

Fempower

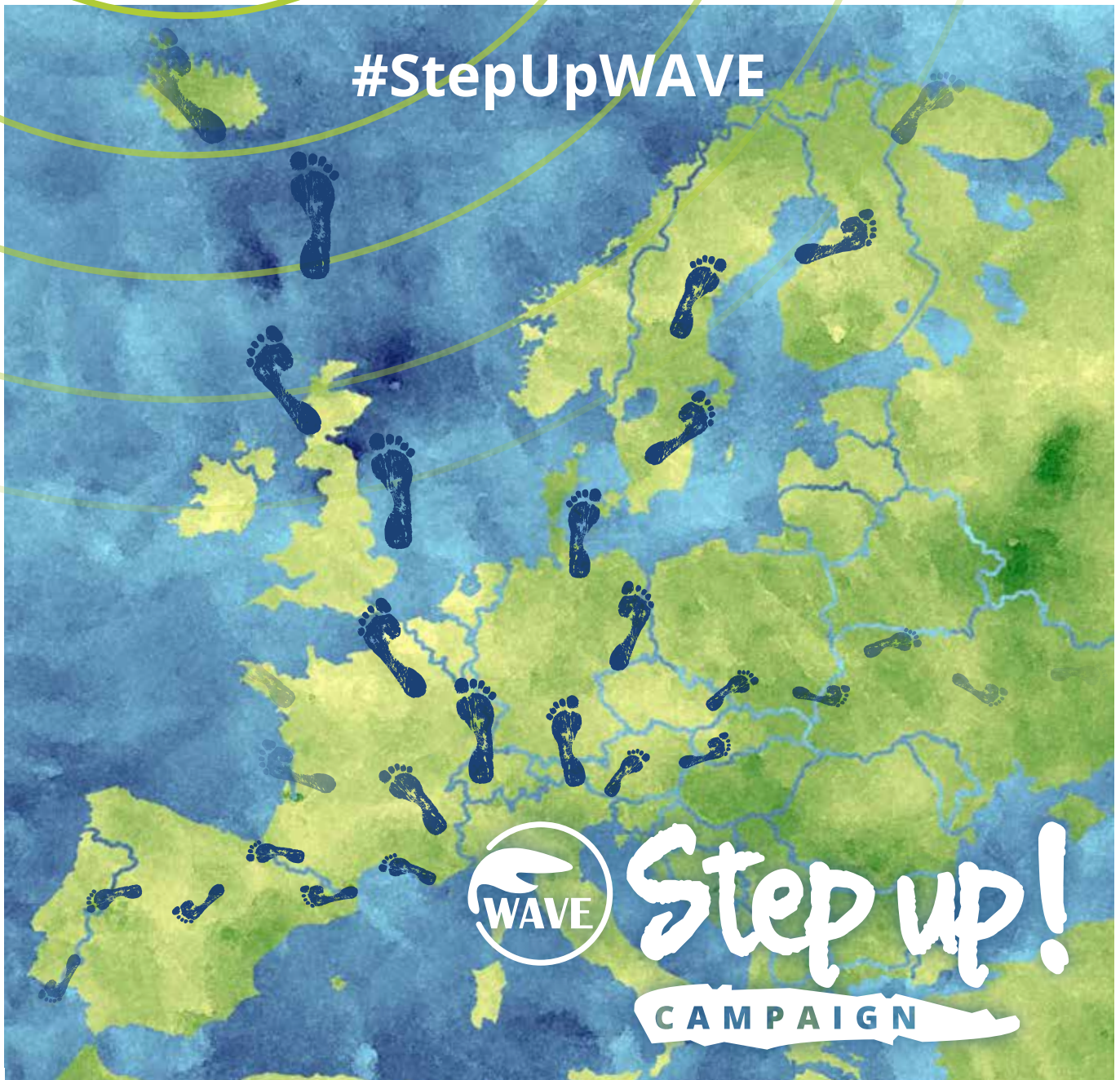


A MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE WAVE OFFICE

Every woman has the right to live free from violence

Women's access to support services in Europe & existing gaps

#StepUpWAVE



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#StepUpWAVE



Aiming at improving the availability of services and also the access to specialist support services for women survivors of violence and their children, the Step Up! Campaign, launched on 25 May 2016 with the support of UN Women, has become viral in several countries throughout Europe, particularly in Cyprus, Italy, Moldova, UK, Spain, Finland, where important government officials and news outlets, as well individuals, showed public support for the campaign.

With nearly 40 European countries in the network taking part in Step Up!, the #StepUpWAVE hashtag is all over the internet.

The WAVE Step Up! Campaign has also received endorsement by Vera Jourova, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumer & Gender Equality, and open letters have been sent to other European stakeholders.

Activities undertaken within the framework of the campaign include the Youth Video Award; a checklist called "How Accessible is Your Service for Women with Disabilities?" and a strategy paper for improving access to services for women with disabilities, which has been circulated to specialist women's support services across Europe. A partnership has recently been established with the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) to increase access to support services for undocumented migrant women. Already making strong gains in many countries throughout Europe, the Step Up! Campaign will launch more exciting activities in the coming months.

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Fempower

Every woman has the right to live free from violence

Violence against women has been globally recognized as a major violation of a woman's human rights. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations occurring in the world, happening in every country, not only in situations of conflict or crisis, but also in peaceful contexts, in both public and private spaces.

The UN 2030 Agenda strives to "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation" as one of its Sustainable Development Goals.

The costs of violence against women are widespread throughout society. Several studies have been carried out in this field, indicating that all recognizable consequences of violence have a cost, be it direct or indirect. Particularly indirect costs stem from the fact that women affected by violence often cannot become active agents in society, developing their full potential and contributing to the economy. Furthermore, violence against women is also a phenomenon that destroys the fabric of society, as children very often become affected by this as well.

According to a survey measuring the prevalence of violence against women, conducted by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, 1 in 3 women in the EU has suffered sexual or physical violence at some point in their lives since the age of 15.

Currently, many women and their children are not able to exercise their rights to live free from violence and access protection and support. While every third woman suffers violence, specialist support services are scarcely available and underfinanced compared to existing needs. There are over 47,000 women's shelter places missing in Europe and only 9 out of all EU member states provide a 24/7 helpline free of charge (WAVE 2016). There is an increasing need for specialist support services for women victims of violence and their children, particularly for victims of sexual violence, and the Istanbul Convention as well as the EU Victims Directive require that states allocate adequate resources to establish such services. However, the current situation shows that there is a wide-spread lack of funding as well as unsustainable funding schemes in Europe. Limited funding has a devastating impact on service provision, its quality, availability and specialization, curtailing the rights of survivors to protection and support.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) states that "Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide or arrange for, in an adequate geographical distribution, im-

mediate, short- and long-term specialist support services to any victim subjected to any of the acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention." (Art.22)

The WAVE Step up! Campaign launched in May 2016 aims to raise awareness on the widespread nature of violence against women and the importance of providing specialist support to women and children affected by violence. It aims to cooperate with different stakeholders and improve existing service provision in the area of specialist support for women and their children in the EU and in Europe in general. The key messages the campaign seeks to convey to politicians and society as a whole is to "stand together to end violence against women and children" and to "step up measures to provide specialist support to survivors".

As governments represent the prime target group for the campaign, a key objective is to see that states will ensure that all victims are offered a place in specialist women's support services in Europe, i.e. women's shelters and centres, and that helplines are readily-available, making sure that a gender-sensitive and women's rights based approach is maintained. Furthermore, the campaign draws attention to the urgent need to improve women's and children's access to support services when these face multiple disadvantages and discrimination, including when it comes to differently-abled, migrant and asylum-seeking women, especially undocumented migrant women.

This year's issue of the Fempower magazine comprises a variety of articles that provide an overview of support systems for survivors of violence against women from eleven different European countries (9 EU member states and 2 non-EU member states). Each article offers an understanding of how women living in that particular country are forced to cope with their experiences of violence, the hurdles they encounter – very often on behalf of society and law-enforcement authorities – and the kind of support they were able to find. Two articles include an interview with a survivor. These give a touching and inspiring account of how they have managed to rebuild their lives and the ways in which they have been empowered by support services to claim their rights and recover their peace and happiness.

We would like to wholeheartedly thank all authors for the efforts made to draft these informative articles, that offer readers a snapshot of the complex and challenging situation of women's support services currently existing in Europe.

Andrada Filip (WAVE office)

“My house is my castle” – the protection of victims of domestic violence under Polish law

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Although the Polish legal system has undergone some changes as a result of Poland’s adoption of the Istanbul Convention¹, there still are a number of substantive and procedural shortcomings that women suffering from domestic violence have to face when accessing justice.

One of the most pressing problems relates to the need to guarantee the separation of the victim (and her children or other dependant members of the family) from the perpetrator. Many women stay with their abusive partners or husbands simply because they have nowhere else to go, and because they are afraid to report the violence to the police, knowing that they will have to live with the perpetrator throughout the entirety of the lengthy proceedings, which would expose them to further abuses and the risk of revenge.

Art. 23 of the Istanbul Convention requires state parties to take not only legislative, but also other types of measures to provide shelters for victims of domestic violence. What is important is that such shelters should be easily accessible and sufficiently numerous to ensure safe accommodation and provide support for all victims of domestic violence. As practice shows, in Poland there are not enough places in the shelters in which women can seek refuge. It is even harder to find a place accepting both women and their minor children, which is why many women compromise their safety and decide to stay at home for the sake of their children. Even if children are not directly subjected to violence, women are often afraid to move out and leave them with the perpetrator – both fearing for their safety and being afraid that this will be seen as child abandonment. This in turn can put the mother in a bad light and thus result in restrictions or deprivation of parental rights in the future.

Another problem is the lack of specialized shelters. In fact, women who leave their homes because of violence are often sent to institutions for homeless women. These shelters cannot be considered a solution adapted to the special needs of women suffering from domestic violence.² Many municipal shelters used for accommodating victims of domestic violence in Warsaw are simply unfit for this purpose – the duration of stay is too short, their locations are too remote, and there is a lack of access to medical assistance tailored to the needs of victims of domestic violence.³ The situation in other cities is similar, if not worse. This is yet another reason why women often decide to return home and continue to live with a perpetrator.

Some changes in the legislation aimed at solving these issues were made in 2010. The possibility of a speedy civil trial against the perpetrator, in which a court can order

him to leave the dwelling unit shared with the victim, was introduced into the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.⁴ This solution is available regardless of the right of the ownership of the dwelling or other property rights that the perpetrator may have. According to the statute, the court is obliged to hold a hearing within a period of one month, but in practice this is rarely the case. As recently reported by the Polish Ombudsman, most of these proceedings last longer, in extreme cases even as long as nine months.⁵ This situation does not seem to comply with Art. 52 of the Istanbul Convention, which establishes the obligation to provide competent authorities with the power to order a perpetrator of domestic violence – in a situation of immediate danger – to vacate the residence of the victim or person at risk and to prohibit the perpetrator from entering the residence or contacting the victim or person at risk.

Throughout the course of criminal proceedings against the perpetrator, however, it is possible to issue a restraining order or order him to leave the dwelling unit shared with the victim.⁶ These are so called “preventive measures” that are applied by a prosecutor (on his or her own motion or on the motion of the police) or by a court. But even on those occasions when the prosecutor decides to apply such orders, the whole procedure usually lasts too long, and therefore can prove ineffective as a means of providing direct protection for the victims. The most severe preventive measure, i.e. temporary arrest, is another way of guaranteeing safety, but it is restricted to the most serious situations only. It seems questionable whether restraining and protection orders existing under Polish law meet every single criterion set forth by Art. 53 of the Istanbul Convention, such as those of availability and speediness.

One of the solutions to improve the means of separation of victims from perpetrators and to guarantee a better protection of victims’ rights is the possibility of granting additional powers in this regard to police officers. The police should be given the possibility to issue restraining orders when there is an immediate threat for the victim. Police officers should be trained in order to conduct proper risk analysis. This would probably require some kind of reform of the “Blue Card” procedure, which was introduced in 2011. The procedure is implemented by specially established local interdisciplinary teams and its main purpose is to prevent the escalation of domestic violence, and to implement individual assistance plans. Interdisciplinary teams consist of police officers, social workers, healthcare staff, teachers, local committees for solving alcohol-related problems and representatives of NGOs. The whole procedure is independent from and complementary to any court proceedings (criminal, family, civil). Risk

analysis should be seen as an important component of the Blue Card procedure, which could allow for the application of effective prevention mechanisms. Police officers and other members of interdisciplinary teams involved in the Blue Card procedure often know the situation of the families involved in it. Therefore, they are in a position to predict threats and decide about the application of different legal measures designed to protect victims. It goes without saying that the police play an essential role in domestic violence prevention. Due to the fact that police officers can respond quickly to domestic violence, they should be endowed with the fastest and most efficient measures to separate perpetrators from the victims of domestic violence.

At present, a police officer is entitled to apply preventive detention in cases where a perpetrator of domestic violence poses a direct threat to life or health.⁷ The detainee must be released within 48 hours unless a motion for a temporary arrest is filed to the court.⁸ In 2010 the amendment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act made significant changes in the arrest policy.⁹ New provisions expanded police officers' powers, introducing the provision of mandatory arrest, until then unknown in the Polish criminal procedure. The so called "arrest process" is an independent means of coercion, used when there is a reasonable assumption that the suspected person has committed an offence, and there is a threat that such a person may go into hiding or destroy the evidence of his offence or if his identity could not be established.¹⁰ Due to the need to ensure the safety of domestic violence victims who live together with an abusive member of the family, new grounds for making an arrest were also introduced to the Law on Criminal Procedure in 2010. Under the first instance, in the case of domestic violence, the decision to make an arrest is left at police discretion. The grounds for arrest are more or less the same as in the standard police arrest procedure mentioned above, but an offence must be committed to the detriment of a person living together with the offender,¹¹ and at the same time there must be a risk of reoffending. This is especially the case when the suspect threatens to commit another offense. In cases where the offence was committed with the use of a firearm, knife or other dangerous item an arrest becomes obligatory. The purpose of introducing mandatory arrests was to strengthen police responses to domestic violence and lower the rate of repeat domestic violence offences.

To conclude, the implementation of domestic violence prevention policy was undoubtedly a manifestation of the pursuit for effective measures to protect victims. Despite a wide range of possibilities to ensure a safe and secure environment for all victims of domestic violence, research demonstrates that the problem lies not only in insufficient legal measures but also in the approach of those who provide services for victims.¹² The stereotypes and prejudices concerning domestic violence are still present in our society and unfortunately they strongly affect the response to that phenomenon. That is why, although there are various different legal mechanisms that can be used to separate victims from perpetrators, the system does not seem to work properly and guarantee safety.

- 1 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul 12 April 2011 (CETS No.210).
- 2 WAVE Step up! Campaign Blue Print, Vienna, January 2016, p. 6, available at: http://files.wave-network.org/home/WAVE_StepUp_CAMPAIGN.pdf
- 3 See: Report by Nils Muižnieks Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe following his visit to Poland from 9-12 February 2016, CommDH (2016) 23, par. 157.
- 4 Domestic violence prevention act from 29 of July 2005 (Dz.U. 2005 No 180 Item 1493 as amended)
- 5 See: Inquiry by Polish Ombudsman, published on 14 of July 2016, available on: <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/ilu-sprawco-c3w-przemocy-domowej-zosta-c582o-zmuszonych-do-wyprowadzenia-si-c499-z-domu-jak-szybko-s-c485dy-o-tym> (in Polish only).
- 6 The law on criminal procedure from 6 of June 1997 (Dz. U. 1997 No. 89, Item 555), Art. 275, 275a.
- 7 The Law on Police from 6 of April 1990 (Dz.U. 1990 No. 30 Item 179), Art. 15a.
- 8 The Law on Criminal Procedure from 6 of June 1997 (Dz. U. 1997 No. 89, Item 555), Art. 248.
- 9 Domestic Violence Prevention Act from 29 of July 2005 (Dz.U. 2005 No. 180 Item 1493 as amended).
- 10 The Law on Criminal Procedure from 6 of June 1997 (Dz. U. 1997 No. 89, Item 555), Art. 244 § 1
- 11 The protection covers not only close family members, but also every person living together with the perpetrator. On the other hand, however, the personal scope is limited only to a narrowly defined group of suspects.
- 12 Report of the Women's Rights Centre, Stereotypes in the court in cases concerning violence against women, Warsaw 2016 (available in Polish only).



