation- and community-based screening and treatment programmes. This targeted work with men who perpetrate violence against women contains structured risk assessments, developing good practice methods in working with perpetrators through treatment programmes, and a new pilot hotline to encourage violent men to seek help. On the other hand, the Strategy takes a universal approach to working with all relevant stakeholders. This puts emphasis on coordination and integration of all relevant actors at local, regional and national levels from government agencies, municipalities, regions and men's and women's organisations. Other interventions consist of evidence-based guidance for professionals in health care and social services, awareness raising with young migrants and asylum seekers, improving knowledge and awareness on youth intimate partner violence and consent, and training with school staff around new legislation on sexual offences.

The Strategy's second objective relating to prevention concerns the role of the criminal justice system in deterring violent men's recidivism, and to encourage violent men to participate in treatment programmes to change their violent behaviour. This addresses risk factors such as substance abuse attitudes, for example, through structured risk assessments. Other prevention measures cover mandatory training for professionals, reviews of serious cases of domestic violence and fatalities, improved detection of violence, support to calculate local and regional costs of violence, and public inquiries.

1.3 Assessment of the opportunities and challenges

One of the strengths of the Swedish Strategy is the wide-ranging role of prevention covering support for victims, the responsibility of perpetrators, and a greater emphasis on engaging all stakeholders, including men and boys, in preventing domestic violence, particularly at local levels. This is beginning to show positive outcomes, particularly of prevention initiatives aimed at perpetrators of domestic violence, a previously neglected area in policy. There has been some success in implementing prevention measures at the local level through the coordination of municipal services. This new dual approach to prevention through universal and targeted objectives in working with men has not compromised the essential role of victim support services and the role these services also play in prevention.

One of the key challenges is in shifting perceptions and organisational objectives so that there is better understanding of the complexities of ending domestic violence. This is reflected, for example, in an approach stressing the importance of building

trust with men, by speaking to men as victims of violence, as well as change makers. A further opportunity is that there is great potential for improving local level interventions, and the linkages between national policy objectives and local implementation. It is interesting to note that there has been a high level of interest amongst municipalities, including small municipalities serving rural areas where access to services is difficult. Challenges highlighted in the implementation of the Strategy include the need for more effective methods and resources for documenting and evaluating prevention outcomes; comprehensive support for local implementation and follow-up; and better systems of coordination between national objectives and local action on the ground. Further challenges relate to the need to improve the evidence base about what works in perpetrator treatment programmes, and to improve ways of measuring progress at the national level.

1.4 Good practice examples emanating from the Strategy: violence prevention

Seminar participants were introduced to two specific projects, which have been successful in implementing some of the objectives set out in the Strategy.

The first is a bystander violence prevention programme with young people through an innovative school mentoring programme. The programme has been implemented in the town of Botkyrka, where high levels of crime and violence, disaffection amongst young people and low engagement and trust with the police, have contributed to social stigmatisation and extremism. The violence prevention programme works on the basis of challenging stereotypical gender norms, with the aim to build strong leaders and attachment to ensure that everyone is safe. Violence prevention takes place through policies and programmes at different levels: individual, parental/family, school and community. The Mentors Violence Prevention (MVP) school programme is part of this coordinated whole-community approach. It is implemented through an active bystander approach by training young people from 12th grade to work as 'norm-creative leaders' with students in 9th grade. The starting point was a general approach in working with young people's own experiences as bystanders and to build trust between police, social services, schools and students. The MPV has helped to create positive leadership and attachment amongst young people, helping them to better understand the dynamics of violence and build awareness of respect and consent in their intimate relationships. The project has led to young people taking leadership roles, as well as better trust between them and the police, resulting in an observed reduction in violence amongst young people.

