

NATIONAL REPORT GREECE 2016

DETAILS REPORT WRITING ORGANISATION

Country: Greece

Organisation writing report: European Anti-Violence Network

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Representing any other organisations? No

1. ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES

WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION HAS YOUR ORGANISATION CARRIED OUT DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS?

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

EAVN monitors all data collected by Greek Authorities on VAW and DV every year, monitors the adoption and implementation of policies, and exerts pressure on Greece to comply with EU and international standards.

Training of teachers and awareness raising of adolescents towards prevention of intimate partner violence

EAVN has designed, implemented and evaluated the GEAR against IPV I and II projects, aimed at primary and secondary prevention of IPV in adolescents. The projects have been pilot-tested in seven countries as of 2016. The main aim of these projects is to promote the development of healthy and equal intimate relationships, and encourage zero tolerance of VAWG, by raising teenagers' awareness of:

- the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships,
- the influence that gender stereotypical attitudes and socially imposed gender roles have on their relationships,
- how power inequality between the sexes is related to psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse against women/girls and,
- how adolescents can contribute to the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence.

The GEAR against IPV approach is a proposal for systematic interventions in school (or other) settings, in which girls and boys are guided, through a series of experiential activities, to assess but also challenge culturally “inherited” gender stereotypes. Participants are encouraged to approach differences between the sexes as individual differences, rather than as characteristics of the superiority of one sex over another. The target groups are

- a) students of secondary education,

- b) adolescents, in particular young people belonging to high-risk groups, such as those who have been exposed to intimate partner violence between their parents, or experienced abuse and/or neglect during childhood,
- c) secondary school teachers and other professionals working in school settings, such as psychologists and social workers,
- d) professionals and organisations active in fields of health promotion and education, gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence, as well as professionals who are providing services to adolescents belonging to high-risk groups and,
- e) decision-making centres, such as ministries of education, and policy makers interested in promoting the integration of the GEAR against IPV intervention in secondary education curricula.

The GEAR against IPV material is a precise fulfilment of Article 14 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Its primary prevention activities are directly related to almost all of the articles included in the Convention's Chapter III for Prevention.

Between 2010 - 2016, in the context of two GEAR against IPV projects implemented under the coordination of EAVN, seven national GEAR against IPV Packages were used to guide the pilot-testing and evaluation of interventions in high schools in seven countries (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Romania, Spain). More than 450 teachers and school-related professionals were trained, and more than 100 GEAR against IPV Workshops were conducted with over 2000 adolescent girls and boys.

Moreover, during 2016, in five countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Spain), sensitised adolescents designed [peer-campaigns](#) aimed at raising awareness among their

peers. National conferences were conducted, and two students/teenagers from each workshop were invited to speak, along with teachers who facilitated the workshops.

EAVN continues to implement the GEAR against IPV Project in Greece with our own funding (more information is available on the project's website: www.gear-ipv.eu).

Training of health and social care professionals and empowerment of abused women

EAVN has implemented a project entitled "**Re-Actions against Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) - Actions in Favour of Women-Survivors of IPV**". A key objective of the project is to contribute to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in at least two important ways. Firstly, the project provides information and support to women-survivors of IPV via the publication and wide dissemination of a book entitled *Guide on "How to Escape" from a Violent Relationship*, which also includes a *Guide on Support Services for Abused Women*. Further, the project operates an information centre for IPV issues. Secondly, the project involves training health and social care professionals (through distance learning) on IPV related issues (e.g. screening, risk assessment, safety planning, documentation of IPV and appropriate referrals). Educational materials, including ready-to-use tools, have been developed for training seminars.

More specifically, since 2012, EAVN has operated an electronic/telephone information centre for both abused women, and the professionals working with them. The *Guide on "How to Escape" from a Violent Relationship* was developed in 2013 and revised in 2015. The guide provides information for women that are experiencing abuse by intimate partners, outlining how they can find help within the health, social welfare, legal and police system of services. The guide informs women, in everyday language, about the entire legal framework regarding domestic violence, explains how they can develop their own safety

plan and their own documentation, and provides information about the available services for psychosocial counselling, shelters, legal counselling and legal aid etc.

Empowerment of women survivors of GBV

In Greece, EAVN has implemented a project entitled "**Writing beyond Silence: Promoting Autobiographical Competences to Help Survivors of Gender Violence**". The project has financial support from the DAPHNE III Programme of the European Union. Through the project, seminars were held to train professionals who work as counsellors in centres for abused women. These trained professionals then implemented autobiographical writing workshops with abused women (individually or in groups) under EAVN's supervision. Autobiographical writing provides survivors of violence with the means to make sense of their situation, cope with emotional distress, and understand their experiences from a different perspective. Training for professionals working in support/shelter services aimed to provide them with the skills to integrate a narrative-autobiographical approach in their counselling practices. The actualisation of this approach in the field gave women ways to reflect on and reinterpret their lived situations, facilitating a process of personal transformation and empowerment, and preventing re-victimisation. The project's website can be found at <http://writingbeyond.eu/>.

