

13. SUPPORT FOR WOMEN WHOSE PARTNERS ARE IN PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES

Introduction

Perpetrator-related interventions include more measures than just treatment programmes. These interventions comprise all measures addressing perpetrators and are aimed at stopping the violent behaviour, such as with barring orders, protective orders in criminal or civil law, detention, sanctions, probation, work in prison, or anti-violence programs run by men's centres. Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention indicates that work with perpetrators needs to focus on and be integrated in "State-wide effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated policies encompassing all relevant measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence" against women and domestic violence (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 7).

Work with perpetrators is not an alternative, but rather a supplement to legal sanctions, in order to help perpetrators change their violent behaviour, to avoid recidivism, and to protect victims.

Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention sets the standards that prevention and treatment programmes with perpetrators must:

- Ensure "that the safety of, support for and the human rights of victims are of primary concern" and that, where appropriate,
- Programmes "are set up and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims" (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 11).

The work with perpetrators of violence against women is still in its infancy in Europe. WAVE has been involved in networking activities for the development of perpetrator programmes since 2006. From 2006 to 2008 WAVE Members were part of a European DAPHNE project which developed guidelines to develop standards for programmes working with male perpetrators of domestic violence (European Network for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, 2015)²⁰. When the legal association Work with Perpetrators was established in 2014, women's organizations providing specialist services to victims were invited to become members of the Board where WAVE has a seat. WAVE engages in the work to ensure that safety and human rights of victims are of primary concern in the work with perpetrators.

There are no clear figures about the number of programmes working with perpetrators in Europe. The Council of Europe Analytical Report (Council of Europe, 2014, p. 73) lists about 450 programmes in 28 European countries. The database of the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators lists about 190 programmes.²¹

Aims and Content of Data Collection

WAVE research focused on the question of cooperation between perpetrator programmes and specialist women's support services. WAVE respondents were specifically asked if specialist women's support services in their country were working together with programmes listed in the database of the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators.

²⁰ European Network Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence-Guidelines for standards for perpetrator programmes: <http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=29>, 30th December 2015.

²¹ European Network Work with Perpetrators Database of programmes: <http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=62>, 30th December 2015.

This simple question does not provide any information on the nature and effectiveness of the programmes nor the quality of the cooperation. It simply provides an indication on the level of cooperation between perpetrator programmes and specialist women's support services in Europe.

TABLE 8 – Cooperation between Perpetrator Programmes and Specialist Support Services for Victims

Country	Total Population	Number of programmes for perpetrators according to the WWP database	Existence of cooperation with women's support services (yes/no)
Albania	2,895,947	1	yes
Austria	8,506,889	5	yes
Belgium	11,203,992	9	yes
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3,791,662	4	yes
Bulgaria	7,245,677	6	yes
Croatia	4,246,809	8	yes
Cyprus	858,000	1	yes
Ireland	4,605,501	1	yes
Luxembourg	549,680	1	yes
Moldova	3,559,497	1	yes
Slovenia	2,061,085	1	yes
Switzerland	8,139,631	14	yes
UK	64,308,261	20	yes
" YES "	121,972,631	72	13

Respondents from 13 countries answered the question on cooperation between perpetrators programmes and specialist support services in their country. The database of work with perpetrators lists 72 programs in these countries.

All 13 respondents confirmed that some cooperation between the database listed perpetrator programmes and women's support services exist, at least with one of the programmes listed.

This finding is similar to the Council of Europe Analytical Study (Council of Europe, 2014, p. 74) which indicates that perpetrator programmes exist in 37 countries and, in the government's opinion, one third of programmes had established cooperation with women's support services.

Recommendations

- ▶ In line with the standard set by the Istanbul Convention, perpetrator programmes need to reach out to women's support services and develop cooperation to ensure the safety of victims while perpetrators are attending programs
- ▶ It is important to acknowledge barriers for cooperation such as different approaches and a separate history of development and to address these carefully; survivors and survivor organizations should never be pushed or forced to cooperate, and the safety of the victim needs to be or primary concern.
- ▶ The existing examples of integrated approaches need to be assessed to identify best practice.
- ▶ More resources are needed to disseminate this information and encourage an exchange of experiences to assess the successes and challenges of this work and promote more cooperation.