The second example is an innovative violence prevention programme run by the County Administration Board of Västerbotten, which has pioneered a structured and integrated gender equality and crime prevention approach. This has been implemented through long-term prevention with four rural municipalities (Sorsele, Vilhelmina, Jorsjö and Asele). The initiative combines collaboration between local services in order to improve awareness about strategic and long-term prevention. Through a transformational approach in challenging social norms, actions are targeted to the whole community and through the engagement of men and boys to break destructive masculinity patterns. Based on existing local crime prevention platforms established in each municipality, new domestic violence prevention programmes have linked domestic violence, gender equality and crime coordinators, along with personnel from the police and municipal services, with the support of an expert NGO. The prevention approach has been particularly important as many people living in rural areas in the north of Sweden have great difficulty in accessing

local services. This emphasis on long-term prevention has also helped to build knowledge about how to prevent violence with men and boys and how to integrate violence prevention into existing structures and services, while recognising that there are costs of not engaging in prevention. One of the challenges relates to socio-economic change in remote communities where women are leaving rural communities to work in cities, while men continue working in traditional industries of mining and forestry. Challenging stereotypical norms, including gender segregation in the workplace, has been an important part of this violence prevention work.

2. The situation in the other participating countries

The most recent **Belgian** National Action Plan against Gender Based Violence 2015-2019, contains objectives on awareness raising, training, prevention, protection of victims, victim and perpetrator care and implementation of an efficient judicial framework. No specific focus is given to engaging boys and men as actors in the fight against gender based violence, although this will be an important issue for the future. To date, most activities have been run by civil society organisations, such as the Belgian MenEngage Network, established in 2018, to involve men and boys in gender equality and through pilot projects working with boys in high schools to prevent gender-based violence. The approach recognises that while most perpetrators are male, not all men are perpetrators – this has been a stepping-stone to discussing social norms change and harmful/toxic masculinities. Important learning has been gained from the worldwide network of MenEngage organisations in engaging men and boys for gender equality. A further good practice is the EU-funded Equi-X project, which addresses stereotypes around masculinity, sexuality and gender through training of young people. The project developed an evaluative scale of masculinity that has been used to measure progress through the Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) scale. These initiatives have been important in the context of changing harmful gender stereotypes and the ‘rape culture’.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Domestic Violence Act, implemented in 2007, is based on three pillars: interventions by the police, intervention centres that work with victims and perpetrators, and court actions to protect victims. In addition, stalking is now covered in the criminal law. The Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-based Violence 2019-2022, aims to improve services to victims and enhance work on prevention, including through perpetrator programmes. Current approaches to working with perpetrators range from therapeutic interventions, and education and skills in managing conflict and anger, with the aim of preventing recidivism and diminishing the probability of serious and repeated domestic violence occurring. A much greater emphasis is now given to coordinated actions, including with the police. An example is the Interdisciplinary Team against Domestic Violence of the City of Brno which engages in local level actions including primary prevention and education, and work with perpetrators of domestic violence. Although these perpetrator programmes have been positively evaluated for their effect in changing perpetrators’ behaviour, there are insufficient resources to provide programmes across the country. Various initiatives have been run by NGOs on awareness raising to change gender stereotypes, gender-sensitive training for teachers, and education programmes for young people in schools. An NGO working with men, Liga otevřených mužů, participates in the White Ribbon campaign – men against violence against women and children. However, the Czech Republic has not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention. Debate about how to end domestic violence has been affected by a negative political climate surrounding gender equality.

In **Denmark**, new legislation in 2019 introduced the criminalisation of psychological domestic violence, strengthened responses to digital sexual abuse, and the establishment of the National Stalking Centre. A national initiative 'Dialogue Against Violence' provides counselling for male and female perpetrators of domestic violence, and interventions to prevent dating violence, alongside the training and supervision for professionals in municipalities and the police. It has also drawn up screening and intervention methods for midwives in the health sector to enable them to implement early intervention and support for vulnerable pregnant women. Since 2012, the Danish Prison and Probation Service has cooperated with 'Dialogue against Violence' by offering perpetrators psychological treatment aimed at addressing, coping with and eliminating violence in intimate relations. Perpetrators may be inmates in prisons or clients on probation, male or female. Although participation is voluntary, it is sometimes a condition for probation. A further good practice is a national hotline and telephone counselling for victims and perpetrators through the initiative 'Life without violence' (Lev uden Vold). Interventions and risk management on perpetrator programmes are insufficient in meeting the problem. For example, treatment programmes for perpetrators are only accessible in four cities in Denmark.

