



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Combating domestic violence

Romania, 26-27 April 2023

Draft Summary Report



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Introduction

Romania hosted the seminar on Combatting Domestic Violence on 26-27 April 2023 in Bucharest. The event took place in the framework of the [EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality](#), which aims at stimulating exchange of experiences and the dissemination of good practices on gender equality in Europe.

Fourteen other Member States took part: Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, together with the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

Luminița Popescu, State Secretary of Romania's National Agency for Equal Opportunities (NAEO) between women and men, noted that the seminar took place 12 years since the opening of the [Istanbul Convention](#) for signature and on the anniversary of Romania's ratification, and that a recent European Court of Justice ruling means that the EU can also ratify it. She welcomed the proposal for an EU Directive on combatting violence against women and domestic violence, now under discussion, as a means of unifying action across Member States. Romania's ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2016 launched a step-change in action to guarantee human rights, prompting legislative and structural progress in protection measures and social services for the victims of domestic violence (DV). Over the last nine years, the Agency has received EU funding of some EUR 52 million and created 144 new social and specialised services to prevent and combat domestic violence.

Emanuela Tassa, Policy Officer in the Gender Equality Unit of the European Commission's Directorate General for Justice and Consumers, confirmed that combatting gender-based violence (GBV) is a priority for the Commission. Several initiatives are coming to fruition:

- After the European Parliament consent, the final adoption in Council of the Istanbul Convention should follow in a few weeks.
- As for the new Directive on gender-based violence, the co-legislators, i.e. the European Parliament and the Council, are currently assessing the European Commission proposal to form their respective positions. Once these positions will have been adopted, the co-legislators will enter inter-institutional negotiations. Hopefully, then there will be a quick adoption of an ambitious text; however, this depends on how long the negotiations will last.
- As also announced in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, an EU network on the prevention of gender based violence and domestic violence should be in place by the end of the year.
- A new victims' helpline number – 116 016 – has been reserved and will be in principle available across all EU MS.

However, gender-based violence remains a major societal problem. It is important to work together to find solutions.

1. Romanian good practices

1.1 Background and framework of the presented practices

Romania's National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (ANES) acts on the government's behalf in two areas: equal opportunities and treatment for women and men and preventing and combatting domestic violence. The legal framework includes the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Istanbul Convention, and Romanian law 217/2003 on preventing and combatting domestic violence, amended in 2018 to provide new services such as sheltered houses, integrated emergency services for victims of sexual violence and helplines; as well as new protection measures (provisional protection orders).

The Agency coordinates and guides the activities of the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection and the public social assistance services in preventing and combatting domestic violence and violence against women, working with all of Romania's 42 counties including Bucharest's six sub-divisions. It sets minimum service quality standards and spending levels (approx. EUR 8,500 per beneficiary per year). Services for victims include emergency reception centres (up to 60 days' accommodation); recovery centres (up to 180 days), sheltered housing (up to one year), and day centres, as well as assistance centres for aggressors. An emergency helpline for victims was set up in 2015 and offers round-the-clock support, also to family members, neighbours or others seeking advice and information. Currently in Romania there are 152 residential centres, which can also accommodate victims of human trafficking, plus 38 day centres, and 16 assistance centres for aggressors.

1.2 VENUS project

The project: '**Venus – Together for a Life in Safety**', is one of the ANES most important initiatives to combat DV and GBV. It is co-financed through the European Social Fund with almost EUR 11 million of EU funding and runs for four years from 2019 to 2023. It represents the central pillar of the complex structural reform of social services designed to prevent and combat domestic violence and gender-based violence. ANES innovative and integrated approach focuses on social services and training of experts and prioritises the needs of vulnerable women and DV victims.

The project has 42 partners in public administrations and has established 126 free social services, with a national network of 42 protected houses for the victims of domestic violence (one in each county), aimed at achieving independent living and social and professional reintegration for the beneficiaries (with accommodation for up to one year). Complementary services for domestic violence victims comprise 42 support groups that offer specific programmes of psychological counselling and personal development, and 42 Vocational Counselling Offices providing professional orientation and support in obtaining a new job, in order to overcome the crisis situation arising from domestic violence. It is possible to relocate victims to other counties to

avoid contact with abusers, and also to support refugees and women of other nationalities.