Every year, EAVN maps the current situation regarding violence against women in Greece and since 2008 the organisation has provided information regarding this data, as well as information on support services for women and children victims of violence, for WAVE's annual Country Reports.

WHAT WOULD YOU DEFINE AS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES REGARDING VIOLENCE PREVENTION TO YOUR ORGANISATION/S? PLEASE FOCUS ON THE LAST THREE YEARS.

- There is a serious lack of support from the government. The government does not recognise the work and experience that NGOs have in this field, and does not utilise this expertise.
- National funding opportunities are non-existent and private donors seem unwilling to connect the names of their organisations to the topic of VAW, as it remains a taboo issue. European funding opportunities are always project-related and cannot be used for our regular activities/services.
- In Greece domestic violence is not a priority. Most decisions are made on the basis of political criteria, not on the basis of the victims' needs. Further, there is no communication among services, and there is no flexibility for services to be adjusted to victims' needs.
- There is a lack of political will to **collect data**, and to **evaluate** the efficiency of the services provided and/or of the policies implemented.

The following points address the barriers victims face in their efforts to find support, protection and assistance. These barriers also constitute **obstacles/challenges** for our organization, as we try to develop ways to help abused women overcome them.

- Firstly, there is no training available for **police officers, lawyers and judges** on violence issues. Nearly all lawyers appointed through the legal aid programme of the state have not been trained on these issues, and this affects their handling of such cases.
- There is no requirement for **staff** at the state's helpline, counselling centres and shelters to be specialised, and the workplace training they receive is mainly theoretical. In addition, there is no evaluation of the quality of the services provided,

no recording of unmet needs, and no follow-up. Last but not least, supervision was provided to counsellors for only a brief period of time.

- There is no training for medical and/or paramedical staff and no screening process in hospitals.
- Even though domestic violence is an ex-officio prosecuted crime, **police** do not respond appropriately. Police officers are largely untrained on how to respond and they are often unwilling to respond. In many cases they discourage victims from reporting their abuse, or they do not officially record women's reports.
- There is no **risk assessment** and no process for the development of an individualised protection/safety plan at police stations or counselling centres.
- **Protection orders are not enforced properly.** Violations often remain unpunished and the victim is left unprotected.
- The State's counselling centres and its SOS helpline **do not support victims to document their cases in court proceedings**, even though they are mandated by law to provide certificates to all women who receive their services, as well as copies of their confidential files.
- The law against domestic violence includes penal mediation and the way this penal mediation is enforced may endanger the victim's safety.

2. COUNTRY

PLEASE GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF GENERAL SITUATION IN YOUR COUNTRY REGARDING WORK WITH PERPETRATORS.

In Greece, there are **no programmes for perpetrators**. One governmental organization accepts perpetrators sent by the District Attorney through **mandatory court referrals in the context of penal mediation** (see below). This programme exists in Athens and Thessaloniki. In Athens, the organisation conducts couple's counselling in place of a

perpetrators' program. They refuse to work with the perpetrator only, insisting that both the victim and the perpetrator participate in couple's counselling.

PLEASE GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF YOUR COUNTRY'S CRIMINAL AND CIVIL RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY ANY CHANGES WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS? (I.E. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGAL AND POLICY MEASURES AND HOW HAVE THEY BEEN IMPLEMENTED?)

During the last three years there have been no changes in civil and criminal responses to domestic violence cases.

Civil Court: A victim can be protected via interim measures that include restriction orders and temporary arrangements related to marriage and children.

Criminal Court: Since 2007, all offenses that are included in the law against domestic violence, except rape, are to be **prosecuted ex officio**, and the in flagrante procedure must be followed.¹ The police often violate both of these obligations. The criminal court can also issue restrictive orders for the protection of the victim.