In **Finland**, the majority of victim support and prevention activities with men and boys, including perpetrators, are carried out by NGOs with state funding. A new focus on prevention and perpetrator programmes followed Finland's ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2015. The current Programme of Government has increased a range of measures to prevent domestic violence, including a Ministry of Justice led three-year programme on crime prevention. Since 2015 there has been a significant increase in shelter places after the National Institute for Health and Welfare (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health) took the responsibility for managing and financing shelters. A national help-line for victims and perpetrators was established with state funding in 2016. A good practice example is the multiagency victim-focused risk assessment meeting (MARAC) which was piloted in three Finnish districts, and has since been extended to over 100 municipalities. Overall, MARAC has been successful in encouraging greater levels of reporting and has helped to reduce the number of recurrent domestic violence reports. An example of a national level prevention initiative involving men's and women's organisations is the 'Unbeatable Line in Espoo' (Lyömätön Linja Espoossa) where professionals work with perpetrators of violence. It includes the 'Unbeatable path - An Alternative to Violence Programme' (Lyömätön tie – Väkivallan katkaisuhjelma) for men who have used or are afraid of using violence in the family or in close relationships. The programme, which lasts for about 1.5 years, involves face-to-face meetings, a professionally led peer support group, and follow-up meetings. Its effectiveness is currently being evaluated by the University of Turku. In addition, in 2000 a cooperation model with the police and prosecutor's office 'Stop Violence - Referring a Domestic Violence and Domestic Violence Suspect from Pretrial Investigation to an Alternative to Violence Programme' was established to address intimate partner violence by directing the perpetrator to the necessary services.

In **Germany**, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs is currently planning an action programme against violence against women, building on the provisions contained in the Istanbul Convention. This will provide increased resources, better coordination of domestic violence assistance, as well as services for perpetrators and victims (male and female) of domestic violence. All federal states have drawn up five-year state action plans to combat domestic violence. Currently, support and counselling services exist for both women and men victims and perpetrators. Other initiatives include the project STOP that aims to end intimate partner violence in five districts in

Hamburg, and is run by the University of Applied Sciences in cooperation with the city of Hamburg. The NGO Saxony e.V. provides a nationwide specialist and coordination point on men's violence, with expert advice on setting up male violence prevention projects. A further project in five federal states has tested new approaches for needs-based planning and the development of the help system for women affected by violence. Violence prevention initiatives have been implemented through school programmes at various levels on sexual and domestic violence and conflict mediation. Some programmes addressing domestic violence are implemented in prisons and through aftercare. There are some good practices in the provision of information resources, such as an online database to help perpetrators and victims of domestic violence find services.

Greece has a comprehensive legal framework on domestic violence, focussed on the provision of shelters and counselling centres for victims of domestic violence. Ratification of the Istanbul Convention led to the introduction of the Domestic Violence Amendment of Law N. 3500/06. This has given a new focus to prevention, stalking, child marriage, and better enforcement of protection orders, amongst other areas. A lack of formal governmental guidelines on perpetrator treatment programmes means that interventions in this area tend to be ineffective and fragmented. One successful initiative is the introduction of 'penal mediation', which sets out conditions that are agreed by the victim and the offender for mandatory specialised counselling for offenders in exchange for more severe measures such as imprisonment. The conditions are: (i) the offender must move away from the family home for 'a reasonable time period'; (ii) he/she has to offer monetary and other restitution for the harm he/she has caused; and (iii) he/she has to follow a mandatory specialised counselling programme for a minimum of three years. Different methodologies have been developed, for example, the programme in Athens provides offender-only counselling, while the one in Thessaloniki addresses the problem through couples counselling. A good practice is the 'VIA-STOP' specialist therapeutic penal mediation programme run by the Institute for the Prevention and Treatment of Violence and the Promotion of Gender Equality. However, gaps exist in risk assessments and training of professionals, as well as in education initiatives targeted to boys and men.