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Protection and support of women survivors of violence in Greece: The unmet needs

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European Anti-Violence Network, Greece

Several important developments have occurred in Greece during the last years (since 2011) regarding provision of support to women survivors of violence. However, the quality of services and the extent to which their needs are being met is still underdeveloped.

When it comes to these developments, the following should be included: the actions of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) of the Ministry of Interior, which, since 2011 – with funds from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007–2013 & 2014–2020 – a) operates the National SOS Hotline (15900) for victims of gender based violence (24 hours/365 days per year, but not free of charge), b) has gradually established 40 counseling centers for abused women and 21 shelters for abused women and their children, mainly under the administration of municipalities.

The services that are currently provided to women and their children are:

- › **Accommodation in shelters.** All shelters provide accommodation free of charge and ensure coverage of basic needs, such as food, clothing, as well as psychological counseling – psychological counseling for children is available only if staff at the shelter include a child psychologist. For other forms of material support and medication they often collaborate with local social services, NGOs, hospitals and medical facilities, including the local community. Except for a few NGOs that provide counselling to women who are not staying at the shelters, women's shelters do not provide non-residential support. Shelters have some security precautions, such as a secret location – however, in local communities, the shelters' addresses can be easily uncovered – and hired security guards.
- › **psychosocial and legal counselling** at counseling centers
- › **legal aid** for women with low income (covered by the state in cooperation with counseling centers and the Bar Association)

Problems and challenges encountered by women

SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT

- › the helpline is not free of charge
- › the services each counseling center is able to provide depend on the specializations of professionals among existing staff (subject to change)

- › even though unofficial and unjustified, all counseling centers follow a policy of providing a maximum of only 12 sessions of psychological counseling per woman; in order to prolong the counseling, the woman must “invent” a new request...
- › mainly due to bureaucracy, counselling centers do not facilitate access to their services for women facing practical barriers (e.g. cover her transportation costs or provide babysitting during her counseling session).
- › in times of crisis, there is no provision for a woman to reach her counselor or her lawyer outside of working hours; in addition, counselors are not allowed to contact women outside of their offices (e.g. when she is hospitalized, at the police station or in court)
- › the lawyers from the counselling centers provide legal counseling but are not allowed to represent women in court (they should find another lawyer)
- › almost all lawyers that are appointed to women through the legal aid programme of the state are not trained and most of the times they do not handle their cases properly
- › There is no requirement for the staff recruited to work at the helpline, counseling centers and shelters to be specialized and the training they receive from their working setting is mainly theoretical. As a result, counselors can be inadequately trained to properly support abused women, while, at the same time, there is no evaluation of the quality of the services provided, no recording of women's unmet needs and no follow-up with women after services have been provided. Last but not least, supervision was provided to counselors only for a brief period of time.
- › there is no provision for assisting abused women to find a job and/or for any other support to cover the basic needs for themselves and their children
- › there is no provision for the children of abused women (the counseling services do not provide any support for the children of abused women and there is no other specialized center).
- › there is no specialized service for victims of sexual abuse

SAFE ACCOMMODATION

- › the length of stay in women's shelters in Greece is three months, which may be extended for another three months (maximum of six months in total). With the exception of the shelter of the Municipality of Athens,

there is no intermediate structure where a woman can stay after leaving the shelter, in case she has no job, financial resources, etc.

- › the shelters for abused women and children host the sons of abused woman only if they are younger than 12 or 14 years and there is no alternative structure for these families.
- › there are only two emergency structures (both located in Athens) that can provide accommodation during non-working hours (in case of an emergency and before making the necessary medical examination), but most women and professionals are not aware of this possibility or how to contact the shelters

PROTECTION

- › even though domestic violence is an ex-officio prosecuted crime, the police are not responding properly; police officers are largely untrained on how to respond and/or unwilling to respond, and in many cases they discourage women to report their abuse or they don't officially record women's reports.
- › there is no official and regular communication between the police, SOS line and counseling centers (not even in cases of femicide)
- › there is no risk assessment and no process for the development of an individualized safety plan (neither at the police nor in the counseling centers)
- › protection orders are not enforced properly (their violations often remain unpunished and the victims unprotected)
- › when it comes to fathers' rights, court orders do not take into account the potential risk for the mother and/or for the child (or children), if fathers have been previously convicted for abusing the mothers
- › in all legal documents the abused woman has to mention her home address; in high risk cases this can endanger her safety or even her life
- › the law against domestic violence includes penal mediation which, when initiated, leaves the abuser unpunished if he does not repeat the offence for a period of three years; however, there is no monitoring of re-victimization; moreover, penal mediation can even lead to couples counseling of the victim together with the abuser, thus endangering her safety.
- › the state counselling centers and the SOS helpline **do not support women to document their cases in court proceedings**, even though they are mandated by law to provide certificates to all women who received their services, as well as copies of their confidential file. But, in reality:
 - Counselling centers provide only a general certificate and only to some of the women who received services; the criteria according to which such decisions are made are unknown and women are not informed about the decisions; in addition, women are not in-

formed about their right to obtain access to their personal, confidential, file. Moreover, there is a policy in place on the basis of which counselors are not allowed to provide individualized reports for women they had given counseling to or to testify in court on their behalf

- the helpline follows a policy that foresees not to document women's contacts with counselors

Obstacles that a woman in Greece may encounter NOWADAYS in her path to escape from a violent relationship¹

Mary goes to the police station to report the abuse suffered from her husband. A police officer tells her that she is not in the correct police station and that she has to go to the police station from her area. She is asking if they can escort her there together with her children because she has no money and she is afraid that she may meet him, but the police officers refused. She finally arrives to the "correct" police station. The police officer writes on a plain piece of paper Mary's complaints. Then he explains her that there is nothing he can do. The only thing that he can do is to invite her husband and tell him not to do it again. She returns home...

After some months a friend of hers provided her with the phone number of an NGO dealing with violence against women. They explained her that the police officer was obliged to accept her complaint and to press charges because domestic violence is an ex officio prosecuted crime. She asked for help in order to receive psychological support and legal advice. She was referred to a woman's counselling center. She went there but after some sessions with the psychologist she stopped because the psychologist made her feel worse than before. Then she called again to the NGO and she was referred to another counseling center. She did get help there. She also received some useful legal advice and she decided to request restrictive orders against her husband in order to protect herself and her children. In order to document her abuse, she needed a certificate from the counselling center attesting that she had benefited from their services due to the abuse; this has to be used as evidence in court. The administrative staff from the center refused to provide her with this document without any explanation, while her counselors (the psychologist and the lawyer) informed her that they are not allowed to act as expert witnesses on her behalf or to provide her with any individualized reports based on the counseling sessions they had done together...

She begged her best friend and her mother to testify on her behalf, but the friend is afraid of retaliation from the abuser, while her mother advises her to "be patient for the shake of her children... this is how men are behaving..."

Due to the gaps in service provision for women survivors in Greece, EAVN is currently designing the establishment of a **specialist support service for women survivors of IPV** where they will obtain reliable and accurate information about their rights and how to claim them, assistance before, during, and after civil or criminal proceedings, including psychological support and advice for legal, →

→ financial and practical issues; peer-support and empowerment. Women's involvement in decision making processes will also be promoted.

1 The story is based on real facts but has been modified to ensure the case is not identifiable



The **European Anti-Violence Network (EAVN)** is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 2006. EAVN's activities include the design, implementation and evaluation of capacity building, training, educational and awareness raising activities as well as research activities aiming at primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG), intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV). EAVN provides specialized information to women survivors of IPV, develops methods and activities for their empowerment and has trained hundreds of teachers, health care professionals and social workers on gender equality, VAWG, IPV and DV. Publications include extensive educational material for training professionals and sensitizing adolescents on IPV issues, and supportive material for abused women.

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EAVN monitors all data collected by Greek authorities on VAWG and DV every year, monitors the adoption and the way in which policies are implemented and exerts political pressure to ensure the Greek government is complying with EU and international standards.

EAVN has designed, implemented and evaluated the GEAR against IPV I and II projects aiming at primary and secondary prevention of IPV in adolescents in 7 countries and has a vision towards the integration of this approach into the regular school curriculum as well as its promotion at the EU level.



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Participants to the WAVE Annual Conference 2016 held in Berlin are showing their support for the Step Up! Campaign

The situation of specialist women's support services in Austria: Findings and recommendations from the first Austrian Shadow Report to GREVIO – SUMMARY¹

Introduction

This article is based on information from the Austrian Shadow Report to GREVIO, the first shadow report that was submitted on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in 2016. The report was drafted by a coalition of women's organisations and can be downloaded from the GREVIO website.² The article follows the structure of the Shadow Report, it provides background information and formulates challenges and recommendations.

Article 22 of the Istanbul Convention covers the obligation to provide or establish specialist women's support services for all women victims of violence and their children. Specialist support services should be available in adequate geographical distribution, providing short- and long-term specialist support services to all victims.

Basically three types of specialist women's support services are needed: women's helplines, women's shelters (residential support) and women's centres (non-residential support). Women's centres can include rape crises centres, intervention centres and women's counselling centres and other non-residential women's support services, but also services for specific groups of women such as migrant and asylum-seeking women and victims of forced marriage.³

National women's helpline

The Austrian National Women's Helpline⁴ was founded in 1998 by the Ministry for Women's Affairs and is run by the Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters, AÖF. The women's helpline is the first contact point by phone for all women and girls seeking help. The women's helpline offers multi-lingual support for about six hours per week and on demand in the following languages: Arabic, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, English, Farsi/Dari, Persian, Russian, Ukrainian and Turkish.

The Women's Helpline is funded by the Ministry for Health and Women's Affairs. It operates 24/7 and free of charge. The support is confidential, callers can stay anonymous and no information about them is passed on without their consent. The national women's helpline is run by trained female staff. In 2015 the helpline received 8,252 calls, of which 7,199 were from women and girls.

CHALLENGES

Staff and infrastructure costs of the women's helpline are funded up to almost 100% by the Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs in the frame of a three-year contract. Multi-lingual support is currently not fully funded and fundraising needs to be carried out regularly to provide this service to migrant and asylum seeking women. The costs of the callers are covered by the ministry as well.

There are NO financial resources for information and prevention included in the budget, which leads to the concerning problem that the number of the women's helpline is not widely known by women, especially by women in rural areas. Funding for the women's helpline is not sustainable beyond three years and is not legally secured. Any change in the government could mean that the women's helpline and other women's support services may be easily abolished. Right-wing parties have already made it clear that they think that specialist women's support services and women's shelters are not necessary. Thus, it is of utmost importance that governments and parliaments work together to establish as much as possible a secure legal base for the existence of specialist services for women and children victims of violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- › The national women's helpline has to be legally secured in the federal law.
- › Steady funding needs to be provided not only for the counselling, but also for dissemination of information and prevention work, awareness-raising, campaigning and public relations work, including social media.
- › All staff costs – especially for multi-lingual counselling – should be covered by the state.

Women's shelters

The first women's shelter was founded in 1978 in Vienna. Currently, 30 such facilities exist in Austria⁵, most of them being situated in cities. In 1988 the Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters (AÖF) was established as a network of the Austrian women's shelters. In 2013 a second network emerged (ZÖF). All women's shelters are run by independent women's NGOs; some are more closely affiliated with party, government or faith-based organizations.

All women's shelters aim at fulfilling quality standards (safety, anonymity, confidentiality, empowerment, autonomy and self-determination of women). They also accommodate and support children coming to the shelter with their mothers. Some, but not all women's shelters offer places for boys over the age of 14 years. Many offer counselling in different languages for migrant women (in Vienna in the form of video interpretation). There are five women's shelters which also run non-residential counselling centres for women victims of violence (Vienna, Vöcklabruck, Wels, Wr. Neustadt and St. Pölten).

The 30 women's shelters offer rooms for 766 women and children. According to the recommendation in the Istanbul Convention, Austria would need 834 places to fulfil →

→ the minimum standard⁶; thus at least 68 places are missing. Additional women's shelters would be needed in rural areas (Mühlviertel, Waldviertel). All women's shelters are accessible 24/7 and operate based on a gendered understanding of violence against women, as required by the Istanbul Convention.

The services of women's shelters are mostly free of charge for women without an income. Women with an income often need to provide a financial contribution according to their possibilities. Women's shelters are usually well-established in their communities and work closely together with other agencies, while maintaining their independence, which is important for ensuring a strong voice to women's rights.

In 2015 3,331 persons were supported in the women's shelters, 1,681 women and 1,650 children.⁷ 353 women could not be admitted to a women's shelter due to lack of space.

CHALLENGES

Core funding vs. insecure "patchwork funding": Many women's shelters, after decades of existence, still struggle with inadequate funding and inadequate funding structures and procedures. This is not only humiliating and a sign that policy makers do not always care about the human rights of women and children, but is also a waste of resources, because the shelter staff is occupied with fundraising and securing funding, while their energy should go into providing empowering support to women and children.

Funding models: The most adequate funding model for women's shelters is core funding, based on legislation. Core funding means that shelters get a certain sum of money, based on the size and services they deliver. Core funding is independent from the number of women and children staying in the shelter and also independent from the individuals seeking help. This is very important, in order to be able to guarantee emergency assistance immediately to ALL women seeking help, including undocumented women, independent of their nationality, religion or legal status, as required by the Convention. Such a system also guarantees women confidentiality and anonymity, which is important for their safety.

Inadequate funding and discriminatory practices occur when funding is based on a system of daily rates, especially when the payment of these daily rates depends on women's entitlement to minimum benefits. For women who have no right to minimum benefits, the government does not pay for their accommodation in a women's shelter. These women would then often not be admitted to women's shelters, and if so only for a very short period of time, or only if that particular shelter gets additional funding from private donations.

Thus, the best model for funding is core funding with a sound legal base. Such a system requires that state control rules do not supersede the right of women and children to safety; it requires trust between women's NGOs and state agencies funding women's shelters. Austria has shown in several examples that such a system can work.

Access to the women's shelters: Regarding access to women's shelters, every federal state has its own legislation and rules. Especially undocumented women are often not admitted or only hosted for a few days.

Another severe problem in accessing safe accommodation is that funding and other regulations can make it impossible or very difficult for women victims of violence to seek shelter in another province. Such flexibility is of utmost importance for the safety of women and children. The national action plan and coordinating body should adopt a policy on how to secure adequate funding and safe access for all women and their children to shelters, including women with mobility problems.

Support for children: Women's shelters are also child protection centres and they are the only institutions which offer children safety and security. The number of children in women's shelters is the same or sometimes higher than that of women. There are also not enough employees in women's shelters, especially for providing support to children. Not all women's shelters can offer places for boys over 14 years, which is sometimes a big problem for women. For this reason, some boys have to stay with the violent father.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Adequate funding for women's shelters: legal base, core funding, sustainability – at least a three-year contract.⁸
- › Funding schemes and contracts should guarantee the right of all women and children to access women's shelters, including undocumented women, refugee women, women asylum-seekers and women with different abilities.
- › The question for policy on non-discrimination is always: Are there any groups excluded from the measure? If yes, why? What measures can be taken to include them?
- › Access to funding and funding for women's shelters should be regulated by a coordinated policy in the framework of the next national action plan in cooperation with the provinces. A national protocol on access to safe services should be developed and adopted by the national working group (IMAG) in the framework of the next national action plan. The policy should be implemented all over Austria until the mid-term of the next national action plan.
- › Provincial governments should review their policies of access for women to shelters and their funding. Core and sufficient funding, based on legal provisions, should be introduced where this does not yet exist.
- › All women's shelters need to provide access in a non-bureaucratic way, including immediate admission to the shelter on a 24/7 basis.
- › Safety must be a priority, including efficient safety measures in all women's shelters and the right for survivors to find safe accommodation in other regions and provinces.
- › Increase the number of women's shelters, and establish women's shelters in rural areas (Waldviertel, Mühlviertel, Styria), and increase the number of places (68 places) in the next three years.
- › Women's shelters should not only be "a roof over the head", but places in which women and children are safe, where they can recover from violence and receive empowering and professional support.