Among the 7,002 people who have taken part in the project are 6,636 victims of domestic violence: 756 of them in protected houses; 1,680 in support groups; and 4,200 undertaking vocational counselling. In addition, 366 professionals have received training. Activities are supported by a local multidisciplinary partnership including police and legal services, social workers and hospitals.

1.3 Implementing the Istanbul Convention in Romania

The Romanian Ministry of Justice operates the project on '**Support for implementing the Istanbul Convention in Romania**' (2019-2023), with funding of EUR 2.5 million from Norwegian Financial Mechanisms. The two Norwegian partners are St. Olav University Hospital and the Secretariat of the Shelter Movement. The main objective is to support the Romanian authorities in adopting coordinated action to address the challenges posed by implementation of the Istanbul Convention, through an exchange of good practices with Norwegian partners. The project encompasses a series of activities:

- A national study to assess the Romanian institutional framework on domestic violence and violence against women, in January 2021.
- Ten training sessions to improve interventions by the judicial system and application of the law, for 250 justice and law enforcement professionals (prosecutors, judges, police officers). 42 sessions around the country with over 3,000 participants.
- 200 professionals and public and private providers of social services for DV victims took part in training sessions to reinforce specialised services for preventing and combatting DV.
- Establishing a national network of counselling centres for perpetrators, with a single methodology and a standard set of tools. Eight new counselling centres have been set up in Bucharest and other cities, handling over 100 perpetrators, and 17 counselling services. The aim is to extend the network to 42 centres.
- Ten referral centres set up for victims of sexual violence in Bucharest University Emergency Hospital and Emergency County Hospitals elsewhere. The pilot centre was opened in May 2021.
- A national campaign to raise awareness about gender discrimination, violence against women and the negative effects of gender stereotypes. The two target groups were students and Roma women.

1.4 Assessment of the Romanian approach to combatting domestic violence

From a population of over 19 million, 42 women and four children died in 2022 in Romania as a result of beatings and abuse in the family, and almost 40,000 women

and 9,00 children were victims of aggression. In 2022, over 20,000 temporary protective orders were issued, but these are probably the tip of the iceberg. In 2022, police intervened in 90,174 cases of domestic violence of which 42,214 were in urban areas and 47,960 in rural areas. One third of all crimes concern DV and the number has increased by 12.4% compared with 2021. Violence is not necessarily linked to poverty or education.

Financial resources from local budgets for victim support services are scarce, and Romania lacks an integrated and coherent system of data collection. A number of other challenges remain, including addressing the interests of Roma and other vulnerable women, disseminating information about existing services, and expanding the number of shelters, referral and rape crisis centres. The two projects described have had a major impact at national level, but services remain inadequate to meet the demand. The challenges include women's lack of confidence in authorities and in their own ability to achieve economic independence; the lack of social services for victims of repeated domestic violence who are economically dependent on the aggressor; and a high level of public tolerance towards acts of domestic violence.

The good practices described represent a new and innovative approach to preventing and combatting domestic violence in Romania, but it is too early to make a full assessment of results.

1.5 Emergency centre for domestic violence victims – FEMINA

Romania has made huge advances in support for DV victims as a result of EU membership and the need to comply with equality legislation. Bucharest Social Assistance Directorate provides a range of social services including shelter, food, legal advice, psychological counselling, social counselling, professional advice and orientation and medical assistance, through the FEMINA and FORTE Emergency Centres and two protected apartments.

The first centre for perpetrators was opened in 2007 and provides a variety of counselling services including psychological and addiction treatment. Treatment is not obligatory unless mandated by a judge.

The seminar participants were able to visit FEMINA, the first in a network of support centres run by a multidisciplinary team and offering an additional online information service through the Facebook group 'Info and support for women from Bucharest'. The Directorate covers the cost of medical examinations for victims and provides a 24-hour helpline – 0219524 – with staff available to pick up victims at specified locations. Residents are monitored for 3-6 months once they leave the shelter.

FEMINA provides 20 beds in 11 bedrooms with bathrooms, as well as social and recreational spaces and a children's playroom. 70% of current residents are Roma. The centre organises individual, family or group counselling and parenting education sessions. Women usually stay for six months, but this can be prolonged. The centre places children in local schools, although not all are willing to accept vulnerable

children. The location is kept secret through strict security rules – residents can use internet but not telephones. Victims are not obliged to submit a police complaint.