In **Latvia**, there have been significant improvements in services for the protection of and assistance for domestic violence victims, and for victim and perpetrator rehabilitation programmes. Latvia has not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention and there is currently no unified policy on preventing domestic violence. A draft law on the Protection of Persons Subjected to Violence and Risk of Violence aims to improve cooperation between state and municipal bodies, health care practitioners and NGOs to ensure protection, prevent recurrence of violence and deaths caused by such violence. Prevention interventions have been implemented by health care professionals, law enforcement specialists and social workers. For example, guidelines exist for health care professionals for working with women who may be possible victims of domestic violence and training has been provided for general practitioners and nurses. Legislation also requires that social workers implement risk assessments, including in assessing domestic violence between adults. Guidelines are being revised to equip social workers to carry out risk assessments to prevent domestic violence. State-funded perpetrator individual and group counselling has been available since 2015. Perpetrator treatment is carried out by the State Probation Service using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and through awareness raising and social correction programmes to help participants develop respectful relationships and manage emotions. A good practice is a cooperation initiative of state bodies and NGOs, which is being piloted in several municipalities under the

project 'A Step Closer: Unified Community Response to Violence against Women. The project aims to implement a multisectoral, victim-centred institutional cooperation model, a community-based risk assessment questionnaire and operational guidelines.

In **Lithuania**, the 2011 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence marked a new approach to domestic violence. It covers both support and protection of victims of domestic violence through a gender-neutral approach, and prevention by engaging men, adults and young people. The National Programme on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Support to Victims 2014-2020 gives a new emphasis to treatment programmes provided by probation services; municipal services such as public health or crisis centres; and NGOs. NGOs working with perpetrators report that they lack funds to provide sufficient services. In addition, they would like to see more resources for primary prevention of domestic violence and a greater role for the provision of state regulated support programmes for perpetrators in collaboration with victim support organisations. Primary prevention activities have to date been gender neutral. Good practices include the work of the NGO, Missing Person's Families Support Centre, which, in cooperation with the Aland Islands Peace Institute. Their work on prevention has implemented the Girl and Boy group method, aimed at enhancing young people's active participation and individual development. This is carried out as part of the wider goals of gender equality and non-discrimination. The NGO Women's Issues Information Centre (WIIC), as part of the EU-funded project, Youth4Youth, piloted a manual in schools in Lithuania aimed at preventing of gender-based violence among boys and girls aged 14-18 years. Using a peer-to-peer model, students completing the programme became ambassadors of gender equality and trained 500 of their peers on healthy relationships between boys and girls. WIIC also runs a programme initiating positive masculinity called 'Super Dad' and raising awareness about positive masculinity through the informational portal 'Not shameful anymore' (Nebegėda). Finally, a nationwide campaign 'For A Safe Lithuania' attracted famous men and women as ambassadors to participate in the initiatives against domestic violence.

In **Malta**, primary prevention takes place through education, awareness raising and training by independent government agencies and NGOs. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2018 led to significant changes, including better definitions of different forms of violence, a more comprehensive definition of domestic violence and increased punishments for perpetrators. However, Malta has taken a gender mainstreaming and gender-neutral approach, the latter differing from the approach of the Convention. There are some concerns from NGOs that implementation is not within the original scope and purpose of the Convention. There is currently no state prevention programme on male violence against women. The government's proposed four-year crime prevention strategy, 2017-2021, which included measures on the primary prevention of violence against women and girls in schools, has yet to be implemented. However, several prevention programmes with boys have been implemented by the government. One example is a project run by the National Commission for Promotion of Equality, 'Equality Beyond Genders', 2016-2017, which targeted boys in post-secondary schools. An EU-funded project 'Breaking the Cycle of Violence', focusses on gender equality and violence prevention with local Boy Scouts. Work with perpetrators takes place in the post-criminal justice system, comprising a 22-week group programme where perpetrators are first assessed on an individual basis prior to joining. There is no research that shows the efficacy or success rates of this programme in Malta. The NGO Men Against Violence, established in 2014, works on primary prevention exclusively with men and boys. It raises awareness with boys in schools and provides training and resources for

teachers. Recently, Men Against Violence and the University of Malta implemented a bystander intervention programme on preventing sexual harassment with young people in post-secondary schools.