- › Women’s shelters should not be desolate places, because this would send the message to survivors of violence that they do not matter.
- › The venues of women’s shelters should be functional as well as comfortable; as a minimum standard, women’s shelters should provide one small living unit per woman and her children; there should be a garden and sufficient recreational spaces and lounges.⁹ It is especially urgent that the new autonomous women’s shelter in Tyrol be built quickly within the next year.
- › Women and children should be supported by qualified staff in shelters, who are trained in providing a gender-sensitive and empowering approach.
- › The diversity of women seeking support has to be acknowledged when ensuring culturally sensitive support.
- › The human rights and safety of women and their children need to be at the centre of the work of the women’s shelters, including democratic and participatory structures and processes.
- › All children need to have the right to access women’s shelters with their mothers, independent from their age and gender. At least two child workers should be available in each women’s shelter, in shelters which accommodate more than 20 children, at least three child workers should be available.¹⁰
- › Every women’s shelter should have at least one room which is wheelchair accessible.
- › Secure and sustainable funding should be provided to networks of women’s shelters.
- › Women’s shelters should also receive core funding to carry out prevention activities, such as awareness-raising, campaigns and trainings in the communities and regions where they work.

Women’s Centres

The main types of women’s centres providing non-residential support to women survivors of violence in Austria are: general women’s centres, rape crises centres and intervention centres. Support for women victims of violence is also provided by centres for migrant women and by general women’s counselling centres, which serve women in all kinds of matters (employment, training, residence status, divorce, health issues and other); these centres also service women survivors of violence, especially if there is no specialist service available nearby, but their focus is not solely on this issue.

RAPE CRISES CENTRES

There are five autonomous rape-counselling-centres in Austria in the provinces of Vienna, Upper Austria, Styria, Salzburg and Tyrol. Four provinces do not provide autonomous rape-counselling-services. Additionally, a 24/7 women’s helpline for victims of sexual violence is run by the city of Vienna.

The Austrian rape counselling centres offer specialised

short- and long-term psycho-social counselling and support for women and adolescent girls aged 14 following rape, harassment, sexual assault or abuse. The services also include legal advice and support during legal procedures. Prevention and awareness-raising measures as well as information about all issues concerning sexual violence against women and adolescent girls are provided. Apart from the women’s helpline of the city of Vienna, none of the centres are able to provide 24/7 services due to lack of funding.

CHALLENGES

Of Austria’s nine provinces, only five have rape counselling centres. Although funded by the federal state, the provinces and the communities, there is no long-term security and each has to regularly advocate to secure the necessary funding. Because of the specific challenges encountered when tackling sexual violence against women – compared with other forms of violence – it is essential that victims and relevant persons from their social environment have access to specialised psycho-social counselling in qualified and appropriate rape counselling-centres. There is a Federal Association of the autonomous rape counselling centres called Bundesverband der Autonomen Frauennotrufe Österreichs (BAFÖ).¹¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Ensure adequate funding for existing specialised Austrian Autonomous Rape Counselling Centers for women and adolescent girls affected by sexual violence.
- › Provide sufficient funding to the Federal Association of the Austrian Autonomous Rape Counselling Centres (BAFÖ).
- › Provide funding for at least one Autonomous Rape Crisis Centre in each of the remaining four Austrian provinces (Carinthia, Lower Austria, Vorarlberg, Burgenland).

Intervention Centers

Intervention centres were established together with the adoption of the first law on protection from violence in 1997, as part of a coordinated intervention system, since laws alone are not enough to empower survivors.¹² They are available in each of the 9 provinces and are run by NGOs. The police are obliged to notify the respective regional intervention centre within 24 hours of all cases of domestic violence and stalking. The centres proactively reach out to victims and offer empowering support, including counselling, psycho-social and legal court assistance, access to justice, etc. The Vienna Intervention Centre also runs an anti-violence program for violent men in partnership with the Men’s Counselling Centre.

Intervention centres are not available 24/7 but the majority of them have opening hours extending normal office hours. Intervention centres are serving all victims of domestic violence and stalking, because their work is based on the national legal framework, which is not women-specific. However, these centres recognize that violence against women is gender-based violence and that women are affected disproportionately by domestic violence and stalking. They all apply a gender-specific approach. →

→ The intervention centres are funded by the Federal Ministry for Health and Women and the Ministry of Interior and the budget for these facilities amounted to €7.32 million in 2015. Additionally, all centres receive funding from the Federal Ministry of Justice for providing psycho-social and legal support.

In the year 2015, the nine intervention centres received 8,261 notifications by the police and 17,621 victims were supported, predominantly women and their children.¹³

CHALLENGES

Some intervention centres have a high case load and can only provide short-term crisis support. For instance, the Vienna Intervention Centre is obliged by contract to serve 5,800 victims of domestic violence and stalking per year. Only 25 staff members (full-time) are available to provide support to victims, which totals on average 5.9 hours per victim per year. This is not enough to provide mid-and long-term support and to achieve sustainable results in guaranteeing victims to be able to live free from violence. More resources are needed in order to reach out to more victims of domestic violence and stalking. Several provinces are in need of more resources to provide decentralized support. Another serious problem is the lack of support for children witnessing violence.¹⁴

In addition, financial resources for the prevention of violence are needed (awareness and sensitization in all sectors of society, training and introducing this issue in the curriculum of different professionals, expansion of victim-oriented programmes for perpetrators, coordinating victim-centred multi-agency partnerships, schools and other educational institutions, more work with the offenders focused on victim protection, etc.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Crisis support alone is not enough, resources for mid and long term support of survivors are needed to achieve sustainable results in the prevention of violence.
- › All children should be guaranteed the right to empowering support at the same premises where their mothers are supported, so that the family is not additionally burdened by having to go to different places to receive the necessary support (see also section on children in the shadow report).
- › In order to reach out to victims at an earlier stage and be successful in the prevention of violence, intervention centres should be notified by the police about all interventions in cases of violence against women and domestic violence (not only in cases of emergency barring orders and stalking, as it is currently the case).
- › Reviews of homicide cases show that the police had previously intervened in homicide cases repeatedly but only qualified it as “a domestic fight”.
- › In several provinces there is still a need for decentralized support.

Centres for migrant women victims of violence

In addition to the women’s centres, services for migrant women victims of violence as well as women victims of specific forms of violence (forced marriage and female genital mutilation) were established over the past few decades in Austria. Unfortunately, most of these only exist in Vienna or in bigger cities. There is a lack of services provided in languages other than German. Since funding for migrant organisations is not secured, they suffer from austerity measures and are even forced to close, such as the migrant counselling centre Horizont in Lower Austria.

Dependence on the perpetrator, restrictive residence laws, lack of education and employment opportunities and economic inequality are the main barriers for migrants and asylum-seekers to free themselves from violent relationships. To enable migrant women and their children to live free from violence requires not only the right to be protected from violence, but also social and economic rights, such as the right to employment, financial assistance and housing.

Currently 6 centres for migrant women exist in Austria: 4 in Vienna (LEFÖ, Counselling Centre for migrants; Perigrina; Miteinander lernen/Learning Together), 1 in Linz (Maiz), 1 in Graz (Danaida). Additionally, 2 centres provide specific support to survivors of violence: The Centre for Survivors of Forced Marriage (Orient Express) and the Centre for Victims of Female Genital Mutilation in Vienna. None of them is accessible 24/7, due to lack of resources.

CHALLENGES

Centres for migrant women and for specific forms of violence face even more problems than women’s centres or intervention centres. They only exist in bigger cities and there is not even one such centre per province. The funding is often insecure and short-term. Due to lack of resources for informational work and awareness-raising, services cannot make themselves known to a wider public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Duplication of the number of migrant women’s centres in the next four years.
- › Intensive and empowering support has to be given to undocumented women victims of violence and all centres should be able and well-resourced to help them to exercise their human rights.
- › Establish at least one centre for migrant women victims of violence in the provinces which do not have one yet.
- › Establish empowerment centres for asylum-seeking and refugee women in all provinces, providing counselling, awareness-raising, training and access to justice, employment and social economic rights to asylum-seeking and refugee women
- › Provide sustainable and long-term funding for all services.
- › Ensure adequate funding for informational work, awareness-raising, training and prevention work, and for innovative programmes to address communities

engaged in stopping violence against women and domestic violence (community-based projects).

REFERENCES

Council of Europe (2011): Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul, available at: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

- 1 The Austrian NGO-Shadow Report for GREVIO was drafted by a coalition of NGOs; the Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters, AÖF & Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna, IST, were responsible for coordination. For further information about the shadow report please contact Mag. Kerstin Schinnerl at: kerstin.schinnerl@interventionstelle-wien.at
- 2 Austrian NGO Shadow Report to GREVIO, available at: http://files.wave-network.org/home/Austria_NGOGREVIOShadowReport_September2016.pdf
- 3 See also WAVE Report 2015, Report on the Role of Specialist Women's Support Services in Europe, available at: http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf
- 4 Frauenhelpline gegen Gewalt/Women's Helpline against Violence, 0800 222 555, <http://www.frauenhelpline.at/>
- 5 See network of the women's' and girls' counselling centres <http://www.netzwerk-frauenberatung.at/index.php/beratungsstellen>
- 6 Network of autonomous women's shelters (AÖF) <https://www.facebook.com/verein.aof>
- 7 Network of autonomous women's shelters (AÖF) http://www.aof.at/images/06_infoshop/6-2_infomaterial_zum_downloaden/statistiken_der_aof/Statistik%202015_barrierefrei.pdf
- 8 Quality Standards Women's Shelters/ Qualitätsbroschüre: www.aof.at/images/06_infoshop/6-1_infomaterial_zum_bestellen/6-1-1_broschueren_und_folder/Qualit%C3%A4tsbrosch%C3%BCre_A%C3%9F_%202008_Englisch.pdf
- 9 See previous footnote – quality standards of women's shelters
- 10 See Qualitätsstandards für die Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen in den österreichischen Frauenhäusern, AÖF 2005
- 11 BAFÖ <http://www.frauennotrufe.at/cms/index.html>
- 12 See also annex on the Austrian legal framework and the Intervention Centres
- 13 Austria has a population of approximately 8,7 million inhabitants.
- 14 For more information on the situation of children see chapter 4 of the Austrian Shadow Report to GREVIO



Step Up! Campaign activities from **Spain** organised by our member 'Fundacion para la Convivencia Aspacia'



Press conference about violence against women and the Step Up! Campaign with our member from **Moldova** 'Casa Marioarei'



WAVE member 'La Strada' from the **Ukraine** endorsing the Step Up! Campaign



WAVE members from **Montenegro** showing their support for the Step Up! campaign



The system of women's shelters in Estonia

Eha Reitelmann

Chairwoman of the Estonian Women's Shelters Union

Background information

In Estonia, the first public debate on violence against women took place in the beginning of this century, when the Ministry of Social Affairs commissioned the first surveys on domestic violence. The survey results suggested that more than 40, 000 women suffered injuries due to domestic violence in Estonia. The professionals working with victims of domestic violence (police, health care professionals, social workers, child protection workers, psychologists, etc.) had not received any training on the specificities of violence against women and thus the majority of abused women did not receive adequate professional help. The government lacked any concrete action plan, and neither did Estonia have a system in place to prevent violence or provide support to victims. Eventually, however, these were established based on civil society initiatives.

In 2002, the first women's shelter opened its doors in Tartu. For a couple of years, it remained the only shelter; and it was financed by local authorities and foreign donors. In 2003, various support groups for abused women were created across Estonia, largely thanks to citizens' initiatives.

In 2005, the women's organisations, members of the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable, launched targeted activities aimed at opening women's shelters in all 15 counties of Estonia, so that refuge and qualified help would be available for women and children experiencing violence across the country.

On 8 March 2005, a women's shelter was opened in Tallinn and in 2006 in Ida-Viru county. In the spring of 2006, the shelters of Tartu and Ida-Virumaa county established an umbrella organisation – the Estonian Women's Shelters Union, whose objective was to act as an advocate in all matters relating to violence against women, to engage in lobbying and to be a partner for the government and the parliament in the legislative and policy-making process. Moreover, the organisation promoted cooperation between shelters, supported their further development and international cooperation.

Together with the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable, the Union prioritised establishing new or additional shelters in all counties, so as to guarantee equal access to services to all women regardless of their place of residence. To that end, local interested women were contacted. They were provided with trainings and help in setting up their NGOs and raising funds.

By the end of 2009, altogether 9 shelters had been opened in various counties and cities: Tartu (NGO Women's Shelter, 2002), Tallinn (NGO Tallinn Women's Refuge, 2005), Jõhvi (NGO Ida-Virumaa Women's Support Centre – Shelter, 2006), Tapa (NGO Jeeriko, 2007; closed as of 2010), Viljandi (NGO Women's Shelter, 2008, as of 2010 NGO Viljandi Women's Shelter), Paide (NGO Järva Women's Shelter, 2008; closed in 2013), Valga (NGO Valgamaa Women's Shelter, 2008). In 2009 shelters were opened in

Rapla (NGO Raplamaa Women's Shelter, 2009; closed in 2015) and in Pärnu (NGO Pärnu Women's Shelter, 2009). The Women's Shelters mostly offered help to the victims of domestic violence, but some shelters, whose staff had been appropriately trained, also provided services to victims of trafficking in human beings and sexual violence.

Funding for Estonian shelters was mostly project-based and organised through the Gambling Tax Council¹; although in the two biggest cities, Tallinn and Tartu, local authorities allocated a considerable sum of money for shelters. When the economic crisis started in 2009, the Gambling Tax Council allocated only a third of the needed funds to the project concerning shelters. It was announced in April that the agreed sum would be further reduced by 35 percent, causing a real risk that the system of women's shelters in Estonia, built up thanks to an immense effort, might collapse.

The Estonian Women's Shelters Union focused on keeping all shelters open despite the recession. We were able to reach an agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs, to the effect that in 2009 the government would support as many projects submitted by the shelters as possible, as long as these projects were submitted gradually. That required an agreement and good cooperation between all nine shelters – which was achieved. The shelters did not compete for funding and as a result, almost all projects received funding from the Gambling Tax Council during that year.

Nevertheless, these efforts were not sufficient to keep the shelters alive, and a crisis program of the Open Estonia Foundation, that was opened in the summer of 2009, contributed to service delivery.

We decided to aggregate the project applications of seven shelters to one, worth 1 million EEK (63, 900 EUR), among other things, to test how well the shelters were able to coordinate their cooperation and the Union's capacity to manage finances. Our application was successful, and the shelters, as well as the helpline 1492, were able to run during the five months from October 2009 to the end of February 2010, and thus overcome the economic crisis.

In autumn 2009 the Estonian Broadcasting Company contacted the Union to work together on a charity TV programme, Jõulutunnel, which was aired during Christmas and raised money to support the shelters and the helpline 1492 for women suffering abuse.

The TV programme sparked a general public debate on the topic in Estonia and helped us make the shelter service more visible. In 2010, 1, 477, 000 EEK (94, 400 EUR) were raised with the aid of the TV programme and the money was equally distributed between nine women's shelters and the helpline 1492, enabling the shelters' system to survive the recession.

While supporting the activities of existing shelters, we also worked on opening new ones to improve the availability of services. Since 2010 the following women's shelters have been opened: Võru (NGO Võrumaa Wom-

en's Shelter, 2011), an additional shelter in Tartu (NGO Tähtvere Open Women's Centre, 2011), Rakvere (NGO Virumaa Women's Support Centre, 2013), Jõgeva (NGO Jõgevamaa Women's Support Centre, 2013), Paide (NGO Järvamaa Women's Support Centre, 2013) and Haapsalu (NGO Läänemaa Women's Support Centre, 2014). As of 2016, the women's shelter services are also available on the two biggest islands of Estonia, namely Hiiumaa and Saaremaa, and an additional shelter was opened in Tallinn. All shelters operate as NGOs; some offer services in more than one county. Therefore, we can say that the objective that the Estonian women's organisations set ten years ago – to guarantee the availability of the services provided by women's shelters in all counties – has been fulfilled.