2. The situation in the other participating countries

Belgium has made significant progress in combatting domestic violence, in terms of policy, legal reforms and service provisions to victims and perpetrators, since the 1970s. However, its unique institutional structure and political tensions across language lines hinder the development of an integrated and coherent approach. Feminist volunteers founded and ran the first women's shelter in 1977 in Brussels, soon followed by similar initiatives in other large cities. From the mid-1980s, public authorities started funding women's specialised services (WSS), leading to a professionalisation of the sector. Perpetrator work started in 2000 and domestic violence hotlines in 2012/2014. The main legal measures are the law of 24/11/97 criminalising DV; the law of 15/05/12 allowing the police to remove the violent partner from the conjugal residence; and ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2016.

Since 2000, **Croatia** has taken comprehensive action against violence against women and domestic violence. Family violence has been defined for the first time in Croatian legislation as a criminal offence committed by a family member who brings another family member into a degrading position by the use of violence, abuse or disrespectful behaviour. The 2003 Act on Protection against Domestic Violence covers prevention, sanctioning of perpetrators and suppression of all types of domestic violence, as well as protection and assistance to victims. A new (fifth) National Plan for protection against violence against women and domestic violence is being drafted and will run until 2028. The Ministry of Labour, Pensions, Family and Social Policy has provided funding to 23 of the country's 25 shelters for victims of domestic violence, with a current capacity of 357 beds.

The police and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO) in **Cyprus** receive a significant number of domestic violence reports. In 2021, the police handled 3,362 cases, and approximately 3,200 in 2022. Statistics show 75% of victims of domestic violence, intimate partner violence and child abuse in Cyprus are girls and women. The 2021 Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence law includes prevention, support and awareness-raising measures as well as a national database to track femicides and other forms of violence against women. A 1996 Council of Ministers' Decree established the Advisory Committee on Preventing and Combatting Violence in the Family. However, the lack of coordination and communication among government bodies and services has led to fragmented implementation of measures to prevent and combat domestic violence.

Survey results show that every third woman in the **Czechia** has experienced domestic violence by her husband or partner. According to the Association of Intervention Centre Workers, children were present in more than half of cases. There are no official

data on femicide, but press monitoring indicates that at least 22 women with eight children died in 2022. In 2021, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' analysis of social services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence identified Intervention centres in every region, and services for victims in several bigger cities, but a significant lack of specialised shelters. A lack of consistency in evaluating cases is due to a range of factors including perceptions of what constitutes violence, understanding of its gendered nature, and professional experience. Czechia has yet to ratify the Istanbul Convention.

Denmark has made changes to counselling and support services for victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) in recent years. Organisations working in the field are more professional and cooperative, and understanding of the problem has become more heterogenic. Partnerships between public authorities and NGOs to combat IPV and partner femicides/homicides are being developed. Denmark's national action plans against IPV since 2002 were initially gender-based but later gender-neutral, with more attention directed towards men as victims. Since ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2014, Denmark has had four action plans against violence against women and close relations. A new plan of action from spring 2023 covers support for children and young people growing up with domestic violence.

In **Estonia**, policies and practice are moving in the right direction. However, legislative and procedural changes are still needed to ensure effective support for victims and survivors, as well as awareness-raising and education to change societal attitudes. In 2022, there were 3,244 registered cases of domestic violence, making up 46% of all violent crimes. Men committed 86% of attacks and 79% of victims were women. 66% of abusers were the current or previous partner and 19% were a parent. The country has established a victim support department (VSU) which contracts out women's support service centres (WSS) to NGOs through a bidding process. There are 17 WSS (one for each county plus three in the capital). Although attitudes are changing, myths remain and victim-blaming is prevalent. Estonia signed the Istanbul Convention in 2014 and ratified it in 2017, but despite progress there is still a long way to go to achieve full implementation.

Violence against women remains a major human rights problem in **Finland**, with implications for both the individual and society. Finland is committed to complying with the Istanbul Convention. A recent report found, from 2015 to 2020, 541 male and 6,899 female victims of domestic violence in shelters. The additional costs of health care for women amounted to EUR 150 million per year. A new study on relationship patterns shows alarming evidence that women's risk of dying as victims of intimate partner violence is high in Finland compared to other Western countries. According to the Council of Europe's recommendation, Finland should have 550 shelter places instead of the current 230 (in 29 shelters). In recent years the number of shelter places has grown and funding increased from EUR 8 million in 2005 to EUR 24.5 million in 2022.

