

# Support services

## SUPPORT SERVICES: METHODS AND TOOLS

Support services dealing with domestic violence are specialised organisations or units within general services that provide help to the victims of violence, usually women and their children. They help them escape from violence; seek protection and justice; and recover from traumatic experiences. Options include: listening; advice; advocacy; shelter; self-help; counselling; protection and prosecution; and access to activism. They were initiated in the 1970s by women's NGOs and are now internationally recognised as key resources for domestic violence victims. These are now spread in almost all EU-27 and Croatia.

Since the end of the 1980s, the work with perpetrators 'rooted in women's safety and domestic violence prevention' has increasingly become recognised as a key component of support services.

They both belong to tertiary prevention measures, aimed at avoiding further victimisation and lethal violence.

## VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES: METHODS AND TOOLS PROVISION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The results of the study indicate that 83% of EU-27 and Croatia included victim support service methods and tools in relation to domestic violence in their national

action plans; and 42% in national legal provisions. Regarding both sources, they are present in almost all countries (96%) at both the programming and implementation levels. In almost three-quarters of EU-27 and Croatia (71%) national and/or local standards for victims' support services are also available.

A total number of 254 examples of implemented victims' service support methods and tools were collected all over the EU-27 and Croatia and will be available on EIGE's website. Of these:

- 61% have a national coverage, while 39% are implemented at the regional level;
- 54% are promoted by NGOs, while 44% by governmental bodies or statutory agencies; and 2% by other actors.

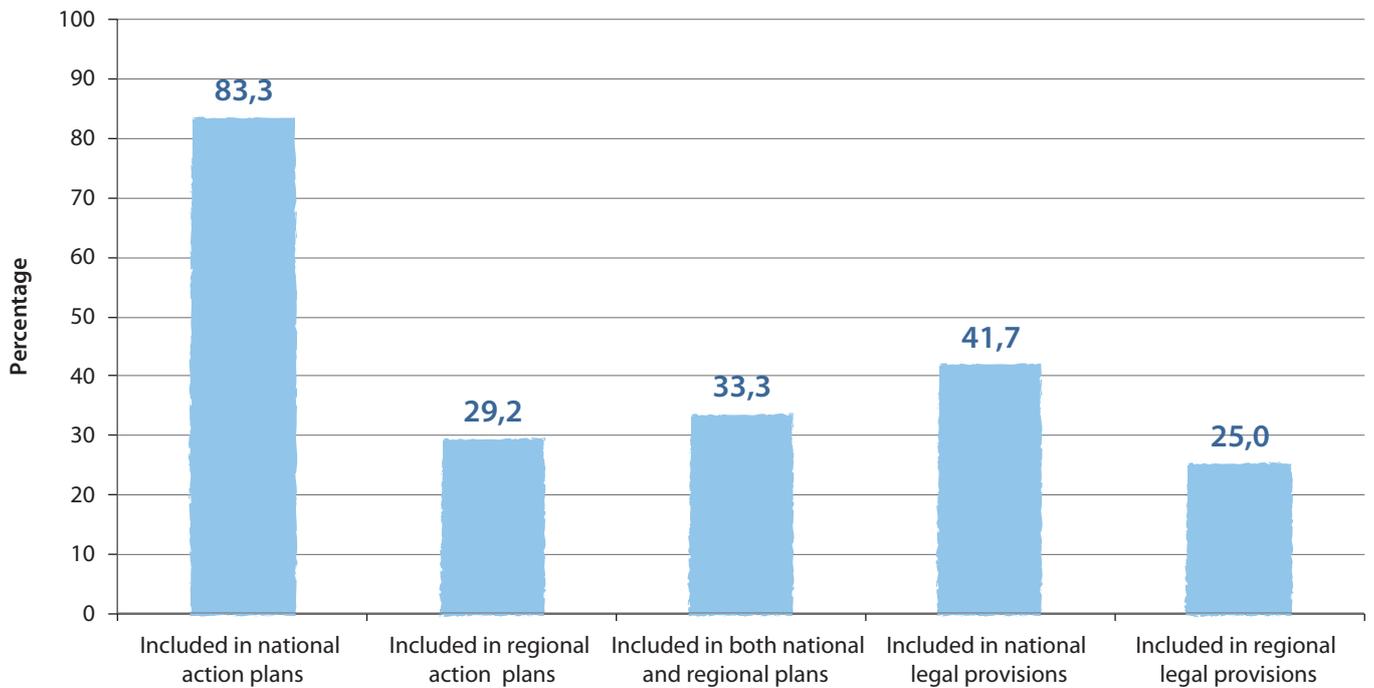
About half (49%) of the collected methods and tools focus on victims: mostly women and children, but also families, couples, and victims and perpetrators separately. The majority of support services include counselling, mentoring or coaching programmes; legal aid provisions; electronic devices for protection and other safety measures; employment tools and methods supporting the victims reenter labor market.