Development of the services of women's shelters in Estonia

When the first women's shelters were opened, our objective was to offer initial crisis support and temporary safe housing for women and children who have experienced violence. Since the funding of shelters has been limited, much of the work was done not only by paid staff, but also with the help of volunteers.

The experience of the shelters showed that women exposed to violence expected in addition to temporary housing and initial crisis support, also expert advice in legal issues, support in communicating with authorities and psychological counselling that would help them break the cycle of violence for good. On the one hand, it required thorough psychological and legal training of the staff members and the volunteers working at the shelters. On the other hand, we had to involve professional psychologists, psychotherapists and lawyers in the work of the shelters more than before.

The first comprehensive service description of women's shelters was drafted in 2012 in cooperation with Võrumaa Women's Shelter. During this process we interviewed women who had experienced violence and the members of local women's organisations, to find out what kind of support they expected from the shelters. For this purpose, we also consulted the Istanbul Convention, the EU Victim's Directive, the minimum standards of the Council of Europe and the materials elaborated by the WAVE Network.

Besides safe housing, the initial counselling and case-based counselling offered by the staff at the support centre, and psychological counselling or psychotherapy as well as legal advice provided by professionals, are considered to be equal parts of the women's support centre service. In addition to domestic violence, support is given to victims of sexual abuse, as well as all other forms of violence against women.

In 2013, the members of the Estonian Women's Shelters Union decided to start using the word "support centre" instead of "shelter" when referring to these establishments, since it covers the content of the services provided in a more accurate way.

At the same time, the state started implementing the Norway support programme project "Developing services for victims of domestic violence, strengthening cooperation between different institutions and raising awareness among victims and the general public". The project lasted for three years and included all 13 shelters that were ac-

tive in Estonia as partners, i.e. both those shelters which were members of the Estonian Women's Shelters Union and those who were not. The budget of the project was 1 million EUR.

The Women's Support Centres started to offer psychological counselling or psychotherapy and legal advice in 13 counties to women and children who had experienced violence. Altogether, more than 6, 200 hours of psychological counselling or psychotherapy and more than 4, 600 hours of legal advice were provided to victims of violence with the help of this project.

Under this project, a system of women's support centre services was established, covering the whole of Estonia, and was based on the needs of women victims of violence and uniform service standards, as had been previously agreed between the support centres in 2013.

As a rule, women's support centres in Estonia provide their services on the premises rented for that particular purpose. Safe housing is provided in three or four bedroom flats rented from private or legal persons, and the addresses are not public. However, if the address is revealed, the location will be changed. Counselling services (case-based counselling, psychological counselling or psychotherapy and legal advice) is provided in a separate private counselling room.

The victims can contact the support centre by phone. The line is open 24/7, and victims can also arrive at the support centre at any time. The service requires no referrals, which means that any victim of violence against women, regardless of the place of residence, can turn directly to the women's support centre for help. All the services provided by the women's support centre are free of charge for the victim. The victim may even remain anonymous.

The women's support centre must have at least two employees. The help of volunteers is also needed, to ensure a 24-hour preparedness to serve arriving victims. Both the workers and the volunteers must undergo a 48-hour basic training on violence against women. We expect that psychologists, psychotherapists and lawyers who work with victims also undergo further training on violence against women.

The Estonian Women's Shelters Union started to collect statistics in all women's shelters according to a uniform methodology in 2009, and the number of victims who have received support has continuously grown. The support centres helped 1, 524 victims in 2013; 1, 617 victims in 2014; 1, 763 victims in 2015 and 1, 055 victims during the first six months of 2016.

The results of a satisfaction survey about the services provided by the women's support centres conducted in 2015 and consisting of an online questionnaire and interviews, showed that the women were very satisfied with the services they had received from the support centre.

Training

The first women's shelters were largely established with the help of Nordic umbrella organisations of women's shelters, especially ROKS from Sweden and Krisesentersekretariatet from Norway. Their services were designed on the basis of international know-how and with the support of trainers from abroad. As these experiences built up, we were able to provide basic training for the staff and volunteers from new shelters by ourselves. →

→ From 2006 to 2016 the Estonian Women's Shelters Union provided 536 hours of basic training and 504 hours of additional training to staff from women's support centres as well as their volunteers. The training was offered free of charge, and all members of staff and volunteers from all shelters were welcome.

Under the Norwegian program alone, more than 200 hours of additional training was offered. Among other subjects, the staff from our support centres acquired additional knowledge in helping children who have experienced violence and this has contributed considerably to improve our work in this area.

Higher education institutions or universities in Estonia provided no knowledge about violence against women in their curricula until 2014. Hence, the only way to guarantee that a high-quality service was being offered by support centres was through additional training. Currently, such courses are offered by two universities as an optional subject.

Throughout the years, support centres have organised joint trainings for specialists from various fields to make sure that everybody who comes into contact with victims would fully comprehend the phenomenon of violence against women, has a shared understanding of how to help victims and is able to conduct successful networking. Practically all support centres have established a reliable network in their respective counties, which includes state victim support services, the police, the Prosecutor's Office, social welfare services, child protection departments and other professionals.

Funding of women's support centres

While the women's support centres were previously financed on a project basis through the Gambling Tax Council, in the period between 2014 and 2016, 500, 000 EUR were allocated each year in the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs for the provision of basic services of support centres. Legal and psychological counselling was financed separately and for the year 2016, the total appropriation for counselling was 225, 000 EUR.

Even though the aggregate funding for 2016 increased, the sum available per county decreased due to making the service available in 15, instead of the former 13 counties. Decreasing funds triggered a conflict between shelters and had a devastating effect on cooperation between shelters.

Future of the women's support centres in Estonia

Between 2015 and 2016, the Ministry of Social Affairs prepared the draft Victim Support Act, according to which women's support centre services will become a state service. The Act further assigns the task of organising procurements to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Although the Estonian Women's Shelters Union repeatedly submitted its proposals to the Ministry of Social Affairs, the ones we considered to be most important were not taken into account during inter-ministerial discussions. Throughout the debate in the parliament we managed to add a clause to the Victim Support Act, stipulating that the services must be available in all counties. Our proposal to include the gender perspective into the service provision was, however, left out, along with many other.

According to the terms and conditions of the call for tender, which was published in the beginning of November this year, in the next two years, funding for support centres will be cut by 100, 000 EUR. Furthermore, funding for support centres outside bigger cities will be reduced by half in the next two years.

While the average budget of a support centre servicing a county has over the past few years been up to 50, 000 EUR, it will be below 30, 000 EUR next year. Practically, this means that in the future, it will not be possible to provide high-quality services to women and children affected by violence. The tender documents do not require the tenderer to provide any certificate proving that the staff of the support centre has undergone specific training on violence against women, a written declaration being enough. In other words, the requirements for service providers have weakened and almost anyone could offer this kind of services. The service quality drops and abused women and their children do not receive adequate help, which is what concerns us most.

This is why the implementation of the Victim Support Act as of January 1st 2017 will most likely destroy the current system of women's support centres, and make a high-quality service only available in bigger cities, further increasing regional inequalities in Estonia in terms of service provision. High-quality specialist support services will thus be just as difficult to access for the majority of abused women and their children as they were ten years ago.

On 25 November, Estonian women's organisations intend to approach the government and the parliament and demand additional resources for maintaining support services for all victims of violence against women across Estonia.

We hope that all members of the WAVE network can support us to achieve this objective.

1 The Gambling Tax Council allocates support and was established under the Gambling Tax Act in 2002. The Council comprises 9 members of whom 6 are members of parliament and 3 are representatives of ministries. Support is distributed once a month. Further information available at: <http://www.eksperimenta.net/collaboration/partners-and-supporters/hasartmangumaksu-noukogu/>



Eha Reitelmann is chairwoman of the Estonian Women's Shelters Union and secretary general of the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable network. She has been active in combatting male violence against women since 2003. Moreover, she initiated and supported the establishment of new women's shelters in all regions of Estonia; organised training programs for a wide range of specialists and young people; drafted proposals, analyses and opinions for different institutions; initiated the development of a course on gender-based violence at the University of Tartu.
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Specialized support services – the missing link in the protection of women victims of violence in the Republic of Macedonia

Elena Dimushevska

Executive Director of the National network to end violence against women and domestic violence

In the Republic of Macedonia only one national study on domestic violence has been conducted so far and this was published in 2012. Findings showed that more than one third of the population was exposed to at least one form of domestic violence. Psychological violence has been most frequently reported, while physical and sexual violence have scored a lower prevalence (which may be explained by the methodological limitations of the study). Victims usually report violence to the police and at the centers for social welfare. Actually, more than three quarters of all violent acts have never been reported according to the findings of this study.

In the research report *Voice for justice*¹ it is stated that domestic violence has characteristics of gender-based violence: according to the statistics provided, 93% of reported and convicted offenders who committed domestic violence throughout the reporting period were men and 82% of victims were women. In 65 % of reported cases the perpetrator was the husband, current or former, and in 95 % of cases the victims were their wives.

The Macedonian Parliament adopted a new Law for Prevention, Combating and Protection from Domestic Violence in September 2014, which entered into force on January 1st 2015. In that document domestic violence is defined as "abuse, insults, threatening of safety, inflicting physical injuries, sexual or other psychological, physical or economical violence which causes a feeling of insecurity, being threatened, or fear, including threats of such acts, towards a spouse, parents or children or other persons which live in a marital or other community or joint household, as well as towards a present or former spouse or persons which have a common child or have close personal relations, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same housing with the victim". The same law envisages protection measures for providing primary support to the victim of domestic violence who has left the violent relationship and has reported violence. The law also incorporates the responsibilities of each stakeholder in terms of providing measures to protect victims of domestic violence: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of justice, Ministry of Health, local self-government units and NGOs. The main objective of these protection measures is provision of primary assistance and support to victims and responding to their needs arising as a result of being in a violent relationship. The following protection measures for victims of domestic violence are foreseen by the new law: accommodation necessary for persons victims of domestic violence; adequate health care; psychosocial intervention and treatment; referrals to appropriate counselling; assistance to the family for regular school attendance of a child; legal assistance and representation; economic empowerment of the victim through her active involvement in the labour market.

General and specialized services for women victims of violence

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, that Macedonia signed in 2011, makes a distinction between **general support services** offered by public authorities such as social services, health services, employment services, which provide long-term help and are not exclusively designed for the benefit of victims only but serve the public at large, and specialized services tailored to the needs of victims of specific forms of violence. These may fall under violence against women or domestic violence and are not open to the general public. Specialized services include: sheltering/ safe houses that are accommodating victims and their children, psychosocial help and support, SOS lines, free legal aid.

Situation in the Republic of Macedonia

1. Specialized support services provided by the State

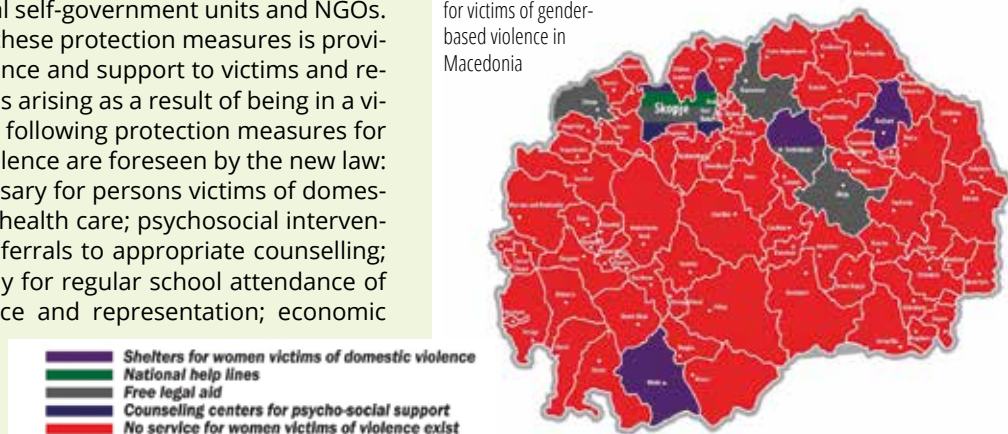
According to available data, there are four state shelters in the country that provide accommodation for up to 6 months and they provide services only for women victims of domestic violence. Geographically, one shelter is located in Skopje and the rest are located in Sveti Nikole, Kochani and Bitola.

2. Specialized support services provided by NGO's

Shelters: There is one shelter that provides accommodation for up to 6 months, and one crisis center (24 – 48 hours) operated by non-governmental organizations. Their services have been set up for victims of domestic violence and their children, including for victims of intimate partner violence. Both centers are located in Skopje.

Macedonia represents a BIG RED SPOT in the context of service provision for women victims of violence

Map of existing specialized services for victims of gender-based violence in Macedonia



→ **Psychosocial help and support:** In Skopje only one counseling center works with family members coming from families where domestic violence is detected. Namely, teams of psychotherapists work with victims, children and perpetrators separately. There is no support center for victims of rape and sexual violence in the whole country.

SOS helplines: Three organizations provide free, national SOS helplines, operating 24/7. None of the national helplines provide services in all languages spoken by the country's various communities.

Free legal aid: Currently there are 6 non-governmental organizations offering specialized services of free legal aid to women victims of violence located in Skopje, Shtip, Tetovo, Kumanovo and Sveti Nikole.

The table below provides an overview of existing services for women victims of violence in the Republic of Macedonia compared to the standards set by the Council of Europe

Type of service	CoE recommendations: Minimum standards	Current situation in Macedonia	What is missing in Macedonia
National SOS Helpline	Minimum 1 national SOS helpline providing 24/7 support in the languages in use	3 national SOS helplines providing assistance in Macedonian language	Providing assistance in all languages spoken by existing communities
Shelters for women victims of violence	1 place per 10.000 inhabitants	5 shelters (accommodation up to 6 months) 1 crisis center (accommodation from 24 to 48 hours)	Minimum another 20 shelters with a capacity of minimum 8 places / beds
Rape crisis center	Minimum 1 per 200.000 women	None	Minimum 5 rape crisis centers
Centers for victims of sexual violence	Minimum 1 per 400.000 women	None	Minimum 3 centers for victims of sexual violence
Counseling centers (early intervention, psychological counseling, free legal aid)	Minimum 1 per 50.000 women	1 counseling center and 6 centers for free legal aid	Minimum 20 counseling centers

The mapping of the situation in Macedonia, conducted by the National Network to end violence against women and domestic violence² shows that existing services offer protection and support exclusively to victims of domestic violence, and other forms of violence against women, particularly sexual violence, are practically non-existent. Furthermore, capacities of existing shelters are very limited, i.e. only a small number of women can be accommodated at the same time, especially when taking into consideration the fact that women victims are usually taking their children with them (approximately 30 places on the national level are available). Also, there is a lack of professional staff that can support women victims of various forms of violence. Availability and accessibility of services is limited because of their concentration in urban locations (mostly in the capital), and women from rural areas have no access to services for protection and support. Existing support services are not accessible to women with disabilities who are victims of violence.

What is of greatest concern is the lack of financial aid to ensure the sustainability of support services. In fact, all services run by NGOs were funded by foreign donations. A very small percentage of the necessary budget comes

from state funding. Current state funding involves application and approval of projects and not a guaranteed annual budget. Problems regarding the sustainability of the services became apparent when donor organizations and foundations started to withdraw from Macedonia due to the perception that the state has assumed responsibility for the protection of victims (in this case only domestic violence victims). The legal regulation on domestic violence from 2004, enshrined in the Criminal Code, and other more recent legal provisions found in the Law for Prevention, Combating and Protection from Domestic Violence contribute to this impression. Furthermore, the preparation and implementation of the first National Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence (2008-2011), of the second National Strategy (2012 - 2015), and now the preparation of the third one strongly confirm the position of donor organizations. Their impression is that the state understands its obligations, hence their presence is no longer needed. A consequence of the withdrawal of donors has been the closing of the first shelter established in Macedonia in 2001 due to lack of funds. Furthermore, the work of several centres providing free legal aid was suspended, and those support services that are still functioning are threatened to be closed as there not enough funds.