A large part of the law is devoted to the institution of penal mediation. When a crime is a misdemeanour, the prosecutor may investigate the initiation of this penal mediation. Under this system, if both the victim and the perpetrator accept the initiation of penal mediation, the penal prosecution is postponed for three years and any restraining orders are terminated. If the offender complies with the terms of the penal mediation during this three year period, then the case is closed and archived and prosecution is no longer possible. If the offender violates the terms of their mediation during this three year period, the prosecutor is informed of the violation, and s/he has the right to interrupt the mediation and to initiate prosecution. Under penal mediation the offender must a) promise ("give his word of honour") that he won't repeat any act of DV in the future, b) accept that he must leave the house if the victim requests it, c) agree to attend a specific therapeutic

¹ Law 3500/2006 on "Combating domestic violence and other provisions"

program for offenders (which is currently non-existent in Greece) and d) agree to repair (if feasible) the damage caused by his actions and compensate the victim. **If the victim accepts penal mediation and the perpetrator gives the aforementioned promises the trial ceases (similar to a three year probation). After three years there is no possibility for this case to be prosecuted.**

In Athens and Thessalonica, the public prosecutor will send the perpetrator to the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) for therapy. In other cities the prosecutor will contact various organisations in order to find one that might accept a specific case (and these organisations do not have appropriate specialisation). As discussed, the EKKA in Athens refuses to work with the perpetrator alone, demanding instead that both the victim and the perpetrator participate in relationship counselling. Moreover, the prosecutor is not informed if the perpetrator does not participate in the recommended therapeutic program (e.g. due to a long waiting list). This means a perpetrator can have their penal prosecution terminated at the end of the three year period despite never having participated in any therapeutic programme, and never having suffered any consequences for his behaviour. No data is available concerning the number of cases that have entered the judicial system without trial due to penal mediation. Moreover, there is no information about the progress of penal mediations that have been undertaken.

Upon initiation of penal mediation

- any restraining or protection order ceases ipso jure,
- there is no monitoring from the court as to whether the perpetrators' promises are being kept or violated and,
- couple's therapy is often applied as the most appropriate therapeutic programme for offenders.

The CEDAW committee has recommended that the state abolish penal mediation in cases of domestic violence but so far there have been no changes.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE PROGRESS YOUR COUNTRY HAS MADE IN RELATION TO ISTANBUL CONVENTION.

The Istanbul Convention has been signed, but it is not yet ratified. A committee has been established in order to prepare the transition of the convention to national legislation. We do not know the result of this process, but we know that it is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

DO YOU KNOW ANY OTHER ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES IN YOUR COUNTRY THAT CARRY OUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR WORK? IF YES, PLEASE, LIST THEM.

There is no organisation carrying out specialised work with perpetrators of domestic violence in Greece. The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) is the only known organization that accepts court referrals in the context of penal mediation.

There is no programme for convicted perpetrators, or any other type of programme for perpetrators.

3. BEST PRACTICES

TELL US ABOUT BEST PRACTICES IN WORK WITH PERPETRATORS IN YOUR COUNTRY.

None.

4. NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN YOUR COUNTRY (REGARDING WORK WITH PERPETRATORS)?

- A monitoring process for the abusive behaviour of perpetrators must be developed. This would involve contacting the victim at regular intervals to monitor her safety. This

task can be undertaken by an NGO or another support organisation, with any abusive behaviour or violation of protection measures directly reported to the police/court. The victim must also be able to contact this organization themselves if they experience abuse.

- Penal mediation must be abolished from domestic violence law and replaced with perpetrator programmes that are undertaken alongside, and not instead of, penal prosecution.
- Specialised perpetrators programmes need to be developed.
- Couple's counselling in domestic violence cases must be banned.
- In responding to each incident reported by a victim, the court needs to take into account all previous cases and court orders (criminal and civil) that are related to the same perpetrator (e.g. domestic violence offenses, interim measures, protection orders, child custody claims).
- The law must be enforced **EVERY time** the perpetrator violates the victim's protection orders.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS AND STEPS THAT YOU FEEL SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON IN YOUR COUNTRY IN ORDER TO TACKLE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON A GENERAL LEVEL?

- A regular path of **communication must be created between police and support services** in order to facilitate the reporting of incidents, and the support and protection of victims, as well as to assist in investigations of femicides.
- Systematic **risk assessment** and **safety planning** must be conducted with all IPV victims. This will require that professionals are adequately trained.
- **Specialised protection measures** should be ordered by the court and implemented by police, especially in cases assessed as high risk and in cases where children are involved.

- **Legal aid** – it is necessary to create a specialised pool of lawyers that will be specifically trained on issues related to domestic violence, including the particular needs of victims. At the very least, there must be monitoring to ensure the adequacy and efficiency of lawyers who undertake domestic violence cases via legal aid, and to ensure that any misconduct is penalised.
- Individualised **practical support** must be offered to IPV victims according to their needs. For example, this support might include an accompanying service, assistance with preparing for court proceedings, babysitting, financial support for vital needs etc.
- There must be a systematic implementation of awareness-raising programs in schools, that educate both boys and girls on gender equality and zero tolerance of VAWG.
- Finally, there must also be systematic training of professionals in all relevant disciplines such as police officers, lawyers, judges, doctors, psychologists, social workers, teachers, etc.

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