The **Portuguese** National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence 2018-2021 includes actions relating to work with perpetrators to prevent domestic violence. A 2019 report from the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic violence (GREVIO) recommended that Portugal improve the provision of perpetrator prevention programmes, including common minimum standards for these programmes, amongst other areas. An important role is given to local coordination at municipal level. An example is the Coimbra Networking Experience, 2000-2019, where health, education, criminal justice, policy, social services and other stakeholders have coordinated their actions to tackle domestic violence. It covers the training of health professionals, victim and perpetrator programmes, research on the prevention of trauma, improved coordination with the police and criminal justice system, and prevention work with young people in schools and football clubs. A National Support Network provides an integrated response to domestic violence through shelters and intervention centres. Prevention measures have been carried out in the criminal justice system by the Retrospective Domestic Violence Homicide Analysis Team, which reviews and implements learning from domestic homicides. Ministry of Health prevention programmes have adopted an integrated model: 'Health action on gender, violence and the lifecycle'. Under the National Programme for Mental Health a project commenced in 2019 to disseminate a strategy on working with perpetrators. This strategy, targeting victims and perpetrators, was drawn up by the Family Violence Unit (based in the Coimbra Hospital University Centre and the Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Psychological Trauma). In addition, research, awareness raising and training have been important parts of interventions in schools through the 'Violence: Information, Research, Intervention' (2002), and 'School Against Violence' (2007) networks, supported by guidelines drawn up by the Ministry of Education. A further good practice is the work being carried out with young people in several municipalities to create safe cities, with actions designed to prevent dating and sexual violence, mitigate risk factors and enhance community resilience.

In **Romania**, legislation was adopted following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This includes new legal provisions in civil law for the introduction of provisional protection orders, and the criminalisation in penal law of stalking and sexual violence. There are very few perpetrator treatment programmes. One of the problems is that the law still focusses on family violence, which is framed as a family, health and welfare problem, rather than a domestic violence and women's rights issue. The low conviction rate of perpetrators makes it difficult to implement prevention programmes for perpetrators. Some prevention activities are run by the police in schools, for example, under the Strategy for Preventing Crime at the Level of Bucharest Municipality 2011–2016. This has resulted in improved engagement with teenagers by NGOs, municipal police and crime prevention initiatives. There have been several public awareness campaigns on zero tolerance for domestic violence, including the national campaign, #HeForShe, but the general lack of services has made it difficult to implement change at local levels. This is particularly the case in rural areas where the police are often reluctant to intervene in families they know from poor and Roma communities. A good practice example is a community organising and advocacy project for women's safety in the Roma community 'Making women's voice be heard!' (run by the FILIA Centre in partnership with E-Romnja, the Association for Promoting Roma Women's Rights

and NGOs). The project has successfully engaged Roma women in taking action to reduce violence and has held discussions on violence prevention with secondary school students, school management and parents.

In **Slovakia**, preventing domestic violence with men and boys and a new emphasis on coordination and prevention exist under the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014–2019. The plan provides for the establishment of a Coordinating and Methodical Centre for Gender-Based and Domestic Violence (CMC), implementation of Regional Action Plans to prevent and end violence against women, and setting the conditions for mandatory perpetrator programmes. Through the CMC, work is being carried out to coordinate activities, including guidelines in primary prevention and specialist work with perpetrators. Guidance and training has been initiated through a 'Manual on Working with Perpetrators of Violence against Women in Penitentiary Care'. There has been opposition to ratification of the Istanbul Convention, viewed as a threat to traditional values, which is affecting the implementation of violence prevention programmes. Despite this political environment, there are some good practice examples of violence prevention with men and boys, such as a pilot project by the NGO EsFem 'Model of gender-sensitive education for boys'. A teacher programme of 'Ethical education' aims to foster boys' personal development. Slniečko, a women's NGO, has drawn up an educational programme 'Kozmo and his adventures' for school and pre-school children to prevent all forms of violence. The NGO, 'Aliancia Žien', works with other stakeholders and international experts to implement cooperation and dialogue on effective perpetrator programmes.