According to these findings, the system of protection for women victims of different forms of violence is facing a number of significant challenges. State institutions need to respond to these immediately, especially because of the fact that Macedonia already signed the Istanbul Convention and ratification is expected to take place at the moment.

1 Mirceva, S; Chacheva, V, Kening, N (2014), *Voice for justice: research report - Assessment of court proceedings in domestic violence cases, with specific focus on assessing the case management from a gender perspective*, IPPSI 2014

2 Skrielj, S, Dimushevska, E, (2016): Mapping of services available for women victims of violence in Republic of Macedonia, National network to end violence against women and domestic violence 2016 http://www.glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Mapi-ran-e-na-servisi_final.pdf



Elena Dimushevska is a women's rights activist and has extensive experience in providing direct services for women victims of violence. Her current position is Executive Director of the National network to end violence against women and domestic violence (since 2011). The role of

the Network is to coordinate the actions of civil society organizations in order to improve existing policies and practices for dealing with the issues of violence against women and domestic violence. The Network strives for the recognition of women's human rights and their promotion in the Republic of Macedonia. Previously, from 2008 to 2011 she worked as a psychologist in a women's NGO that runs a shelter center and was providing psychosocial counselling for women victims of domestic violence that were accommodated at the shelter. From 2013 she works as a psychotherapist with women victims of domestic violence in counselling centers run by NGOs. She graduated in Psychology from the Institute for Psychology, Philosophical Faculty in Skopje. She is a certificated psychotherapist for psychodrama and a family counselor.
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From Crisis to Crisis: the fight for sustainable refuge funding in England

Sian Hawkins

Campaigns and Public Affairs Manager, Women's Aid Federation of England (WAFE)

Over the past few years we have seen specialist refuge services in England lurch from funding crisis to funding crisis with no promise of sustainable funding from either local authorities or central government. Despite the uncertainty around refuge funding, the one unchanging factor is that the demand for refuge spaces continues to far exceed the places available. Still, every day in England, our 2015 Annual Survey shows, 92 women and 75 children are turned away from refuges, normally due to there being no space available for them¹.

SOS: Save Refuges, Save Lives Campaign

From 2010 - 2014 Women's Aid found that 17% of specialist women's refuges closed, and the future of many more services was hanging in the balance. The rapid decline in service provision was primarily down to two key factors after funding for services was delegated to local authorities by central government:

- 1) Huge swathes of local authority funding cuts, through a prolonged period of austerity. This source of funding pays for the support costs of women's refuges, such as staff time.
- 2) Poor local commissioning practices which do not take into account the specialisms within the sector and do not understand the way refuges operate as a network allowing women to move freely across local authority boundaries to safety.

These issues were particularly acute and damaging for local services supporting women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities². The value of these highly specialist services, which hold significant national importance was not always recognised locally, so we saw and intervened in many situations where local authorities either wanted to subsume these services into larger, non-specialist, organisations or to decommission them completely.

Women's Aid launched the SOS: Save Refuges, Save Lives campaign back in September 2014 and successfully brought the issue of refuge closures to the general public and heart of Government. In December 2014, after significant public outcry and media interest, we were able to secure a £10 million investment in refuges and, in June 2015, a further £3.2 million which provided additional resources until 31 March 2016. Whilst only short term pots of funding, this additional resource enabled some services that were on the brink of closure to remain open and others to increase their numbers of beds.

When we launched the SOS campaign we asked survivors of domestic abuse, what their refuge had meant to them. Here are some of the things that they told us:

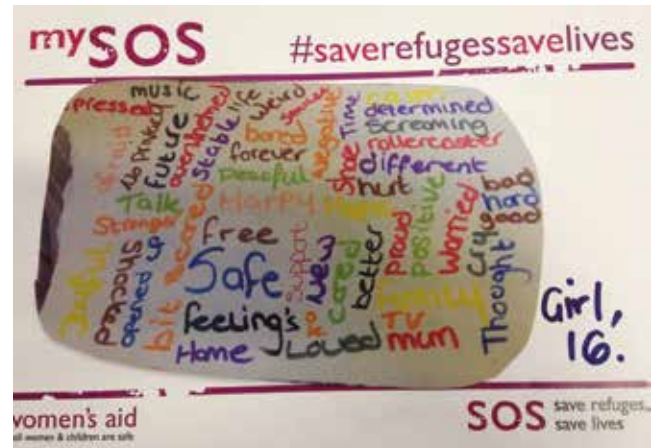
"Going to a refuge saved my life, and gave hope and a future to my children...it has given me the support and strength that has helped me to re-build my life."

"My refuge literally saved my life and saved the life of my baby son. My ex was breaking into my flat, he'd have killed me if we hadn't gone to the refuge."

"Specialist refuges are a doorway to the life we all deserve."

"The specialist refuges mean people care whether I live or die."

We also asked children and young people in refuges to tell us what their safe house had meant to them by making us a 'word cloud'.



The impact of the Government's 'welfare reforms'

Despite the success of the SOS campaign, the additional, short term funding and our on-going work with the Government to protect the funding for the support costs for refuges, there is a fresh crisis facing refuges across our network today regarding the rent costs of refuges. In the UK women have to pay for their stay in a refuge, most of the time this cost will be met by the woman usually by her claiming 'Housing Benefit' which covers her rent and the upkeep of the refuge. However, not all women will qualify for Housing Benefit, for example if they have a job or if they do not have residency rights.

Part of the UK Government's response to austerity has been to reduce welfare spending by £12 billion by 2017/18 and they have brought in legislation to enact these cuts, many of which have been highly controversial and will potentially be very damaging for support services. For example, some services will not be able to accept women without children as their Housing Benefit entitlement will now be too low. There are currently seven different 'welfare reform' policies that Women's Aid is concerned about, the most dangerous of which is a cap to housing benefit in the supported housing sector, including refuges, to Local Housing Allowance rates. What this in practice means, for refuge services, is on average, a 44% reduction in the rent element of the funding they receive. We asked refuge services across England what this would mean for them and 67% of them told us they would have to close and 87% told us that they would not be able to continue with their current level of provision.

After successful campaigning from Women's Aid, in September 2016 the Government announced that refuges, alongside other types of 'supported housing' such as homeless hostels, will be exempt from the Local Housing Allowance rate reform until 2019. Whilst we welcome this move, we are convinced that a long term funding solution is needed and a solution that also ensures that, not only →

→ enough refuges are available, but that they can also provide the right kinds of support. We will continue to campaign on the other six areas of welfare reform which are of great concern to us.

Women with multiple and additional support needs

Our 2015 Annual Survey of member services found that increasing numbers of women with multiple support needs are accessing refuges. The survey showed that 33.7% of refuge residents had mental health support needs, about one in ten women had alcohol or drug misuse support needs and 13.3% required multilingual support. The increasingly diverse set of needs that women are presenting at refuge with is not translated into additional funding for specialist support workers or 24-hour staff. We are seeing quite the opposite in fact: funding cuts are forcing services to cut back on the support they can provide and there are increasing difficulties around affording to employ, more expensive, skilled drug and alcohol workers, for example. Our Update of UK Refuges Online (UKROL)³ services in 2015 found that increasingly domestic abuse services are listing that they can support women with mental health, drug or alcohol issues, to respond to this growing need, however there was no commensurate increase in staffing. In fact, we found out that of the 60 organisations who had added one or more new 'service type' to their profile on UKROL, only 38% of them also stated that they had increased their staff team, in fact 23% of them stated that they had to contend with a decrease in the number of staff working at their organisation. This further increases the tension between the need to deliver high quality services for women with increasingly complex needs and continually reducing resources.

By drawing attention to the issues that survivors of domestic abuse with multiple issues face in accessing services, we received a small pot of Government funding to set up the No Woman Turned Away (NWTAW) project. This project helps women who are struggling to access refuge accommodation find suitable and safe accommodation via a caseworker situated at WAVE head office. An initial analysis of the first six months of this project shows that the most common reasons for which women are declined space in a refuge are (of 151 cases the NWTAW Turned Away team supported from January to May 2016):

- The space was no longer available in 48 cases (meaning the refuge space had already been given to another woman)
- The woman's support needs were too high for the refuge to support in 17 cases
- 17 women had no recourse to public funds, for example if she is not a British citizen or if she does not have the necessary immigration status
- In 15 cases the woman did not meet the 'risk' threshold for the refuge service
- The space was not suitable for a disabled woman to access in 14 cases
- There were multiple other complicated cases where there were various reasons why a woman could not be accommodated in a refuge

It's important to note that women's refuges want to be able to support all the women who turn to them for help. However, due to the issues discussed above relating to funding cuts and commissioning, it is in many cases not

possible to provide the level of support and expertise needed in order to provide a safe home for women fleeing with multiple issues or additional support needs.

What's next?

Our combined work on the WAVE Step Up! campaign across the UK is focussing on raising awareness on the value of specialist domestic abuse organisations and increasing the profile of the life-saving services they provide and the importance of women with multiple additional support needs being unable to access these services. Alongside this we are calling for the Government to ratify the Istanbul Convention without delay, which will enshrine women's and children's rights to access specialist support when fleeing domestic abuse in UK law. Ratification of the Istanbul Convention will be a very welcome step and is now more important than ever, after the UK's recent vote to leave the European Union.

We are committed to ensuring that all survivors of domestic abuse can get the support and help they need, when they need it. The complex and fragile landscape of funding has left specialist domestic abuse services in constant suspense over recent years, not knowing from year to year whether they will be able to keep their doors open. The WAVE step up campaign is a vital opportunity to work together across the UK, and Europe, to ensure survivors of domestic always have somewhere safe to go in their hour of need.

1 Women's Aid (2016) Annual Survey 2015. Women's Aid: Bristol www.womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-annual-survey-reports/

2 Women's Aid recognises, and advocates that, it is vital that BME women have a known, culturally-specific organisation in their community where they can get help from other BME women who understand the complexities of their situation and the additional barriers they face. Such organisations address unmet needs and prevent harms that would prove costly and dangerous to victims if their services disappeared. Women's Aid works closely with UK based black feminist organisation, Imkaan, who defines BME VAWG services as: independent, specialist and dedicated services run by and for the communities they seek to serve.

3 UKRefugesOnline is a web based information system providing up to date information on domestic violence/abuse services. It aims to assist women and children facing domestic violence/abuse to find the right help by enabling front-line services to notify the refuge spaces or other services they have available. UKROL is owned and managed by Women's Aid Federation of England, Welsh Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Aid and Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland. UKROL is part supported and part funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government.



Sian Hawkins is the Campaigns and Public Affairs Manager at Women's Aid Federation of England. Sian leads on the SOS: Save Refuges, Save Lives campaign that has successfully secured an additional £13.2 million of funding for women's refuges from the Government in 2014/15 and 2015/16 and the Child First campaign which is calling for safe child contact.

Previously Sian was the Anti-Human Trafficking Policy Officer at The Salvation Army after studying for a Master's Degree in Human Rights, specialising in Modern Slavery where she conducted field research in Nepal. Sian has experience as a support worker for domestic violence survivors and sex workers and is a former trustee to Reigate and Banstead Women's Aid. S.Hawkins@womensaid.org.uk

Interview with M., a 35-year old survivor of intimate partner violence from Slovenia

Tjaša Hrovat

Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo (Association for Nonviolent Communication)

Can you tell me something about your experience with violence?

I got pregnant very soon, after four months of being together with B. When I was a child, I had an image of the perfect family, a picture of a complete group: a father, a mother and a child; I thought that a family had to stick together no matter what. That's why I decided to stay in the relationship, although I soon realized things were not the way they should be. It was incredibly hard; he was very violent ... For example, he dragged me around the courtyard, kicked me in the head, really hard ... I was never able to talk to our child G. about it. I told him it was just a game. I didn't know how to explain things to him. B. was always telling me that I couldn't be with anyone else; that he would have killed us both if that had happened. I thought I would end up in a mental institution; I felt as if I had been brainwashed. He didn't let me work and earn my own money; he just wanted me to be at home. However, I really like working, I like having my own money, being independent. So I managed to find a job I could do from home. I remember when we were already separated and I went out for a coffee with my friends, how I was expecting that he would call, like he always did, and start insulting me, saying things like "where the hell are you, bitch". Then I said to myself, "Wow, I can drink coffee with my friends." I'd never had such freedom before. You think it's normal that he expects you to be at home all the time because you have a small child. Then soon the child turns three and you find out you barely have any friends left.

He was also telling me what to wear, whom to talk to and whom not. I wasn't myself anymore. However, I left him when I realized I was in real danger. Well, I guess I'd known that before, but he kept telling me he'd kill me if I left. But then ... He put his gun to my head and I realized that I would die if I stayed and I said to myself, "Just go!"

Did you get any help when you decided to leave him?

Well, I'd been planning it for a long time, gathering information ... So much had already happened and I decided to call a safe house. I found the number on the internet. I'd already talked to my friends about the things that were going on so they told me about a safe house. If you don't tell anyone, you can't get any information. I'd also seen some posters with information on violence helplines. So, I called the safe house and inquired about it. Of course you're scared, you have no idea what that place is like and you're afraid to take a child there. So, I called, explained everything and the woman on the phone said I should come immediately and I told her I still needed some time to think about it. I was afraid of getting a joint custody if I were to leave. Then I wouldn't be able to take care of the child. B. also drank a lot and I was afraid that the child would fall or something and B. wouldn't notice because he would be sitting in a bar. So, I told myself I'd rather suffer for the next 15 years until the child is grown up and able to take care of himself than leave him alone with his

daddy. Because everyone was saying that you get a joint custody until you prove differently. So I didn't know how to get out of the relationship and at the same time ensure the child was safe.

How did you manage to end the relationship with B.?

First, it was late spring, I started to gather information and slowly move my stuff to my parents' place in a way that he didn't notice. In December that year we had an office party. In the last six years I've been out twice. Once, I had a school reunion and when I came back home he didn't let me in. The second time I went out, he was really furious when I came back; he was throwing out all my stuff. Therefore, when I returned from that office party I was really surprised that I could get inside the house; but there was no electricity. And then V., his son from his first marriage, comes and tells me "B. is really drunk and he turned off the electricity." So, I went to the bathroom and B. woke up and came after me. He pushed me into a bathtub and took away my phone. I was always hiding my stuff, my purse for example, because he was stealing money from me. I was really afraid for the things I needed for work, like my computer and telephone; that was my job. He knew that, so he always took my phone and threw it away. A lot of times I was afraid to fall asleep because I kept thinking "if I fall asleep he could kill me". I was so afraid...; I listened to his every step around the house. Sometimes I realized I was getting angry at myself because I was so tired, but at the same time too afraid to fall asleep. So, let me continue. He pushed me into the bathtub and threw the phone down the stairs. I ran down and fortunately the phone still worked. He came after me and tried to take the phone again, but I didn't let him do that. He started hitting me. I got badly injured. I had swollen lips and bruises all over my body. As I was screaming, the neighbours came; V. opened the doors and they came in and stopped him. I ran to the car, half naked and barefoot and drove to the police station.

Did you go to the police station alone?

Yes. And the policeman asked me why I was barefoot. I mean, really inappropriately. And they took me to another police station, the local one, and I gave the statement. A detective asked me whether I wanted to report violence or just a misdemeanour for infringement of public order. I didn't know what to do so I decided for the misdemeanour.

So, you didn't file a criminal report?