Recent policy changes in **Greece** have generated a marked increase in domestic violence reports, while societal attitudes have shifted towards harsher punishments for offenders and more support for victims. Statistics from the Annual Domestic

Violence Report (2021) compiled by the Hellenic Police show a 62% rise in the reporting of domestic violence cases from 5,620 incidents in 2020 to 9,303 in 2021. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention has boosted policy and legislative efforts, but more are needed, particularly for victims of coercive control, stalking and psychological violence. The Gender Secretariat of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs oversees an extensive network of support, including a 24/7 national helpline 'SOS15900', 44 Women's Aid centres where psychosocial, legal and work-related counselling is offered to female victims of domestic and gender-based violence, and 19 shelters spread throughout the country.

In **Italy**, on November 18, 2021, the Government adopted a new National Strategic Plan on Male Violence Against Women 2021-2023. The objective is to continue redoubling government efforts to address very specific needs relating to multiple aspects tied to conditions of violence. Furthermore, a network of anti-violence centres has been set up across the country to provide support to women victims of violence. Italy has introduced two measures to combat economic violence, directed at women: The micro-credit of freedom is either a business-related credit or a social credit, linked to support 'personal' expenses. Women victims of violence can use it to deal mainly with personal issues. The National Social Security Institute (INPS) finances the income of freedom. Anti-violence centres 'certify' their direction to women who can apply to obtain financial aid, that adds up to about 400 euros per month for a year. So far, Italy has financed 12 million euros and, in the coming months, will fund 1,850 million euros.

Instances of domestic and gender-based violence are relatively high in **Latvia** compared to other EU Member States. OECD data indicate that every fourth woman has been subject to violence. Nonetheless, attitudes are changing and in 2018 only 19% of the Latvian population believed that domestic violence is a "private thing, which does not need intervention", compared with 31% in 2016. Support for prosecution of offenders rose from 64% to 75%. Legal reforms include a 2022 measure allowing officials to apply temporary protection without a written application from the victim, covering cases where the psychological well-being of the victim is severely affected by the perpetrator. Latvia remains one of the six EU countries that has not ratified the Istanbul Convention.

Malta ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2014 and applied it in 2018 through the Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act. The country has had two Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plans from 2018-2022. The Strategy for 2023-2027 is due to be launched soon. State services include a centralised social work unit for domestic violence, as well as 11 community centres in Malta and two in Gozo. The same state agency runs one emergency shelter for women and children, a perpetrator programme, and a national helpline. Between 2019 and 2021, the state social service agency (Appogg) received 3,538 reports of domestic violence, of which 82% were filed by women. The Malta Police Force stated that from 2011 to 2021 reports of DV doubled. Malta continues to have a predominantly patriarchal society, which can be seen in social attitudes, gender roles and male dominant discourse.

Portugal has been building a solid legal framework to combat domestic violence. It first established DV as a public crime in 2000 and later, through Law no. 112/2009, established a broad legal regime for the prevention of DV and the protection of its victims. Law no. 104/2009 provided for compensation for victims of violent crimes and DV. The National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination is in force until 2030. Yet in 2014, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that 93% of women surveyed considered violence against women to be very common or quite common in Portugal. Reporting is increasing, (except during the pandemic) and DV is the most frequently reported crime in the country: 26,520 cases in 2021 and 30,488 in 2022. Although these numbers are high, this is seen as a welcome sign that far more women are coming forward to report assaults. Greater attention to mental health issues for victims and perpetrators is imperative, as well as violence protection measures among young people.

Spain's 2019 macro-survey on violence against women found that 57.3% of women living in Spain aged 16 or over had suffered violence during their lives because of their gender, and 14.2% had suffered physical and/or sexual violence from a partner, current or past, at some point in their lives. Since 2003, 1,196 fatal victims of GBV have been recorded: 12 so far in 2023. In 2004, Spain established specialised criminal courtrooms – the Courts for Violence against Women, of which there are currently 108. The Attention and Protection Telephone Service for Victims of Gender Violence (ATENPRO) is available 24/7 and staffed by personnel specifically trained to provide an appropriate response. In 2014 Spain ratified the Istanbul Convention, which is a key tool in combatting DV. Increasing young people's awareness of the problem of GBV and DV through the education system seems to be one of the best long-term prevention strategies.