In **Slovenia**, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (2008, 2016) and the revised penal code that criminalised domestic violence and stalking (2015), led to a greater emphasis on coordination, prevention and work with perpetrators. In particular, the revised Domestic Violence Prevention Act, 2016, sought to improve the coordination of and communication between all competent actors, including NGOs, with improved procedures for addressing domestic violence. The revised penal code enables the courts to issue conditional suspended sentences with protective supervision and referral to perpetrator programmes. Although there are no national standards or guidance in working with perpetrators, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and Ministry of Education and Sport have responsibilities in this area. In practice, most prevention initiatives, including in schools, are carried out by NGOs. There are no specific prevention programmes engaging men and boys. A good practice example is the work of the NGO 'Association for Nonviolent Communication' that has successfully worked to prevent domestic violence with perpetrators, victims and young boys through social skills training. There has been good cooperation with relevant state institutions and an increase in referrals in recent years. However, new programmes for perpetrators and prevention are needed, as is guidance on risk assessment and in raising awareness amongst judges and police.

In **Spain**, the law on gender-based violence provides support for victims of domestic violence, with a lesser emphasis on prevention or work with perpetrators. Preventing violence against women is part of both the Organic Law 1/2004 on Protection Against Gender Violence and the 2018 National Agreement of the Need of Urgent Measures to cope with Gender Violence against Women. Specific focus is given to the role of educational initiatives to promote gender equality and raise awareness about implementing a transformational approach. Emphasis is given to creating positive masculinities amongst young people. Here both boys and girls are viewed as potential victims, perpetrators, and positive bystanders. A good practice is the EU

project, Lights4Violence, which aims to promote healthy relationships among adolescents through positive youth development. This enables young people to confront risk factors and behavioural problems such as drug use, risky sexual relationships, antisocial behaviours and depression. There is also an increase in perpetrator treatment programmes, although the effect of these programmes remains uncertain. A key role is given to prevention with men and boys through a multisectoral and multidimensional approach. In addition, working in partnership with civil society organisations has helped to engage disadvantaged men's active participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of prevention programmes.

3. Key issues discussed during the seminar

During the seminar, in-depth discussion took place amongst the host and participating countries about the opportunities and challenges in engaging men and boys, and pursuing the men and boys' perspective, in violence prevention work, and the transferability of good practices. Valuable debate was held about important and innovative ways to promote violence prevention, taking into account masculinities' aspects, intersectional inequalities, and multi-sectoral cooperation. Some participants expressed concern about the anti-gender backlash, which in some cases is resulting in the de-gendering of domestic violence. The good practices discussed demonstrated the value of mutual learning in this still-emerging field of multi-faceted violence prevention.

One key theme was the need to improve the **integration between victim support and prevention activities**. In particular, participants highlighted the need for clarity in prevention programmes to avoid polarising interventions on victim support and prevention. This is essential as evidence shows that some forms of victim support reduce the risk of victimisation and/or using violence later in life. An important aspect of this is that all interventions potentially have preventative effects. Demonstrating this perspective in the planning of services, training of professionals and evaluation of outcomes can make a real contribution to preventing domestic violence. In the Swedish case, for example, early intervention is prioritised because of its preventative effect. However, problems arise when there are different legal frameworks on child protection and domestic violence, and different staff teams and networks of actors working on gender equality and the rights of the child/child protection. As a result, better integration of objectives is needed between actions to prevent violence against women/girls and those designed to prevent violence against children, in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Adverse Childhood Experiences model.³

The second theme centred on how to achieve successful **coordination and collaboration for long-term prevention activities amongst service providers**. An important feature of this is effective long-term coordination of national, regional and local authorities in health, social services, education, police and criminal justice, and women's organisations. Participants recognised that more work needs to be carried out to promote coordination and collaboration between professionals. Key to this is to work towards common objectives and methodologies on prevention. Participants agreed that there is great potential for more work to take place in the

³ The WHO perspective of violence prevention by detection and early intervention against Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), where early interventions to detect ACES such as direct and indirect exposure to domestic and other violence (being subjected to/witnessing violence), neglect, substance abuse etc. combined with support for children and their parents (strengthening parenting skills).

health sector, for example, through training, guidelines and protocols for health and social services professional to detect the signs of domestic violence. In some countries, guidelines have been drawn up for health care workers in primary health care, maternity and emergency care settings for this purpose. However, there is often a lack of coordination between health services and other service providers and specialist agencies in preventing domestic violence. Participants concluded that more efforts needed to be made to encourage better engagement of and tools for the health care system in early intervention and prevention, which, as many participants confirmed, is often absent in this kind of work today.