No. I was afraid because I hadn't prepared and planned everything yet. I told them I was afraid to go home and two policemen accompanied me to get my stuff. My child was at my parents' place at that time. When we arrived I saw how B. was acting, he was really disrespectful to the policemen and I realized he didn't give a damn about anything. He threw all my clothes on the floor. Luckily I had already bought plastic bags, so I just started packing and →

→ taking bags to my car. And even the policemen said to me “Come on, hurry up a bit; we can no longer restrain him.” And I thought to myself “well, call reinforcements”, right? Of course I couldn’t take everything and I was quite sad because I care a lot about my things.

What happened next? Did the police give you any information about available help?

Yes, they gave me a phone number from a crisis centre and I had to call them from the police station. The woman on the phone told me to come and I said I couldn’t because my child was still at my parents’ house. So, I went to my parents’ house and soon realized that I was too afraid to stay there. I couldn’t work; I was alert all the time, watching through the window if he was coming, I didn’t let the child go out of the house, I was really scared. Besides, B. was constantly calling me, at least a hundred times and he was sending me text messages saying he was sorry that he hadn’t smashed my face, he insulted me ... So, I called the crisis centre again. When I came there, I was still too afraid to leave the house for the next two weeks.

What was it like to be in the crisis centre?

Of course you feel terrible. I remember entering the house and how G. immediately got excited about all the toys he saw and I just burst into tears, thinking “what did I do to my child”. However, it wasn’t that bad, I made friends with two women who were also staying there at that time. We are still in touch. G. didn’t let me go anywhere or do anything without him; all the consequences of the domestic abuse he had witnessed became apparent when we arrived. He wanted to be next to me all the time; I couldn’t even go to the toilet alone.

What helped you most in the crisis centre?

What I liked most is that I could sleep and breathe freely; that I knew I was safe; that no one knew where I was. And that I could take time and bond with my child and see all the troubles he had, all the consequences of violence he also suffered. This gave me a confirmation that I’d made the right decision.

When I was in the crisis centre I also made arrangements to enrol my kid in another kindergarten, to the one next to where I had my own apartment. I was too afraid to take him to the same kindergarten where he had been going before. I also immediately went to the emergency, while I still had the bruises and everything, so I could show them to a doctor. I didn’t have to wait in line; they really tried very hard to make it easy for me, which was very nice of them. I showed them my injuries and told them what had happened. They wrote everything down. Two days later I went to the police and submitted a criminal report. I went alone, although a counsellor from the crisis centre could have gone with me if I had wanted to. I was at the police station for five hours. I described everything, how our relationship was nice in the beginning and how violence slowly escalated. Before going there, I had prepared some notes so I wouldn’t forget anything important.

How did you feel when reporting the violence that you experienced?

My only concern was how to protect my child until B. changed his dangerous behaviour. A policewoman interrogated me and we made a short break after a couple of hours. We found out that our kids were going to the same kindergarten. We still see each other. During my report,

she asked all the right questions so that I could really reveal everything. For example, she asked me how I felt at a certain event and so forth. Because I didn’t know how to tell my story and what to tell, I was already so accustomed to violence that I didn’t even recognize it. Many of the women I met on a positive self-image workshop that I attended weren’t as lucky as I was. They didn’t prepare such an accurate report so they had many problems later on at court and everywhere. Some had to defend themselves as if they had done something wrong. In a safe house and in a crisis centre they inform you about all the procedures, so that you really do everything you can to notify all the institutions about your situation.

You can stay in a crisis centre for a limited period of time. What happened next?

Yes, you can stay in a crisis centre up to one month. I thought I would move into my apartment afterwards, as I had a place to stay, but then I realized that B. would not leave me alone and I was afraid to go to the apartment. That’s why I decided to go to a safe house. However, I already did many useful things while staying at the crisis centre: I went to the doctor, to the police, to the social service centre...

What was your experience at the social service centre?

A counsellor from the crisis centre accompanied me. We had a team meeting, but the police didn’t come because they had mixed up the hours. We talked about what had already been done, what the situation was like... Everyone was really committed to my case, especially the social worker. He let me know that I had to report everything that would happen. Later on, I also filed for a restraining order according to the Family Violence Prevention Act. I learned about this possibility in the crisis centre. First, I didn’t even want to file a complaint about the violence I was subjected to, I just wanted B. to get a restraining order, but they told me it is not possible without a report. I was afraid things would get even worse if I reported violence and I would be in even greater danger. I really didn’t know what to do. I wanted to let him know that I didn’t mean to cause any harm, that I just wanted him to change his behaviour in a way that it would be safe for our child to be around him. Of course he denied having any problems; he thought his only problem was lack of money.

For how long did you stay in the safe house?

A little over half a year. I think it was a good idea to stay for so long, to really make sure I was safe and ready. I could also go to psychotherapy for free and my child as well. I was very glad that they made an effort to make things easier for me. For example, I got Wi-Fi so that I could work from there. We could also arrange the room the way we wanted. I told my child we were staying in a hotel. There were also other children and he felt OK in the safe house. I also liked planning with my counsellor what to do next, because I am a very organized person. She also helped me file all the reports to the police, because B. was constantly violating the restraining order. She also accompanied me to court when I had a hearing. I had quite a bad experience with the judge. First she told me she had already had six court cases and that she hadn’t read my case and that she didn’t have time. She also asked me in a sarcastic way “Well what was so terrible that you got so frightened?”. And I told her that each text message

he'd sent had scared me because it showed that he didn't comply with the restraining order. And then she asked me "Do you know you are not the one who will get the money he'll have to pay," and I said, "Yes, of course." And she continued, "Well, who is going to get it then," and I said, "Well, the state." It was really humiliating. So, we filed a complaint later on and it helped because the judge was quite nice the next time. She listened to me very carefully and let me talk and explain everything. She said she believed me and that she could easily punish him on the basis of all the evidence I had sent to the court. And I told her I didn't want him to pay money; that I would prefer it if he had to join a program for perpetrators of violence. He agreed, but he tells me now that he doesn't belong there, that there are people with real issues participating in the program and that he doesn't have such problems. At the courtroom I also had the chance to tell B. that when the restraining order ends, he won't just get the child, he didn't understand that. I explained him that the judge issued an interim injunction giving me full custody, so he can't just come to the kindergarten and take the child. I requested the interim injunction when I was at the safe house and there was no hearing regarding it. I got full custody temporarily and contact arrangements between father and child were temporarily prohibited. The judge said she needed an expert witness to tell what kind of contacts are in the best interest of the child. In that case, the judge made a really smart decision – I think.

When I was at the safe house I started psychotherapy, which was free of charge for me and for my child. It really helped me. My child also had a lot of traumas, but now he is almost OK. Well, not so long ago, he drew a black picture at kindergarten. He usually always draws very beautiful, colourful pictures. And now he drew this black picture of his dad lying in bed and he told me, "Mommy, I drew daddy at that time when we couldn't wake him up." How is the trial for your child's custody proceeding? You mentioned the interim injunction...

I've just been to the expert witness. I didn't go to the first court hearing because I was ill, so only my attorney went. Now, when seeing the expert witness, it was the first time the three of us met. We were all invited to go together, B., our son and me. First, I had a one on one talk with him, then B. and then all three of us together and then again just me and then just B. I told the expert witness that B. is really good at manipulating, but I still thought B. would manage to manipulate him. Luckily, he didn't. The expert witness actually saw everything that I see, I was quite shocked. He wrote a very good expert opinion briefing. Now I'm waiting for the procedure to continue at court.

When did you move out of the safe house?

When I knew I was safe enough and didn't need it any more. Before I moved, we'd made a safety plan and I've always been very cautious anyway. Also, when I was at the safe house, I always paid attention where to drive, where to park, everything. I am still very cautious about these things. However, I can say I feel pretty safe now, at least when B. is not drunk. Two weeks ago he was drunk and called me and asked me to put the child on the phone. I put him on the phone and then realized that he was drunk, from the way he was talking. So I sent him a text message asking not to call the child when he is drunk and then he started insulting me, saying, "You disgust me, you are a piece of shit," calling me "a bitch"; I

was everything. He was sending me awful text messages. He also threatened to come and I got really nervous and scared, I didn't know what to do, should I go somewhere or should I call someone to sleep over at my place? ... He was calling me constantly and I didn't answer, but then I picked up the phone and told him to stop bothering me, to stop scaring me. And he said, "You see I can get you no matter where you go" and he kept sending me e-mails, first insulting ones and then apologetic ones, like "I know I was rude, I'm sorry," and so on. I don't answer him anymore.

What helped you most on your way out of the relationship with B., out of violence?

I'd say the crisis centre and the safe house; the way they guided me through all the procedures. What I wanted most was to protect my child. I'm still learning. Not so long ago I imagined I am responsible for B., that he joins a program for perpetrators, to become a good father. Now I finally see that I'm not the one who can do it; that he has to decide for himself.

What would you still need at the moment?

Psychotherapy, workshops and such; to work on myself. It's that you constantly think there is something wrong with you. However, when you start working on yourself you see that this isn't true. I barely knew what violence was before coming to the crisis centre. I read that if he didn't let you out, that was violence and I was quite shocked. If women knew which type of behaviour is violent they would recognize it more quickly. I was lucky because I didn't have financial troubles. A lot of women don't leave their partners because they are afraid to end up on the streets. They don't know that if they set themselves goals, a safe house can help them with everything, even when they don't feel confident enough to handle things by themselves.

So, can you do it with the necessary support?

Yes. A lot of women stay in abuse relationships because they think they can't handle everything; but when you are free you can make miracles happen. I can't believe how much I've accomplished. You just have to set yourself goals and work hard to achieve them. It's all in our heads. If you want something and you work on it, you can accomplish it. If a woman stays in a violent relationship, she will end up in a mental institution, she will go mad, get sick. With the help of therapy, workshops and counselling you become stronger. And you start reading certain books. However, it takes time to go through this entire process.

What was missing from the support system you were provided with? What could have been done better?

It was all so new to me, I was in shock. I was grateful that I had a place to go to; that I got help. Some women don't trust counsellors, they avoid them. However, the more you tell, the better the kind of help you get from them. You also definitely need therapy. Otherwise, a safe house is nothing to be afraid of. In fact, you are completely free, you can sleep in peace. I've also noticed that some people think that women take advantage of safe houses. For example, when I tell someone that I've been to a safe house they say women take advantage of a safe house to destroy their men. People have different opinions. Others think it's like being in a hotel; that they cook for you and the like.

→

→ **Is there something else you would like to add?**

I don't know. Women should love themselves and get out of an abusive relationship. And for the ones who are having a hard time leaving abusive partners, it's good to know that a safe house is nothing to be frightened of, contrary to what I have thought before. It's not a prison, like some people think. It can actually be a really relaxing and pleasant environment if you can manage to get along well with the other women living there. I'm still in touch with some of the women from the safe house where I've stayed.

Women in **Italy** showing support for the WAVE Step Up! campaign, demanding their government increases its investments in specialist support services for women victims of violence.



The interview was conducted by **Tjaša Hrovat**, who works as a counsellor at the Slovene NGO Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo (Association for Nonviolent Communication). Association for Nonviolent Communication is a non-governmental, non-profit and humanitarian organization dedicated to prevention and reduction of violence and its consequences. It

was founded in 1996 and was the first non-governmental organization in Slovenia offering programs for victims of violence as well as for perpetrators of violence. Tjaša Hrovat has, among other, a Master of Science in clinical psychology and has worked in a safe house for several years. She is the author of a workbook for perpetrators of violence (I can do differently) and is the editor and co-author of two manuals for professionals (Violence against Children. Professional Standards for Working with Children, affected by violence and Work with Perpetrators of Violence).

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#IamNotAfraidToSayIt: Reflections on the Initiative

Mariia Demianchuk

Societal changes. How do they look like? In Asian languages the hieroglyph "crisis" consists of two symbols: one of them means 'risk', another one means 'possibility'. The turbulent situation in which Ukrainian society has been finding itself in the last few years covers the whole palette of 'fifty shades' of crisis. We are struggling with the building of a new modern democratic model of government. This also means to question existing societal rules and clichés.

Such processes inevitably include shameful, tabooed topics, such as discrimination, violence, the polemics of what is right and wrong, strong and weak. As a psychotherapist, I am convinced that all changes happen first on the level of ideas. On the 5th of July 2016 Anastasiya Melnichenko, the head of the human rights organization **Studena**, invited women on Facebook to share their experiences of sexual violence with a hashtag #IamNotAfraidToSayIt, also #Iamnotscaredtospeak (#ЯНеБоюсьСказать in Ukrainian; #ЯНеБоюсьСказать in Russian). She started with her own stories. Within a few days the topic became viral with hundreds of women and men reacting to this media initiative by telling their own stories of violence, some for the first time in their lives. The initiative quickly spread to Russia and Belarus. Although it set the wave in Ukrainian society, the reactions and opinions were drastically different: from empathic identification with victims to cynical contempt of 'soul stripping' and 'public victimising'.

The stories¹ comprised topics like sexual harassment, paedophilia, gender-based physical and moral violence, rape and assaults.

Melnychenko recalled an incident when she was 13, when she was walking on Khreshchatyk Street in the heart of Kyiv, holding bags of groceries in each hand. Suddenly, a male passer-by came up to her, grabbed her between her legs, and then released her and walked away as if nothing had happened. "But I'm not ashamed to talk about it because it wasn't my fault. The rapist is always guilty."²

Anna writes: "I am 15. I was on my way home returning from school. The same had happened to me. He didn't leave peacefully, he threatened to kill me if I told anybody. I promised to keep it a secret. I was going further on and said to myself that it was my fault, I was wearing a short skirt, it was my carelessness. I felt ugly, disgusted, I hated myself for I had lost control over myself, if only for a few seconds. I wanted to die."

Veronika writes: "I'm 15, I came to this punk concert with my friends, but I didn't have a ticket. I stayed outside to wait for them with hundreds of other people like me, with no ticket. I had wide jeans and a XXXL T-shirt on, which can hardly be called seductive. And here come two so called 'good uncles', offering to help me get in through the back door. The next few hours were a real horror for me, which I cannot forget until this very day. I survived, the wounds and bruises did heal, but the wound from

my soul will probably never heal. Shock, horror, pain, unfairness, betrayal, dread, loss of trust in the whole world, shame, humiliation...

After that I didn't want to be attractive anymore, on the contrary - I wanted to hide myself to avoid another maniac".

Antonina writes: "I work in a company. New Year, Corporate event. My boss got drunk and got his genitals out right at the table. Everybody was ashamed, and turned away. Suddenly he is grasping for my hand and trying to make me touch his crotch. I dragged my hand back, got up from the table and went to his wife, I told her about what had happened. She said: "My husband can do whatever he likes. If he wants to have sex with somebody, I don't mind. /Laughing/" They have four children, 'great family'.

Karina writes: "When I was 7 we lived in the centre of Kyiv, every day we went out to play with friends on the playground nearby. Often there was a man there, his penis was out and he masturbated."

Olga writes: "When I was 6 the friend of my father stayed for a night in our home. I woke up in the middle of the night, he was sitting on my bed, inserting his finger into my vagina. I was little, I didn't know how to react. He went away."

Dmytro writes: "I was 10. The priest was asking me if I had fantasies about girls. He said it's a big sin. While I was praying he touched me, also in the genital area. I ran away."

DISCUSSION

There were some critical, cynical and sarcastic reactions and comments. That the "initiative is organised by men-haters", "that all these women just wanted to make a soul strip", "that they exaggerate". It is always easier to identify with an aggressor. Feeling for and with a victim takes courage. Melnichenko explains why she decided to start the initiative "iamnotafraidtosayit" after she read a post on Facebook written by a man who found a beaten, raped young woman lying in the park late in the evening. He wrote that the conclusion of that story is that the girl should not have been walking through the park at that time.

Here I would like to bring in two points of view on the issue: the psychological and cultural or societal.

The psychology of violence stays with one leg in our post-between-war-history, as Oksana Zabuzhko writes in her "Fieldwork in Ukrainian sex" (1996): "What can I tell you, Donna- dearest. That we were raised by men fucked from all ends every which way? That later we ourselves screwed the same kind of guys, and that in both cases they were doing to us what others, the others, had done to them? And that we accepted them and loved them as they were, because not to accept them was to go over to the others, the other side? And that our only choice, therefore, was and still remains between victim and executioner: between nonexistence and an existence that kills you". The sexual violence occurring now in the war zone in the East of Ukraine and the rise of domestic abuse in soldiers' families represents another huge topic worth of a discussion, but for another paper.