The current **Swedish** policy to combat domestic violence puts an emphasis on preventative measures directed at the perpetrators. In Sweden, 25% of women aged 16-79 report having been victimised by a current or former intimate partner (National Council for Crime Prevention, 2014), but only about 9,000 cases of male-to-female assault in a domestic context are reported to the police annually. Some 17 women are killed by a former or current partner in Sweden every year. It is estimated that 150,000 children are living in households where domestic violence is present, and victims living in rural or remote areas are especially vulnerable. The government has launched an action programme with 99 measures to combat gender-based violence for 2021-2023, including better sheltered housing for women and children. In March 2023, the government started to develop a new action programme against domestic violence and honour-based violence for 2024-2026. This programme will focus more explicitly on victimisation among the LGTBQ population and among men and boys. A proposal to criminalise emotional abuse and controlling/coercive behaviour is due to be introduced in January 2024.

3. Key issues discussed and examples

The need for **long-term strategies** was emphasised repeatedly. For example, participants asked whether Romania's 126 social services would continue to exist after the end of the Venus project in September 2023. Romania plans to maintain funding through partners and the ANES. Law 292 will allow for transfer of funds from the state to service providers.

Focusing on perpetrators: a number of countries are enhancing prevention by prioritising treatment of perpetrators. In some places treatment is obligatory, while in others it is voluntary. Following the failure of group therapy, Sweden launched the PREDOV programme in 2019, based on research evidence. It offers individualised treatment for medium-risk offenders in prisons, which can be continued during probation. Perpetrators are assessed after sentence, and high-risk individuals receive more intensive cognitive behavioural therapy. The length of treatment depends on each case, but it is not mandatory. Results and recidivism rates will be assessed in 2024, with a more in-depth evaluation in 2026.

In Belgium, perpetrators are obliged to undertake counselling after an emergency protection order. However, treatment lasts only 2.5 months, and it was stated that short interventions can be worse than nothing. Croatia is drafting a new, improved strategy for psychosocial treatment of perpetrators, who receive compulsory treatment while in prison, continuing voluntarily on probation. However, the justice system lacks resources for comprehensive follow-up, and judges need more training about DV risks.

In Latvia the state organises care for victims while a private state-funded agency offers treatment (individual or group) for perpetrators. This can be mandatory outside prison. Around 700-800 people a year receive treatment. The probation service carries out risk assessment. Latvia, like Finland, does not support mediation, which tends to lead to more opportunities for violence.

Greece funds treatment for perpetrators. A new programme launched in 2012 and covering most of Northern Greece has successfully treated 75 perpetrators, with only three cases of recidivism. The programme is available to both men and women and lasts five to seven years. Evaluation occupies the first six months, taking account of the victim's point of view, followed by individual and group therapy and couple counselling under strict conditions. The final six months set the groundwork for the future. Evaluation shows that the programme successfully changes aggressors' attitudes to society, but more funding is needed.

Cyprus' programme lasts for two years but no evaluation is made. In Finland, programmes last 1.5 years, with voluntary face-to-face or peer-to-peer support group therapy. Spain runs two programmes: one for offenders in prison and the other for men without criminal records, carried out by NGOs. Unfortunately, indicators for success and recidivism vary from country to country making comparison difficult.

Programmes for LGBTIQ, disabled people, children and other vulnerable groups: information should be available in minority languages. Since Romania's government Directorate is also responsible for child protection, it adopts an integrated approach with specific measures for children and disabled and elderly people under

the same umbrella. GREVIO has recommended new legislation to ensure judges take account of parental violence. A helpline offers support to minority groups. In Belgium, most services are taken up by the majority population, so special efforts are required to reach discriminated communities. Portugal has 39 shelters and is working to set up specialised accommodation for groups such as disabled women, LGBTQ people and men. The high proportion of children needing counselling is of concern: 10,000 children have undergone community-based counselling in one year.

Cooperation/training for police, judges and the judiciary: Participants raised questions about how police monitor DV cases. Data protection may be an issue where different agencies are sharing information. In Greece, DV training is mandatory for police and the judiciary. The national school of public administration trains civil servants. A new police department has been set up, leading to a big increase in reporting. Sweden notes a generational gap, with younger police officers more aware. There are special police units to deal with DV.

Services for victims: There was common agreement that women leaving shelters face multiple challenges and often need ongoing support. Thus it is important that they can remain in touch with coordinators and get help when they ask for it. There are also some groups that are more difficult to reach out to. Sweden, for instance, has difficulty helping victims in rural areas. The country has a national network of shelters, but it is difficult to persuade women to move away from their local areas. Sheltered housing is temporary, and Sweden has a shortage of long-term housing.