Furthermore, the exchange highlighted the need for greater knowledge and guidance in furthering **evidence-based violence prevention and social norms' change with young people in schools**. Of particular importance is better coordination of social policies and interventions by all relevant actors as this would assist with early intervention and violence prevention when working with young people and schools. The focus should be on universal prevention targeting boys and girls, as well as young men / women, throughout the educational system, starting in pre-school. This approach could successfully address youth dating/intimate partner violence and by-stander intervention/peer response skills training.

The debate also concentrated on the **methods for working with perpetrators**. It highlighted the need for more evidence-based practices on risk assessments and methodologies for effective treatment programmes for perpetrators. The discussion highlighted the emerging evidence-base and methods for treatment programmes in several countries, including treatment programmes that respond to different typologies of perpetrators. Participants were interested in the collaborative approach to risk management using structured evidence-based methods that have been developed in Sweden. These methods, involving all relevant agencies and the criminal justice system, assess risk for the perpetrator and identify support and protective actions for the victim. This approach goes beyond the power and control theory of violence perpetration and examines different sub-types of perpetrators. Strategies that are targeted to these different sub-types ('partner-only violent men' versus 'generally violent men') can better help to identify and address their differing characteristics, motives, and risks. It was suggested that the 'partner-only violent men' would benefit from perpetrator programmes that encourage positive engagement in activities outside of the family, sports and leisure activities, employment etc., whereas 'generally violent men' require different violence-focussed treatment programmes.

An overarching discussion theme that ran through the seminar related to the need for **multi-dimensional and evidence-based interventions** to respond to the complex dynamics of domestic violence. This requires more tools and evidence-based methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of different methods of both universal and targeted prevention programmes. Finally, discussion was held about developing **common approaches, definitions and concepts** and there was a consensus that this is an area that would benefit from ongoing EU cooperation and knowledge sharing.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the seminar resulted in a great deal of valuable learning and exchange on new and innovative ways to address the complex challenges inherent in ending domestic violence by engaging men and boys. The following recommendations

made during the seminar suggest a range of actions at local, national and EU level, which are highly relevant to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

- Improve resources and implement evidence-based methods in engaging men and boys to enable them to become active agents of change in tackling the devastating effects of toxic masculinity and domestic violence.
- Promote awareness of ways that men and boys can contribute to prevention by sharing examples of their positive engagement and of role models, demonstrating the benefits of social norms change.
- Carry out new inclusive and effective universal prevention programmes with clearly defined outcomes, to be achieved through better collaboration and coordination of prevention activities across different services.
- Involve the whole society in prevention of domestic violence, including service providers in health, social services and education, women's organisations and organisations addressing toxic masculinities, the media, workplaces together with social partners and employers, faith organisations, and sporting organisations, amongst others.
- There is an urgent need for health services to be involved in the prevention of domestic violence, and to develop evidence-based models and guidance on risk assessment and referral systems, for example, in working with pregnant women and/or vulnerable women.
- Develop guidance on working with disadvantaged and migrant boys and men, including ways to counter the radicalisation of young men in migrant communities.
- Carry out research and guidance on evidence-based interventions on prevention with perpetrators, including how risk management and mitigation strategies can be addressed to different typologies of perpetrators. This also applies to implementing risk management with victims, particularly through support of vulnerable victims who may face more barriers in accessing services.
- Implement ongoing EU exchanges of good practices and data sharing on the prevention of domestic violence, including a shared terminology and common guidance for professionals on risk management and perpetrator treatment programmes. This could take the form of a permanent EU structure.
- Member States that have not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention are urged to ratify it, and all governments are encouraged to fully implement the provisions on prevention. In addition, Member States should ratify the new ILO Convention 190 on eliminating of violence and harassment at work, particularly in working with employers and through social dialogue, to introduce workplace measures aimed at preventing domestic violence at work.
- Give greater attention to the role of the media in engaging men and boys in domestic violence prevention, in line with the Istanbul Convention. This could include, for instance, guidelines for media organisations and journalists on responsible media reporting, and engaging the media in long-term prevention and social norms change.

- Carry out future EU-level prevention activities by integrating domestic violence prevention with men and boys, for example in future EU information campaigns on gender stereotypes and EU level actions on cyber-violence.