Since Eve and the apple of knowledge, since Hypatia of Alexandria who dared to verbalise her opinion against male voice, women have been guilty...For being too beautiful (think of the witches burnt in the Middle Ages), for being too `bold`, to wear too shorter skirts, to say the

unpleasant truth... the list can be much longer. This story is so old that we don't remember 'why', but we know that women are guilty. It is one of the axioms of our western Christian society. Or was, until the fifth of the July, when Mrs. Melnichenko shook it with a hashtag #iamnotafraidtosayit.

The worst is that so many victims of violence said that they did feel guilty, as if they had done something wrong. When the truth is that there are a lot of mentally and physically sick men out there. After reading hundreds of painful stories one sees this gender role distribution not so self-evident anymore. The last story of a boy molested by the priest brings us once more to consider what is wrong or right. It is possible to observe how much resistance there is in a patriarchal society when it comes to changing power relations, i.e. role distributions, when watching the movie "Spotlight" (2015)³.

In Ukraine, after a woman has been raped, society would point out it was her fault. Before the 5th of July 2016, when for a few days women got united by the same traumatic experiences ("it's not just me"), men were astonished to see how they had turned a blind eye to much of reality.

Of course, this initiative will not stop all sexual harassment in the Ukraine. Recently, a man who anally raped a teenage girl was sentenced to pay a fine of 120 Euros only. Societal changes are slow, non-linear and non-reversal.

Aleksej writes: "some posts are very difficult to read. Especially, when you yourself made such a mistake once. You belong to this 'sea of morons.' Banal, but every day I see it as if it were yesterday's happening. But - I got better. Forgive me."⁴

In the aftermath of this initiative some actions have been set: demos against violence, Anastasiya Melnichenko writes a book on how to speak about sexual violence with teenagers, there are some self-help groups organised by women victims of sexual harassment. We will never be the same after this initiative. I believe we won't be fearless, but we will be less afraid to speak out and to act.

1 The following Facebook posts have been translated into English from the original versions for the purpose of this article

2 https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/iamnotafraidtosayit-hashtag-campaign-helps-ukrainians-come-to-terms-with-sexual-abuse-418138.html?utm_content=buffer35c-c0&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

3 Further details available at: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1895587/>

4 <https://snob.ru/selected/entry/110621>



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Autonomous Women's Shelters in Croatia – lack of secure funding for crucial women's support services

Valentina Andrašek

Autonomous Women's House Zagreb

In Croatia, intimate partner violence is a widespread problem, where an average of 13,000 offences are reported each year.¹ It is estimated that every third woman in Croatia has experienced or will experience some form of physical violence from her partner throughout her lifetime.² Several forms of help are available for women survivors of intimate partner violence, most importantly shelters and counselling centres. According to government reports, there are 17 shelters in Croatia.³ However, 10 of these are state homes, also referred to as safe houses, and only 7 are autonomous women's shelters.

There are crucial differences between the two types of accommodation. State homes or safe houses, which are established not only by the state, but also by the church and local municipalities, sometimes in cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), adhere to a strict set of rules, whereby the Centres for Social Welfare (CSW) decide which woman will be placed in the safe house and for how long. The CSW has to issue a written order for the woman and her children to be placed in the safe house and the woman is under obligation to report the violence to the police.

These safe houses are not operating according to feminist principles and they do not use a victim centred approach. Instead, they are more family-oriented and traditional, as are most Croatian institutions. The safe houses receive male victims of violence as well, at least in theory. All this creates several problems in practice. Women do not feel safe because the addresses are public, and abusers can often easily find out where they are placed. Some safe houses even allow visits of the abusers on their premises, supposedly so that he can see the children. Needless to say, this does not make women feel safe at all. Autonomous women's shelters on the other hand receive women directly, without the mandatory referrals and it is not necessarily required of these to report the violence to the police. Instead, it is the women's choice whether they want to report the violence, get a divorce, leave the abuser or go back to him.

Autonomous Women's House Zagreb opened its first shelter in Croatia in 1990. It was also the first shelter in Eastern Europe to be opened at a time when there were no laws sanctioning domestic violence and the issue was not visible in the public arena. The first shelter was mostly run by volunteers and supported by sister organizations from Western Europe. After the year 2000 we started getting some funding from state ministries, the city and the county, all based on project funding. Also, at that time, other women's NGOs, as well as the church and the state, started opening different types of accommodation for victims of domestic violence.

In 2009, after Autonomous Women's House Zagreb led a nation-wide campaign, five autonomous shelters signed a contract with the state, the cities and the counties, guaranteeing funding for 90% of the yearly budget (30% from the state, 30% from the city and 30% from the county). However, this funding scheme worked only for one year. After that, funds were significantly cut, first by the county and then by the state as well. Instead of the originally agreed upon 90% funding, the shelters now receive 50-60%, depending on each municipality. Since 2009, the seven autonomous shelters lobbied for a more secure, permanent funding scheme. Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, with financial support from the WAVE Network, even wrote a proposal of the Law on financing shelters and counselling centres. This proposal was accepted and supported by left wing parties, who were in the opposition at the time, but when they won the election in 2011 and could have passed such a law because they had the majority, they backed out and decided not to support the law any more. Instead, they instituted a call for proposals and awarded a three-year programme funding to shelters.

From then on, the state along with the cities and counties, continued to reduce funds while instituting ever stricter regulations, even to the point of impinging on the autonomy of NGO-run shelters. To be sure, rules and control are important when funds from the state budget are distributed, but the scope of control over the shelters went far beyond detailed financial supervision and narrative reports. For example, the call for proposals would describe how the shelter should be operated, including such propositions as standing next to each woman while she is doing her laundry and supervising her. These rules treated NGOs the same way institutions are treated. But NGOs exist and do their work precisely because the state is a slow mechanism that cannot always provide help efficiently. Throughout this process, women's rights are being violated; hence, it is necessary to have NGOs as a corrective system for the state. Also, state institutions are funded 100% from the state budget while NGOs are only partially funded.

The situation we have today is that there are 10 state, city and church homes, sometimes run in cooperation with NGOs. What they have in common is that they all comply with the regulations for state homes for children and adult victims of family violence. They are funded on a per-bed basis, which means that they receive a certain amount of money for each woman and child placed in the safe house every month. This means that the CSW also determines the length of stay for each woman. The seven autonomous women's shelters are co-funded through three year tenders from the state and one year tenders from the cities and counties. This funding scheme is very

insecure, as funds are often delayed for many months. For example, the first funds in 2016 were received in June, and the bulk of the city of Zagreb funding, which is 30% of our yearly budget, was received in October. The reporting is very detailed and takes up a lot of resources pertaining to the shelter and counsellors who work there, while the shelters are understaffed to begin with, because the funding we receive is insufficient. Furthermore, the state instituted a so-called «licence» in the beginning of 2016, that all shelters are required to get in order to receive funding. This license on minimum requirements for provision of social services required a commission to enter the shelter in order to have it issued. This has caused additional problems for Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, as we are the only shelter in Croatia whose address has been declared an official secret. Therefore, even the police and the courts and the CSW do not know where the shelter is located (which is not true for other shelters).

Because of the shelter's confidential location, women at higher risk of violence or lethality are often placed or seek refuge in our shelter. These include women whose violent partners are prominent citizens, employees of state institutions, others who have access to official state secrets, and those who resort to various activities to learn the confidential address using their personal connections, stalking, private investigators, and other actions. The need for a confidential and secure shelter is underscored by those dangerous perpetrators who go to great lengths to locate their victims. For example, a repeat and convicted abuser who perpetrated violence against his wife, as well as police and criminal judges, hired a private detective to (unsuccessfully) discover the address of our shelter, where his victim had sought safe refuge. Indeed, colleagues from other shelters and homes for adults and children victims of violence often seek client transfers to our shelter in high-risk situations, precisely because of its secret address.

For this reason, we proposed multiple alternative ways to carry out the investigation of the shelter. We prepared a 72-page report with detailed descriptions and photographs of every corner of the shelter and we even proposed that the investigation be performed through a video link. Since the problem went unresolved for over 6 months, we had to ask for help from UN institutions. This issue continues to remain unresolved, but after our meeting with the minister, we have hope that some sort of compromise will be reached, which will allow the state to have control and the shelter to keep its address an official secret.

But even after we resolve this matter, the fact remains that autonomous women's shelters provide a crucial service to women survivors of intimate partner violence, while they are underfunded and placed under enormous pressure to report and justify their work. There is also a general and disturbing lack of cooperation and networking with NGOs, which is becoming more and more apparent. Most of the rules and regulations concerning shelters, but also NGOs in general, are implemented without real consultations with NGOs, which is what creates these problems in the first place. There is a serious need to go back and consult relevant NGOs, to ensure the rules and regulations can be tailored specifically for them. We hope that the Istanbul Convention will be ratified soon, which

would enable the state to provide increased resources for essential women's services that have been providing help to women and children for over 26 years.

- 1 The population of Croatia is approximately 4.25 million.
- 2 According to the only research carried out so far in Croatia regarding the prevalence of intimate partner violence. The research was carried out by Autonomous Women's House Zagreb in 2003, in cooperation with the State Office for Maternity, Youth and Family.
- 3 National Report Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 5 of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21, Human Rights Council, February 9, 2015, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/22/HRV/1, p. 52.



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The survivors' organisation 'Fundación Ana Bella' in Spain is joining #StepUpWAVE with some of the women survivors from their organisation!

Women's shelters in Italy – still a precarious situation

D.i.Re - Donne in Rete contro la violenza
www.direcontrolaviolenza.it

It is an undeniably serious fact that Italian women's shelters are largely underrated, underfunded and far from meeting current European standards, as shown by the worrying official data on women shelters' diffusion.

Nevertheless, Italy was among the first countries to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, universally known as the Istanbul Convention.

States that ratified it are bound to implement the necessary policies and services, however in Italy the Convention has only been implemented partially.

For a long time, the Equal Opportunities governmental functions were uselessly mandated to lie in the hands of the Prime Minister. Afterwards, in July 2016 these have been transferred to the Minister for Constitutional Reforms and Relations, Maria Elena Boschi, who currently seems not to have understood the gravity of the problem.

In particular, the following article of the Convention is still largely disregarded, which establishes that: "Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting-up of appropriate, easily accessible shelters in sufficient numbers to provide safe accommodation for and to reach out pro-actively to victims, especially women and their children".

In our country not all women's shelters are able to provide hospitality to women victims of violence, as they do not have sufficient funds to open and manage a shelter house.

For instance, out of the 77 shelters and centres of the Network D.i.Re¹ – the only national association that works on this issue – only 46 have one or more shelter houses able to host women and their children.

Moreover, in Italy, the free helpline supporting women victims of violence, established in 2009, do not seem to help, as women cannot find shelters and centres ready to host them in their vicinities.

We know that the Council of Europe recommends a shelter for every 10.000 inhabitants and an emergency centre for every 50.000 inhabitants (Rec. UE – Expert Meeting on violence against women – Finland 8-9 November 1999, on shelter's standards). According to the research published in the WAVE Report from 2015, there are 627 beds in Italy and it would take 6.078 to comply with the required minimum standard; Italy is therefore lacking 5.451² beds.

Many women's requests remained unanswered, even if many of them are risking their own lives.

For over 25 years shelters have been fighting for the rights of women to lead a life free from male violence, but also and mainly, to stress the fact that this violence needs to be acknowledged and recognised as a cultural, social and political problem and not to be treated as a fleeting emergency, relegated to news about crime and to cases of pure jealousy and madness.

Furthermore, regional and municipality funds for shel-

ters are scarce, supplied intermittently and with delays, often granted without clear criteria and out of control; sometimes they even remain unspent. We found out that only 7 Italian regions were accountable and transparent in their use of public government funds to fight male violence and that only 5 had published the list of shelters that actually received or will receive the funds allocated for the years 2013/2014.

On September 5th 2016 the Court of Auditors, the supreme body of control for public finances, issued a court decision that severely criticises the administrative and financial management of public policies on male violence, urging the Equal Opportunities Department within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to adapt to international and national existing norms: "Concerning the funds specifically allocated to the empowerment of accommodation facilities addressed to women victims of violence and their children, it is noted that the management of resources allocated for the years 2013-2014 was completely unsatisfying. Communications from the local authorities to the central authority were deficient and inadequate with respect to the information requirements on the effective use of the resources and to the assessments of the outcomes".

In view of what had emerged concerning the Extraordinary Action Plan against sexual and gender-based violence from 2015, the Court recommended the Equal Opportunities Department to use its powers of coordination and supervision to improve and move forward the entire system. Moreover, the 2016 "Stability Law" (Legge di Stabilità) established within the First Aids of public hospitals "the path of protection for victims of violence", previously called "pink or white rose code" to protect victims of violence (minors, women, elderlies, persons with disabilities) which assimilates male violence against women to any other type of violence suffered by "weak and vulnerable" subjects.

This modality is unacceptable from both its content and point of view, as it neutralises the issue of male violence against women by ignoring the cultural and historical rationale behind it. This path foresees a rigid division line, that eludes the possibility for women to autonomously decide how to act in order to escape violence and imposes a dangerous burden on them when it comes to disclosing violence.

While confronted with this reality and the national and local institutional deafness, the women's movement and shelters' activists mobilised throughout Italy and called a national march of protest in Rome on the 26 of November 2016.

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¹ D.i.Re - Donne in Rete contro la violenza, www.direcontrolaviolenza.it

² Available at: http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf

Survivors' project in Portugal: New challenges in the fight against sexual violence

Petra Viegas & Rita Mira¹

According to the Internal Security Annual Report (RASI) published this year in Portugal by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 375 cases of rape have been reported, mostly perpetrated by men against women.² When analysing the relationship between perpetrators and victims, more than 50% of these crimes have been committed in the context of family relationships or the perpetrator was someone known to the victim.

With regard to sexual abuse towards children, the report states that in 40% of cases there was a family relationship between victims and perpetrators. In 61,5 % of cases the victim's age was between 8 and 13 years and in 7,4 % of cases victims were under 3 years of age.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted a study in 2014 which looked at the prevalence of violence against women in the member states of the European Union. Results³ indicated that 3% of the Portuguese respondents had been victims of sexual violence by their partners and 1% by non-partners in the 12 months prior to the survey, corresponding by extrapolation on Census 2011 to 41,52 women and girls.

As far as the specialized support services for survivors in the field of sexual violence are concerned, including rape crisis centres, in Portugal there are no such services, not fulfilling the recommendations of the Council of Europe (CoE): the existence of a Rape Crisis Centre per 200 000 women – "There should be at least one centre per region."⁴ Nevertheless, there is an assumed interest by political bodies, namely the Equality and Justice Department, to support the opening of the first rape crisis centre for sexual violence victims, which will be managed by AMCV.

"Specialized support services for victims of sexual violence are lacking in the majority of European Union countries", and Portugal is no exception. This was our national slogan when we launched the WAVE Step Up! Campaign in Portugal. For AMCV the campaign represents a joint effort to address the lack of specialized services in the field of domestic and sexual violence and its impact on survivors' empowerment and recovery, and to effectively implement the Istanbul Convention.



The invisibility of the crime of sexual violence, the lack of proper national policies and legislation and the lack of specialized services in Portugal has motivated AMCV to submit an application to the Active Citizenship Program (managed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) from the European Economic Area Grants (EEA Grants), with the support of Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein.

The application called "New Challenges in Combating Sexual Violence" (Novos Desafios no Combate à Violência Sexual) was accepted and implemented between February 2014 and January 2016. It had three formal partners: The Health General Directorate, the National Institute of Forensic Medicine and Sciences and the Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights. It aimed to develop an integrated and coherent intervention model in order to contribute to an effective response in order to ensure the empowerment of survivors of sexual violence and adequately meet their special

needs. The work done by the Center Unit supporting survivors of sexual violence and that of the self-representative group of survivors of sexual violence – Hypatia – have been crucial in achieving this goal. Moreover, both initiatives have brought in innovating and pioneering activities.

