

*Press release*

## DeStalk e-learning course ready for practitioners to tackle cyberviolence and stalkerware

The IT security community, research and civil society organisations, and governmental authorities combined their expertise in this new online course. The course trains public officials of regional authorities, workers of victim support services, and perpetrator programmes how to effectively fight digital forms of gender-based violence.

*11 October 2021*

Cyber abuse represents a new and widespread form of intimate partner violence, which disproportionately affects women and girls. Perpetrators find increasingly creative ways to exert power and control using smart devices, apps, and online spaces. An intersectoral approach and adequate professional training are needed to effectively address cyberviolence and to improve the skills of services responsible for keeping survivors safe.

Alessandra Pauncz, Executive Director of WWP EN

Since February 2021, the DeStalk consortium partners have been developing the e-learning course, with the overarching goal to better help victims and prevent online gender-based violence.

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, one in ten women have already been subjected to cyber violence from the age of 15<sup>1</sup>. In Europe, seven in ten women who have experienced cyberstalking have also experienced at least one form of physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner.

Stalkerware is commercially available software that is used to secretly spy on another person's private life via a smart device and is often used as part of intimate partner violence.

According to Kaspersky figures<sup>ii</sup>, in total, 6,459 mobile users were affected by stalkerware in the EU in 2020, with Germany, Italy, France and Spain respectively impacted most prominently.

The online course is a milestone on the way to filling a knowledge gap, as **online abuse** is a known issue, but practitioners and officials need more knowledge to enhance their ability to recognise and stop the use of cyberviolence and stalkerware.

The new forms of intimate partner violence, such as cyberviolence and stalkerware, need professionals capable of understanding how to tackle them and how to avoid risks while protecting the victims. Moreover, policy makers and other stakeholders are a crucial part of the fight against domestic violence. This practice-oriented and victim-centered training, targeted at professionals and relevant stakeholders, aims at enhance knowledge on the topic of cyberviolence and stalkerware and provides skills on how to tackle it.

Berta Vall, Associated Professor, Faculty of psychology, education and sports sciences,  
Blanquerna

Kaspersky developed the **e-learning** package in cooperation with Fundación Blanquerna, Una Casa per l'Uomo, Regione del Veneto and WWP EN. The course is taught on Kaspersky's Automated Security Awareness Platform, one of the company's educational platforms. Work on the online course has been possible thanks to the support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Commission.

We are honoured to have led the work on the DeStalk e-learning course, with our expert partners from research and education, civil society organisations and governmental authorities to develop content for this important training on cyberviolence and stalkerware. By combining our joint expertise from different disciplines, we have designed a unique online course on our platform. Aimed at increasing capabilities of professionals working in the field of domestic violence and government authorities, the micro-learning approach and automated training paths will enable users to learn at their own pace and acquire the skills needed to support victims of cyberviolence and stalkerware.

Alfonso Ramirez, General Manager Iberia, Kaspersky

The training is open to representatives from the EU of both institutions and services who address gender-based violence in their everyday work, and is **available in 5 languages**: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. One hundred users will have access to the e-learning platform free of charge to complete the programme by August 2022. The course is self-paced, meaning each student will study at their individual pace, while the educational platform will continuously motivate and engage them. Although it depends on how much time an individual can dedicate to the course, it is estimated that within four weeks, spending between 30 to 90 minutes weekly with studying, it is possible to complete the course.

The regional policies in preventing and combating violence against women must be updated and target all new forms of abuse. Raising full awareness and knowledge on the topic and width of cyber violence and stalkerware with specific training for all subjects involved in the network against violence is crucial to improve its effectiveness.

Valeria Motterle, P.O. International projects, Regione del Veneto

The e-learning course is structured in 4 modules including lessons on: introduction to gender-based violence and cyberviolence, recognising the most common forms of gender-based cyberviolence, in-depth training on stalkerware, **practical guidance** on what to do when confronted with cyberviolence and stalkerware according to the specific field of work (public authority, perpetrator programme, victim support service).

Even though they are aware of the existence of forms of violence that are perpetrated online or through commonly used devices, professionals admit that they do not have specific knowledge and skills on the topic, regarding both the detection and assessment of cyberviolence and the practical work with perpetrators or victims/survivors. This lack of knowledge leads to the issue of low efficacy of prevention and contrasting measures adopted by both types of services.

Elena Gajotto, Project Manager of Una Casa per l'Uomo

Practitioners and public officials who would like to take part in the training are required to **register** their interest via the registration form available on the [DeStalk webpage](#).

## About the partnership

The DeStalk project is run throughout Europe thanks to the collaboration of an international and interdisciplinary project team:

- [Fundación Blanquerna](#), research and education organisation from Ramon Llull University, Spain
- [Kaspersky](#), the leading global cybersecurity company
- [Regione del Veneto](#), the local government of Italy's Veneto Region
- [Una Casa per l'Uomo](#), civil society organisation working with victims and perpetrators in Italy
- [WWP European Network](#), European umbrella association for perpetrator programmes

More on [DeStalk](#)

---

<sup>i</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017, "[Cyber violence against women and girls](#)"

<sup>ii</sup> Kaspersky, 2021, "[The State of Stalkerware 2020](#)"