About one-third (28%) of the collected methods and tools represents different models of direct services.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

The European Institute for Gender Equality – EIGE commissioned the study on 'Collection of methods, tools and good practices in the field of domestic violence (as described by area D of Beijing Platform for Action)' in order to identify, collect and systematise the resources and information on training in dealing with domestic violence, awareness-raising and victims support services; identify gaps and needs; and provide recommendations for further development. The study was carried out by IRS – Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale in partnership with the Gender Studies, Equality and Equal opportunities Interuniversity Observatory (G.I.O.) through a network of country experts in the 27 Member States and Croatia. More information and references about the study are available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/activities/gender-based-violence>.

## Victim support services: methods and tools provision and implementation



Around 40% of the collected methods and tools are aimed at professionals in cross-sectoral (or multi-disciplinary) groups or at professionals from individual sectors. The methods and tools collected include, among others: networks guidelines, codes of conduct, protocols, minimum standards, monitoring centres or schemes, performance assessment tools, administrative data collection, screening and risk assessment tools.

During the study, alongside victims' support services, programmes aimed at perpetrators have been mapped and collected. A total number of 48 examples of implemented methods and tools related to such programmes was collected.

The collected methods and tools are mostly directed at perpetrators (82%), while a few at couples or victims and perpetrators treated separately (4%). They mainly consist of counselling, mentoring or coaching programmes (69%). The remaining part is directed at

professionals (16%) and consists of networks (11%) and guidelines or minimum standards (7%) required for the work with perpetrators.

### CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY GOOD PRACTICES IN ADDRESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- strong basis in human rights and gender analysis
- clear, appropriate, comprehensive definitions of domestic violence
- women-/victim-centred approach
- men/perpetrators accountable for the violence they inflict
- emphasis on equality issues and anti-discriminatory practices
- recognition of women/victims' and men/perpetrators' diversity

## SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY GOOD PRACTICES IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

- women's self-determination and empowerment
- believing, sensitive approach
- comprehensive, tailored information and support
- free of charge
- confidentiality and anonymity
- safety-oriented practice
- involvement of survivors and their representatives
- guidance and supervision
- policy and guidelines
- multi-agency/community approach
- administrative data collection (monitoring and evaluation)
- ongoing financing/fundraising planning

## SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY GOOD PRACTICES IN PERPETRATORS' PROGRAMMES

- clear content aimed at stopping violence
- belief in people being able to change
- treating men perpetrators with respect
- priority to women's and children's safety
- collaboration with and support to victims partner contact and support
- risk assessment
- counselling guidance and supervision
- policy and guidelines
- protocols
- collaboration with victim support services
- multiagency/community approach
- administrative data collection (Monitoring and evaluation)
- ongoing financing/fundraising planning

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **British Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)**, a model of intervention now endorsed by the Home Office, based on structured meetings where statutory and voluntary agency representatives share information about high-risk victims of domestic abuse in order to produce a coordinated action plan to increase victim safety (ongoing since 2003).
- **Bulgarian Court Watching of domestic violence law**, an intervention model promoted by SOS-Families at risk (Varna) and the Open Society Institute. Based on NGOs' external independent monitoring of the judicial system practices, it provides empirical data on the implementation of the law on domestic violence (ongoing since 2005).

## PROGRAMMES EXEMPLIFYING GOOD PRACTICES IN RELATION TO PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **British Accreditation Standard and Process delivered by Respect** (London) that proposes a process of accreditation to organisations which run programmes aimed at perpetrators of domestic violence. This process assures the quality level of their intervention and invites them to adhere to Respect's standards (ongoing since 2003).
- **German standards and recommendations** for working with male domestic violence perpetrators in the context of the inter-agency cooperative alliances against domestic violence ('Standards und Empfehlungen fuer die Arbeit mit maennlichen Taetern'). These standards have been developed by the federal association for work with perpetrators of domestic violence (ongoing since 2007).

## ABOUT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY (EIGE)

The European Institute for Gender Equality is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans and beyond, by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable information on gender equality in Europe.

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ISBN 978-92-9218-187-1

doi:10.2839/53411

ISBN 978-92-9218-187-1



Publications Office



MH-30-12-147-EN-C