Hypatia is a self-representative group of women survivors of gender-based violence. Its development was based on the need to create opportunities to ensure the active participation of survivors in the decision-making process, increasing their involvement in the efforts undertaken by support services and political decision-making bodies.

Rita requested a survivor of sexual violence to share her experience – Vitória (fictitious name), aged 37 years, who participated in the Hypatia Group and benefited from the services provided within the framework of the project "New Challenges in Combating Sexual Violence".

1. Could you share with us your experience in terms of searching and accessing specialized services in the field of sexual violence?

In the beginning I felt lost and afraid. I felt that there was no information available and I did not know what to do. I felt completely isolated, as if I had been caught up in some →

→ sort of hole. When I suffered the violent act, I called the police who accompanied me to the Institute of Forensic Medicine (IML) to undergo the forensic examination. Neither the police nor the IML gave me the contact details of any specialized organization that could help me get some support. After the complaint and forensic examination, I was completely alone and I felt desperate. It was a painful process. I was ashamed to tell what had happened to me and I did not feel supported at that early stage.

At the IML I felt as if I was being assaulted once again. I felt very uncomfortable being examined by a man – having to show him my body and being touched by him. He was a very cold and distant person– he did what he had to do without explaining anything to me. He ordered me to do things mechanically. It was painful process, as the examination was performed with little care and consideration for my needs. I would have liked to have been accompanied by someone I could trust, but I was unaware whether this was possible. And I wish I had been referred to a specialized organization in this field.

2. How did you learn about the existence of AMCV? And what kind of support did they offer you?

A community organization that I know gave me the contact details of a general victim support organization. In turn, this organization gave me the contact details of AMCV, explaining that they offered a specialized service in this field. I called to schedule a counselling session since I needed help. I could not be alone throughout this process. I shared what had happened to me with some close friends. It was important but not enough. I know that many victims only seek help later on, because it is very painful and they just want to be alone and hide from everything and everyone.

Since then I have been supported on a regular basis by AMCV. The support is focused on my different needs. This is a very positive aspect. The police and the IML played an important part related to the crime itself and the legal proceedings, but this does not meet the needs of someone who has been subjected to sexual violence. In such cases it is important to benefit from specialist support that can cover all your needs and you need to feel that someone is close to you.

In the beginning, it was very complicated to attend the service; I distrusted everything and everyone. I was afraid to speak out and act. I was always “standing behind”. I even postponed some sessions because it was too painful to talk about what had happened. But not anymore. Now I always come and I never forget the sessions. Gradually, I realized that I could trust the professionals who only wanted to help me and give me strength to be able to bear the horrible situation I was in and fight for my rights. I could finally have some peace.

I thought of suicide several times. I thought I had no way out, that I could not bear so much pain any longer. But with the support of AMCV and the counsellor I developed my ability to act and think about what had happened. I stopped blaming myself and began to focus on my happiness, on my goals and rights. Today I know that the blame of what had happened to me lies only with the perpetrator – he is a criminal.

It was very important to know that whenever I wanted I could call AMCV and schedule a session to share my doubts and fears, as well as receive information about various issues, services, criminal proceedings and safety strategies. Above all else, it was important to know that I was not alone. With the passage of time I started to have more confidence in myself and in other people; that gave me strength and determination.

3. Can you briefly tell us about your participation in the project “New Challenges in the Fight Against Sexual Violence”?

This project allowed me to have access to a specialized service in the field of sexual violence, and I was supported for more than a year. It also gave me the chance to participate in a self-representative group, where I shared my problems and needs with other women victims of violence. It has been very important for me, increasing my strength and confidence to achieve my goals. I have thought of stopping the criminal proceedings, but with their support I always gained strength to continue. I also think of other women victims now, is important to complain and not to give up. Giving up means giving strength and more power to the perpetrators.

It was soothing to realize that the services and facilities offered by AMCV are safe and completely confidential. This gave me confidence to share my anxieties, without fearing that someone would be “pointing the finger at me”.

4. Do you believe that any improvements regarding access and type of services available to survivors of violence would be needed? If so, what?

There should be more information available, e.g. on television, community services. Women victims of sexual violence do not know where to go to. It is important that there are specialized services in this field and that this information reaches ordinary people. Services should not only be available in Lisbon (AMCV); women across the country should have access to this type of services as well.

I also think that the relevant different organizations should communicate more with each other. As I said, neither the police nor the IML have taken the initiative to cooperate with AMCV. I had to fight for my rights and decided not to remain quiet. But there are women out there who cannot reach out for support and are very lonely and isolated.

I also consider that it would be important for criminal enquiries to be centred around one entity and a key person. I often felt very confused and had to tell my story over and over again several times.

The service, especially the IML, should be more human and these entities should realize that the victim needs other things such as clothes and food. In my case, when I went to testify, it took too long, and throughout the entire time I did not get any meals.

5. Can you share with us how you have managed to integrate in this group?

It has been amazing to participate in this group. It was important to meet other women with similar stories; some

had even more shocking stories to tell. Each woman has a different story, a story of suffering, but also of great strength. Hearing these stories gave me courage not to give up on my life. I realised that I was not the only one who has experienced such a traumatic event and that the problem was not related to me alone. Another important issue is that the group values the opinions of all, therefore I felt important within that group.

At first, I also had a bit of fear and mistrust. I did not know what the group was about; and what sort of things I could do there, if it was going to be useful or not. I did not know anyone. Over time, I gained confidence in the group facilitator and other women. Now I feel protected and safe when I participate in these meetings and group activities.

6. Can you present some group activities?

The group meets twice a month. The activities aim to make society aware of the victims' difficulties and needs and advocate for their rights. It aims to give a voice to the victims, who often have to remain silent. We have developed different activities, participated in public events, such as seminars and conferences, gave our testimonies and took a stand with regard to public policies. We also participated in interviews – among other things.

7. How would you describe your participation in the group?

It is very good. I participate whenever I can. I am assiduous and punctual during meetings. I am also active and got involved in several activities, for example I participated in a seminar at the Justice Campus.⁵

8. In the context of the Hipátia Group, we know that you have actively participated in the building of an artistic installation, the so-called “Pedaços de Nós” (Pieces of Us), which is currently available in AMCV facilities. Can you explain the building process?

First we took plenty of photos of the bodies of all members. Then we combined these photos into puzzle. Each picture tells a story of suffering, but also a story of strength belonging to every woman. Each story is unique, but they all have something in common, since every woman was the victim of some kind of violence.

9. What is the purpose of this artistic installation?

To communicate to people that every survivor has needs; every survivor is a unique person. But the message is also that violence tears us into pieces. The recovery process is actually the recovery of our lives and of our beings, it implies putting all these pieces back together and rebuilding ourselves. We also want to say that victims should seek support to gain self-confidence, that they can overcome what had happened to them.

10. Would you like to add any information and to leave a message?

I would like to say to all women victims of violence that they are not alone, they should not be afraid or ashamed to talk about their experiences. They should fight for their happiness. No one has the right to take their happiness away; neither husband nor boyfriend. No one! they should say to themselves: “Enough! I am a woman survivor and I have rights!”

- 1 The article was reviewed by Maria Shearman de Macedo
- 2 Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna – Ano 2015, Ministry of Internal Affairs, p. 33, available at: [http://www.ansr.pt/InstrumentosDeGestao/Documents/Relat%C3%B3rio%20Anual%20de%20Seguran%C3%A7a%20Interna%20\(RASI\)/RASI%202015.pdf](http://www.ansr.pt/InstrumentosDeGestao/Documents/Relat%C3%B3rio%20Anual%20de%20Seguran%C3%A7a%20Interna%20(RASI)/RASI%202015.pdf)
- 3 FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Violence Against Women: Countries summary, 2014, country data, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>
- 4 Council of Europe, Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services, 2008, Strasbourg, p. 28, available at: [https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF\(2007\)Study%20rev.en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF(2007)Study%20rev.en.pdf)
- 5 This is a set of buildings where several services related to the different Courts are located. In this situation, the seminar took place in the Department of Investigation and Prosecution.

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Petra Viegas has a degree in Community Development and Mental Health and a Master's Degree in Community Psychology. Since 2003 she collaborates with AMCV in the field of national and transnational projects and training. Moreover, she develops awareness and information materials. She has also been implementing activities related to support groups, workshops and group activities for women survivors of violence.
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WAVE Information Centre for Cross-Border-Support



One important task of the WAVE Office and its Information Centre is to deal with cross-border requests from women in need.

Each month, WAVE receives cross-border requests for support from women survivors of violence, from family members of survivors, from women's support services, or from different institutions. The requests are often received when women have not been able to find sufficient support in their countries, or when they find themselves in dangerous and high risk situations, are unaware of the support provided in their countries, or the situation is especially complex and involves cross-border assistance.

In such cases, WAVE can refer survivors to appropriate services in their respective countries or may even provide support directly to survivors, whenever possible.

WAVE Network and European Information Centre against Violence (ZVR: 601608559)

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WAVE Members (as of 12/2016)

1	Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC)	Albania	62	Women's Wellness Centre	Kosovo
2	Human Rights in Democracy Center (HRDC)	Albania	63	Križu un Konsultāciju Centrs Skalbes	Latvia
3	Women's Association Refleksione	Albania	64	Frauenhaus Fürstentum Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein
4	Woman Forum Elbasan	Albania	65	Vilniaus Moterų namai – Intervention Centre	Lithuania
5	Albanian Women Empowerment network (AWEN)	Albania	66	Femmes en Detresse asbl	Luxembourg
6	Counseling Line for Women and Girls	Albania	67	National Council for Gender Equality – NCGE	Macedonia
7	Women's Right Center	Armenia	68	National Network to End Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – Voice against Violence	Macedonia
8	Women's Support Center	Armenia	69	Commission on Domestic Violence	Malta
9	Austrian Women's Shelter Network – Information Centre against Violence AÖF	Austria	70	Dr. Marceline Naudi (Individual Member)	Malta
10	Network of Austrian Counseling Centres for Women and Girls	Austria	71	Network Forum	Malta
11	Domestic Abuse intervention Centre Vienna	Austria	72	Association Against Violence "Casa Marioare"	Moldova
12	Renate Egger, Individual Member	Austria	73	Center for Support and Development of Civic Initiatives "Resonance"	Moldova
13	Clean World Social Union	Azerbaijan	74	Women's Law Centre	Moldova
14	International Public Association "Gender Perspectives"	Belarus	75	SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence NIKSIC	Montenegro
15	Law Initiative – Commission on Women's Rights	Belarus	76	Federatie Opvang	Netherlands
16	Collectif contre les Violences Familiales et l'Exclusion (CVFE)	Belgium	77	MOVISIE	Netherlands
17	Department of Health and Welfare, Violence Victims and Policy Coordination – Province of Antwerp	Belgium	78	Secretariat of the Shelter Movement	Norway
18	Garance ASBL	Belgium	79	Centrum Praw Kobiet	Poland
19	Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk	Belgium	80	AMCV – Associação de Mulheres Contra a Violência	Portugal
20	Foundation United Women Banja Luka	Bosnia and Herzegovina	81	A.L.E.G Association for Liberty and Equality of Gender	Romania
21	Medica Zenica Information	Bosnia and Herzegovina	82	ANAIS Association	Romania
22	Bulgarian Gender research Foundation	Bulgaria	83	Artemis Counselling Centre against Sexual Abuse	Romania
23	Nadja Centre	Bulgaria	84	CPE – Center Partnership and Equality	Romania
24	Autonomous Women's House Zagreb	Croatia	85	ANNA – National Center for Prevention of Violence	Russia
25	B.a.Be., Be active. Be emancipated.	Croatia	86	Crisis Centre Ekaterina	Russia
26	Women's Room – Center for Sexual Rights	Croatia	87	Nizhny Novgorod Women Crisis Center	Russia
27	Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)	Cyprus	88	Autonomous Women's Center (AWC)	Serbia
28	Association of Women's support service Living (KAYAD)	Cyprus	89	Association Fenomena / SOS Kraljevo	Serbia
29	proFem – Central European Consulting Centre	Czech Republic	90	Alliance of women in Slovakia	Slovakia
30	ROSA – Centre for Battered and Lonely Women	Czech Republic	91	FENESTRA – Interest Association of Women	Slovakia
31	Kvinnuhusid	Denmark	92	Association SOS Helpline for Women and Children	Slovenia
32	L.O.K.K – National Organisation of Women's Shelters in Denmark	Denmark	93	Asociación de Mujeres Valdés Siglo XXI	Spain
33	Estonian Women's Shelters Union	Estonia	94	Asociación Otro Tiempo	Spain
34	Tartu Child Support Center	Estonia	95	Fundación para la Convivencia ASPACIA	Spain
35	Women's Shelter of Tartu	Estonia	96	Centro de Asistencia a Víctimas de Agresiones Sexuales – CAVAS	Spain
36	Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters	Finland	97	Directorate General for Gender-Based Violence, Youth Affairs and Juvenile Crime	Spain
37	Women's line Finland	Finland	98	Hèlia – Associació de suport a les dones que pateixen violència de gènere	Spain
38	Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes – FNSF	France	99	Oficina de Gestión, Preparación y Supervisión de Programas Europeos. Fundación para la Atención e Incorporación Social (FADAIS). Consejería para la Igualdad y Bienestar Social	Spain
39	Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhum"	Georgia	100	Plataforma Unitària contra les Violències de Gènere	Spain
40	Sakhli – Advice Center for Women	Georgia	101	Roks – National Organisation for Women's and Girls' Shelters in Sweden	Sweden
41	Women's Information Center (WIC)	Georgia	102	UNIZON	Sweden
42	Anti-Violence Network of Georgia	Georgia	103	Dachorganisation der Frauenhäuser der Schweiz und Liechtenstein	Switzerland
43	BIG e.V. – Berliner Interventionsprojekt gegen häusliche Gewalt	Germany	104	Frauenhaus Biel	Switzerland
44	Frauenhauskoordinierung e.V.	Germany	105	Vivre sans Violence	Switzerland
45	Bff: Bundesverband Frauenberatungsstellen und Frauennotrufe – Frauen gegen Gewalt e.V.	Germany	106	Kadin Dayanisma Vakfi – The Foundation for Women's Solidarity	Turkey
46	GESINE-Netzwerk Gesundheit.EN	Germany	107	Mor Çati – Women Shelter's Foundation	Turkey
47	Prof. Carol Hagemann-White (Honorary Member)	Germany	108	International Women's Rights Center La Strada – Ukraine	Ukraine
48	Karin Heisecke, Individual Member	Germany	109	Sumy Local Crisis Center (SLCC)	Ukraine
49	KOFRA – Kommunikationszentrum für Frauen zur Arbeits- und Lebenssituation	Germany	110	Women's Information Consultative Center	Ukraine
50	PAPATYA – Kriseneinrichtung für Junge Migrantinnen	Germany	111	Haven Wolverhampton	UK
51	ZIF – Zentrale Informationsstelle der autonomen Frauenhäuser des BRD	Germany	112	IMKAAAN	UK
52	European Anti-Violence Network	Greece	113	Latin American Women's Aid	UK
53	NaNE-Women's Rights association	Hungary	114	NIA Ending Violence	UK
54	Stigamot – Counseling and Information Centre on Sexual Violence	Iceland	115	REFUGE	UK
55	Women's Shelter Organization in Iceland	Iceland	116	Scottish Women's Aid	UK
56	Sexual Violence Centre Cork	Ireland	117	Welsh Women's Aid	UK
57	Rape Crisis Network Ireland	Ireland	118	Women's Aid Federation of England	UK
58	Safe Ireland	Ireland	119	Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland	UK
59	Women's Aid Ireland	Ireland	120	WWA – Aberystwyth Women's Aid	UK
60	Associazione Nazionale D.i.Re contro la Violenza- D.i.R.e Women's network against violence	Italy			
61	Associazione Nazionale Volontarie Telefono Rosa-Onlus	Italy			

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