Romania's '[Gloria](#)' project, funded by Norway, covers 250 local communities where services for victims of DV are missing or insufficient. It pays for transport to support centres and volunteers accompany women to legal consultations. Thanks to local services, five to six times more cases are reported, while costs are not much higher. The 'Vera' project, also Norwegian-funded, offers training for mobile emergency teams to provide legal assistance and support for DV victims in small communities, with local participation including police, churches and community groups.

Regarding methodology, participants agreed that "rights-based" counselling is more empowering than a "needs-based" approach. Reintegration into the labour market is also a key issue.

Cooperation with NGOs and partners was generally seen to be a crucial element of good service provision. Besides funding, NGOs should be consulted on policy decisions. In Romania, NGOs have an input into improving the legal framework. Reform of law 217 created a working group for consultation. But while consultation is important, it also uses up staff time and resources. NGOs should be reimbursed for the time spent negotiating with governments, and act as "critical friends". Participants noted that governments can outsource services if they cannot provide them, But NGOs cannot resolve everything, so government ministries need to develop an integrated vision in order to handle the complex issues surrounding DV.

For 25 years, Malta has operated 'shelter meetings' involving state social services and private providers. They take place 3-5 times a year and also discuss individual cases. The group has expanded to include legal services, support groups, etc. This

maintains good relations between partners and boosts morale for workers. Other countries could apply this system at a regional or local level.

Awareness raising: In many countries a patriarchal culture is still prevailing and there is a long way to go to change gender stereotypes and public attitudes to DV. Families have a responsibility when transmitting values and attitudes, especially to boys. The role of the media is important: broadcasters in Romania are obliged by law to publicise a helpline number. In Sweden, training is mandatory in university courses for social workers, doctors, lawyers, psychologists, teachers etc. Homicide case studies were seen as useful for analysing failed policies.

EU financial support for research and prevention programmes: Reliable evidence provides for confident policymaking. However, some – in particular small – countries lack the resources to carry out research, thus EU support in this field is crucial. According to EIGE, gender-based violence costs EU society some EUR 366 billion a year and has an emotional, economic, and social impact. So, investment in prevention saves money. Prevention and working with men and boys should be priorities but funding should not be provided at the expenses of support to victims.

4. Lessons and recommendations

Key lessons and recommendations emerging from the seminar include:

- Ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention is key to tackling domestic violence across the EU, providing a framework for action. All EU Member States should ratify.
- Primary prevention is the top priority. This needs more investment, targeted education for boys and men, and widespread awareness raising in society.
- Sustainable planning and investment are needed to maintain services for victims, whether provided by the state or NGOs. They should be coherent and integrated, where possible creating one-stop-shops for help and information. Victims need ongoing support after they leave sheltered accommodation and resume an independent life. State and EU funding must contribute.
- Long-term treatment is the only way to change perpetrators' attitudes, coupled with evidence-based evaluation of success or failure. Encouragement and/or compulsion are necessary to persuade perpetrators to undertake and complete counselling.
- Member States face similar challenges but need to approach them in a culturally appropriate way. However, a lack of common indicators and evaluation standards undermines comparability. Accurate risk assessment and evaluation of results are vital and need to start from the victims' perspective.
- Domestic violence training, using innovative techniques where appropriate, should be mandatory for the judiciary, medical practitioners, teachers, social

workers and others to overcome stereotypes and instil a gender-sensitive approach.

- Attitudes in society need to change to end patriarchal gender stereotypes and the stigma attached to domestic violence, through education of boys and girls from school age onwards.
- Accurate, accessible, and transparent data collection and scientific research are vital for wise policymaking. Politicians, researchers, and civil society should work more closely together.
- Support services will not reach victims of domestic violence if they do not know about them, so they need to be publicised. Special measures may be required to reach vulnerable groups such as e.g., LGBTIQ, people with disabilities, rural, migrant and Roma women.
- Partnerships, connections, and networks foster the exchange of good practice and mutual support. Close cooperation between authorities, civil society and NGOs is essential. In the context of a backlash against women's rights in some countries, it is vital to step up cooperation to improve women's status in society and fundamental freedoms. Much remains to be done to bring an end to violence against women and domestic violence and efforts must be systematic and continuous.